



CASE STUDIES.... COMPENDIUM OF INSPIRATIONAL PRACTICE

Part of our practical guide to
sustainable development for
smallholder farmers.

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INTRODUCTION

The **SUSTAINABLE SMALLHOLDERS EU COMPENDIUM OF INSPIRATIONAL PRACTICE** is part of our practical guide to sustainable development for smallholder farmers. It seeks to contextualise some of the SDGs that are relevant to smallholder sustainability and to make them more achievable. The Compendium presents a collection of more than 30 case studies of smallholder farmers who have successfully implemented sustainable development innovations. Each case study starts with their motivation to incorporate sustainable farming practices and, most importantly, showing what impacts and results showing what impacts and results have been achieved.

The case studies come from 5 different countries: UK, Italy, Spain, Slovakia, and Ireland. They represent motivational experiences for small-scale farmers who do not know how to implement sustainable farming practices, and who will be provided with a compendium highlighting the motivations that motivated the farmers in the case studies to develop sustainable practices and, above all, showing what impacts they achieved.

The sustainability practices of the case studies touch on the sustainable development objectives and topics developed by the Sustainable Smallholders project e.g efficient use of technology in agricultural production to reduce waste such as precision farming and the use of social media to promote business; implementation of partnerships with university bodies to research and study innovative sustainable techniques; and much more...





UK CASE STUDIES

1

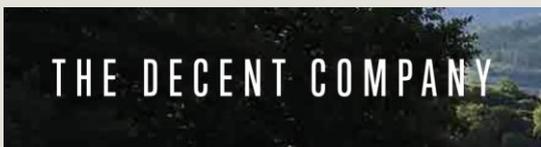
“

If you're doing it all yourself, you grow into it and find your way. There isn't a place you can go to find out what you need to know

”

Martha Roberts
The Decent Company

thedecentcompany.co.uk



Background

Martha Roberts of The Decent Company didn't start out with plans to own a meat business. Smallholding was a lifestyle move in a bid to live in a more sustainable way. After completing a butchery course and realising she owned more pigs than she should have, she had to find a way of using the meat.

She already used social media for her corporate job, so when she started sharing what she was doing on Twitter, people naturally started asking if she was selling the meat.

The bureaucratic side of her new business venture scared her and so for a few years, she primarily sold the meat to friends and family. After officially meeting the legal requirements in 2017, she started breeding pigs and needed to formalise the way she worked.

Martha registered with the local council and found the experience very good. She left with paperwork to do and at the same time, had to get to grips with allergen labelling.



Challenges

Martha admits she struggled until she had a website built to manage orders through. Originally, 60-70% of orders came through Twitter. She found a way through the bureaucracy and local authorities were helpful, but she maintains it's still hard to know which department to go through each time she had a query. Although she's worked in the corporate world for years, it was still difficult to navigate the law and various departments.

In terms of deciding where to sell, Martha opted for the path of least resistance. Markets would be time consuming and very sales orientated, so instead, she opted for someone else to do the prep and for her to ship the product.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, demand for locally sourced meat rocketed and that has carried on as more people became aware of what options were available to them in their local area. She was initially worried about the lead time on meat, but Martha reveals that period of change helped the business as it created expectation. The rare breed, provenance, story is always going to be a hit with customers looking to support sustainable, locally sourced products.

What does sustainability mean to you?

For Martha, sustainability has become an overused-buzz word that people aren't as clear about anymore. For her, it means working and producing something in a way that is manageable for humans and for land, but also there is an ethical way of raising animals. Organic is not the most important thing – welfare is the most important thing and making sure that free range does actually mean that the animals have spent their lives outside. Martha's pigs are all free-range, meaning they live outdoors, all year around in large paddocks of pasture and woodland. Even when the sows are farrowing (having piglets), they have access to the outdoors. Piglets will naturally start to dig within 24 hours of being born. The piglets grow up in family groups and all the pigs have cosy straw-filled arks for shelter.

The challenges with small scale production:

The practicalities of how you want to get products to customers is something Martha found particularly challenging. She didn't want to go down the wholesale route as she couldn't sell the meat for less than it was worth. Wholesale pork prices were very low.



Her focus is consumers, and her challenge was how to reach people and convert people on social media to buy her pork, which she did via story telling about her life and how the animals live. She strongly believes that people buy from her because of her ethos and focus on rearing free-range pigs.

Overall, she has had very few bad experiences with customers and the supply chain. She doesn't take deposits but always has a waiting list. Martha strongly believes that "if you're doing it all yourself, you grow into it and find your way. There isn't a place you can go to find out what you need to know."

A few years ago, Martha felt like she should be a bigger business, however, the incoming winter and infrastructure made her re-think this. In early 2020 she decided that she should go back to enjoying the business and the reason she got into the industry in the first place. She went back to being smaller scale which is more manageable, and she likes this as a counterbalance in her life to the other things that she does – this is what smallholding is about – it's about balance.

From farming and food production, there is a snobbery towards small producers - anything that demonstrates that small producers can be better than large scale is helpful.

Martha often gets emailed by her customers asking if she knows anyone like herself who does lamb, beef etc. There isn't currently a directory for small, free-range producers, and this is something she says would be useful to connect everyone.



FREE-RANGE RARE BREED PORK

FREE TO ROOT & ROAM

ORDER NOW

How do you work with people in the same industry?

Martha worries the most about her local supply chain. For example, if her local abattoir shut then that would really damage her supply chain, alongside the farm that do her butchery - their business was restaurants and Covid stopped their restaurant supply chain. Without those in her supply chain, she could not run her business.

She's also a member of the [Pork Wales Group](#) who send out promotional material of Welsh pork. Apart from that Martha works on her own by and large.

She says, "it is amazing how quickly people start asking you for advice, you become someone who becomes a go to person - the reality is that you never know enough so you spend your life asking questions and sharing knowledge."

What is needed now?

Practical resources and advice is definitely up there. Gaining more information on how to start selling and the ticking the box to make sure you are covering everything you need to - simple compliance.

At the moment, you can go to marketing seminars but that's not what they need help with - do farmers want to become marketers, cut lists for

butchers? Are other things that people don't understand? Smallholders have a story to tell and need support with all the practical stuff. Smallholder organisations around the country didn't get involved in this in the beginning - I feel Ireland has a different attitude towards smallholding which is good.

it is amazing how quickly people start asking you for advice, you become someone who becomes a go to person - the reality is that you never know enough so you spend your life asking questions and sharing knowledge



Patchwork Pig - Jane Matthews

Background

Jane Matthews runs a farm shop and farms rarebreed pigs, Ayrshire herds, sheep and chickens. She has all sorts of produce at the farmshop and the majority of the milk goes to a dairy, certified as organic and produced without antibiotics. The shop also features raw milk vending machines and has been selling pasteurised milk, ice cream, milkshakes, halloumi, as well as beef, pork and lamb. The shop is all vending machines. They operate as a shop on a Saturday selling pies, sausage rolls and more and they have a frozen vending machine too.

The farm originally belonged to her parents. Her brother took it over and now Jane farms the pigs and runs the shop. They initially did pork, milk and eggs, and kept on some dairy bull calves – rear to 9-12 months (young beef) which gives them purpose. Everything they sell they produce on the farm themselves. Their USP is the fact that they have no or very few food miles – the abattoir is about 30 miles away.

How important is sustainability?

They are also organic and it's very important to them to not use fertilizers or pesticides. With the vending machines, everything is vacuum packed, or tray wrapped – it's proving difficult to find sustainable packaging.

How do you work with other people in the same industry?

Jane will use [AHDB resources](#) and help, but because they produce everything themselves, they don't work with other people very much.

What are the main challenges?

Jane remarks that marketing and expanding their customer base is a key challenge, alongside keeping on top of finances and remaining up to speed on legislative changes. There is no one group bringing smallholders together – there are lots of individual groups but there is no actual body to represent smallholders.



What do you want to achieve?

To add value, so you are making money from the life stock instead of just scraping through. Organic milk is 30p / liter so would want to sell this through the shop to make money.

What support do you need?

Help with legislation. You can spend hours researching, updating HACCP plans and in fact, she used the HACCP plan for the original vending machines but agrees it needs to be updated. She says if there was a template HACCP plan, RA templates and support with marketing that would really help too.

What problems are they solving?

Connecting people with food – encouraging people to eat better meat less frequently.
Encouraging people to eat high quality, local food.
Educating people around the value of food.

During Covid, people were more connected with their food but there will be an element of people going back to what they were doing before now that we're returning to normal times.

Do you work with restaurants?

Jane has done some food service meat boxes but not regularly. She says if there was a way into food businesses this would be useful, they are now trying to link into food banks now, although this isn't ideal as you see your profit disappearing. Her view is rrestaurants don't want to pay what it costs you to produce so you wouldn't get it return.

The business wants to encourage mobile caterers to source quality products - people will pay more and this is cutting out the middleman if they are working directly with businesses. They get the butchering done for them, but they will do this in the future.

What is needed for the sector?

An [ELMS \(Environmental Land Management\)](#) scheme should help smallholders and taking over from the single farm payment. This is still under development, it's a few years away. You would also get points to connect with the public too.

We could have a smaller scale version of [Ladies & Pigs](#) (they go round the different shows). Also, the ability to promote smallholders' projects too and high welfare food.



Vale House Kitchen

The Country Skills & Cookery School | Vale House Kitchen

Vale House Kitchen is a business with manifold offerings. Aswellas runs a successful cookery school, Annie and Bod Griffiths offer baking courses and unique opportunities for guests to acquire or hone skills in fishing, shooting, foraging, brewing and butchery

After relocation from London to the West Country, Bod sought a way to combine his love of business and people with his penchant for nature and the countryside, and Vale HouseKitchen was borne.

The ethos of the company is Fork to Field and welfare is of utmost importance to the company: "Our pigs have a great life, and they also have a good death." If this sounds contradictory-it isn't. The fact remains that the majority of the UK population eat meat on a regular basis.

How important is sustainability?

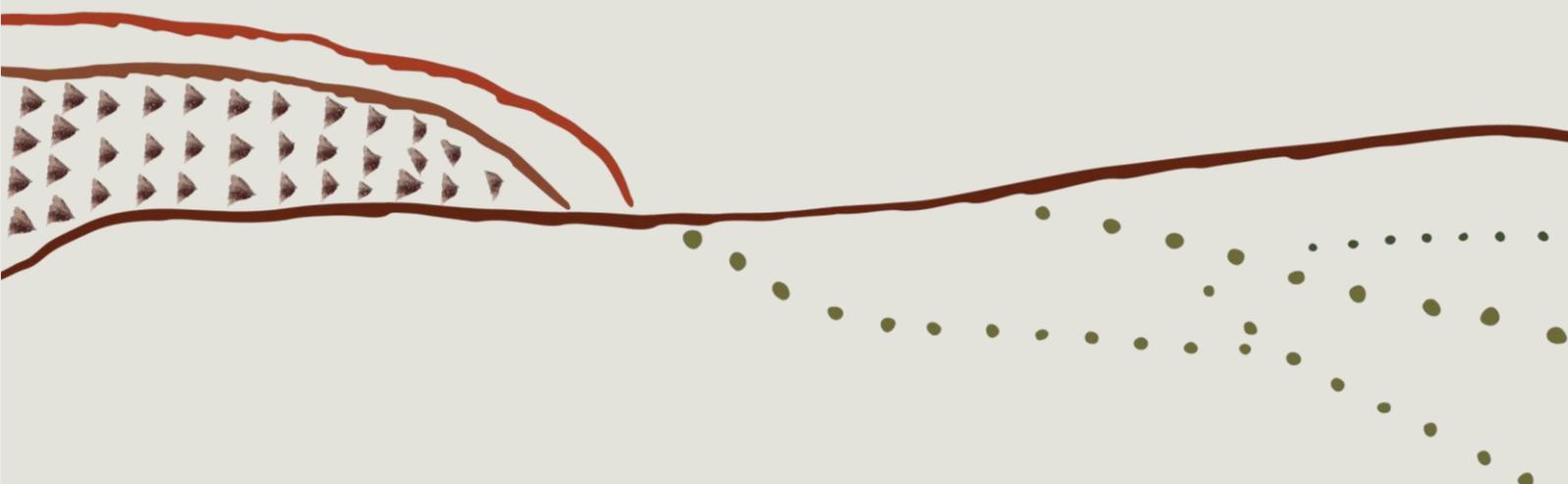
Sustainability for the couple is a complex issue, meaning different things to different people: "People have lost a connection with food and education is key; meat was a treat years ago, we need to be looking at eating less meat that is of a higher quality."

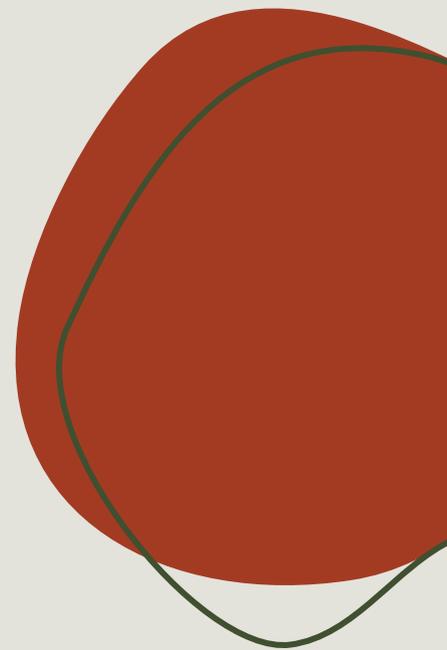
Bod also lauds the inclusion of other, less well-known meats: "Venison, rabbits and pigeon are amongst the most ethical meats you can eat." In a society seeking to alter its relationship with meat, without having to forego it entirely, Vale House Kitchen offers meaningful, accessible, and realistic solutions to pressing issues and provides consumers with the opportunity to have greater autonomy over the food on their plate, and its journey to the table. Its ability to do so whilst offering guests a chance to enjoy solitude and luxury in an idyllic location, just miles from historic sites such as Bath, is testament to its uniqueness and charm.



IRISH CASE STUDIES

2





Celtic Salads is a small 20-acre farm on the west coast of Ireland where the majority of farming consists of traditional pastoral farming of cattle and sheep.

Donnacha Fahy, a 6th generation farmer, identified the need for locally produced large-leaf and micro salads for the catering industry as well as retail consumers in the area.

Motivation

33% of Ireland's GHG emissions come from the agricultural industry due to traditional pastoral farming being the norm. Donnacha Fahy is a 6th generation farmer, and the first of his family to adopt a more sustainable horticulture-only model. Celtic Salads carefully consider their footprint and adopt sustainable practices that shorten the supply chain and reduce waste.

- The coastal location of the farm lends itself to a horticulture model, with the sea providing steady temperate conditions, continuous relief rainfall, access to seaweed as a natural fertiliser, and a central location in Bellharbour, Co.Clare on the west coast to provide customers with fresh produce.
- Originally the business model focused on supplying the foodservice industry, however,

they found this produced a lot of waste as restaurants demanded a very uniform product. Donnacha adapted Celtic Salads to a more retail consumer model which improved the efficiency of the business.

- Any waste still produced is composted on-site and combined with other nutrient-rich natural material and fed back into the process to create more product.

Comparison

Farms are often over-reliant on pesticides and fertilizers. By utilising the natural environment and repurposing their own waste, Celtic Salads have managed to produce without harming the natural environment. The new retail business model has also resulted in significantly less waste.

A Sustainable Business Model

Celtic Salads have a sustainable business model that is not harming the natural environment while supplying the west coast with locally and sustainably produced product.

Cloonconra Cheese

Cloonconra Cheese is produced on a small organic farm in West Roscommon by James and Mary Gannon. The farm was initially a smallholding of suckler Moileys, a culturally important pedigree Native Irish Breed, kept prominently for cultural reasons rather than for enterprise. The small herd was managed, and the milk was used to make butter for personal consumption but there was no use for the remaining milk.

Following the financial crash, the Gannons were looking for an alternative stream of income and with the rise in popularity in farmhouse cheeses in Ireland, they chose to develop their own range of cheese products to add value and sustain their smallholding.

Starting out

James and Mary began learning the craft of cheese making, attending a number of courses. Initially, they developed a raw soft cheese that they supply to restaurants in the region. Since then, they have gone on to develop an organic heddar for the retail market. Sustainability, heritage and the slow food movement is central to everything they produce and a core part of their brand.

Biodiversity

Most cheese in the region is produced non-organically on large farms and goes to a co-operative for processing. This 35-acre farm in Roscommon is a natural and biodiverse habitat consisting of marginal land with hillocks and bogs. The Irish Moiled Cattle has been present in the Irish landscape since the 1300s/1400s, making it resilient to common issues

Web link

other breeds in Ireland experience. By emphasising breed preservation over milk yield and selecting a breed that is naturally at home and self-sufficient in the Irish landscape, Cloonconra can best preserve the natural environment while producing a high-quality product.

The Irish Moiled cattle was once on the brink of extinction with breed numbers reaching as low as 30 calves in the 1980s, but thanks to smallscale farmers such as the Gannons, numbers have since risen.

Cloonconra has successfully created a product produced entirely on-site while preserving the flora and fauna of the local area.

Connections

Cloonconra Cheese is a member of the [Irish Slow Food Presidium](#), the [Raw Milk Presidium](#), and farms using organic standards and uses only sustainable and compostable packaging for their products. Despite being a new dairy producer their product has already enjoyed much success winning a gold medal at the prestigious Irish Cheese Awards in Ballymaloe. This success has allowed the owners to augment their income while maintaining their unique smallscale farm in Roscommon.

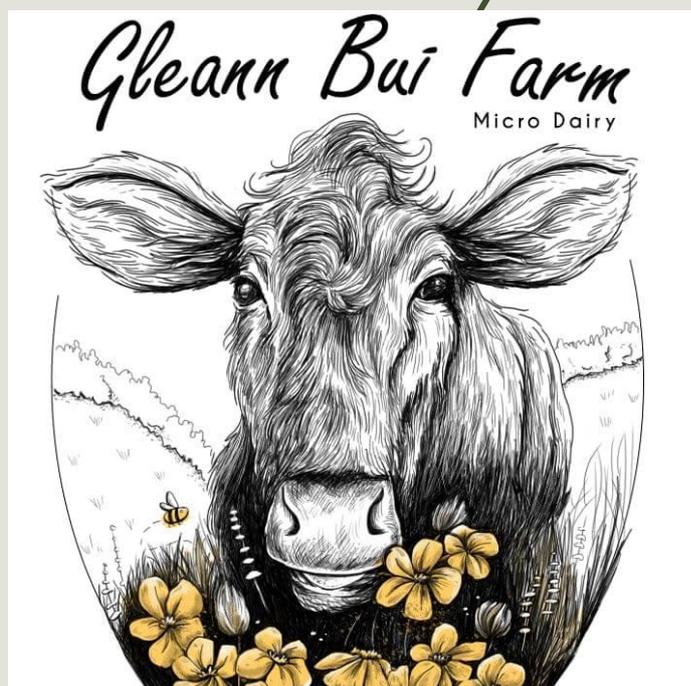
Read more about Cloonconra Cheese and their Organic Farm through these links





Glean Bui Farm

[Gleann Buí Farm | Facebook](#)



Based on a small suckler farm in Co. Mayo, the owners Michael Mc Grath and his partner Sinead Moran found that they could not make a viable income from Suckler Farming and they needed to move to a different farming system to ensure viability.

Starting Out

The couple manage a mixed herd of traditional breed cows on 27 acres of High Nature Value Farmland in Mayo. They are passionate about conserving the species of rich grass, mature trees and biodiversity that is found on the farm. They established the Gleann Bui Farm micro-dairy with the objective is produce fair food, farmed in harmony with nature for a fair price. The herd is 100% grass-fed; grass, grass herb, wildflower and tree leaf fed. The farm is also organic and regenerative practices have been adopted to protect soil and to sequester carbon from the atmosphere.

They sell Raw Milk and other dairy produce together with pastured raised, free range, organic fed chicken and eggs.

Most milk in the region is produced non organically and goes to a large co-operative for processing . This system ensures that the milk is processed on the farm and delivered locally. This small scale farming and processing ensures a sustainable and organic product is provided locally.

Outcome

The farm is now more viable and Michael does not have to substitute his income with off-farm work. There is also a supply of high quality nutritious raw milk, chicken and eggs for the local community.

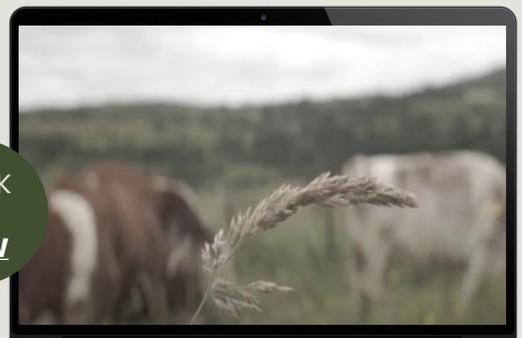


For more information, visit

and



CLICK TO VIEW



CLICK TO VIEW

WATCH them in Fair Food Farmers Series



CLICK TO VIEW



CLICK TO VIEW

COMMUNITY DRIVEN REGENERATIVE FARM

Online Farm Shop

Knocknarea Farm

<https://www.knocknareafarm.com/>

Knocknarea Farm is a small mixed farm run by two young farmers, Sean and Rob. The farm consists of 28 acres located at the foot of Knocknarea Hill in County Sligo. The farm is mostly made up of pastoral cattle and hens along with one acre of horticulture. Farms throughout Ireland rely on pesticides and fertilisers to efficiently produce.

Sean and Rob believe there is a better way.

Starting out

Their work started by engaging and experimenting with regenerative farming practices that negate the need for artificial fertilisers and pesticides and create a higher quality product and a richer ecosystem. Knocknarea Farm achieve this by engaging in many sustainable practices.

They have 300 hens in total which they rotate across their meadows allowing them the free range of 5 acres at a time. They use coups with mesh bottoms that allow the droppings to fall through and naturally fertilize the land promoting a more diverse field.

For their horticulture farming, they adopt a no-dig approach to their growing, not tilling the soil, and simply sewing into the topsoil.



**KNOCKNAREA
FARM**

Sean and Rob believe that Ireland should be able to produce its own nutrient-dense food, grown in a manner that makes the soil and landscape more abundant and full of life for generations to come

Regenerative Practices

Despite being a new farm, Sean and Rob have had great success with their regenerative practices in the past year. The pastoral hens have promoted multiple species meadows, which has seen the return of native species such as white and red clovers which are naturally nitrogen-fixing, negating the use of artificial nitrogen fertilisers. The no-dig approach to their horticulture has also been successful, and they haven't had to weed or use any pesticides as the tilling both promotes soil diversity, and doesn't allow weeds to flourish.

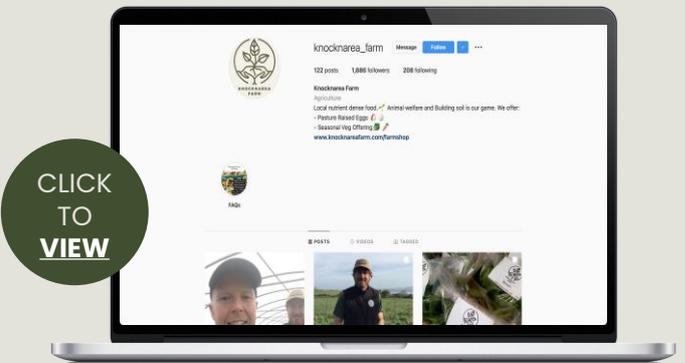
Outcomes

By adopting sustainable regenerative farming practices, Knocknarea farm has been able to have a productive season without compromising the natural ecosystem of the area. Their business model is based on sales through a Weekly Veg or Egg Bag and an innovative membership model.

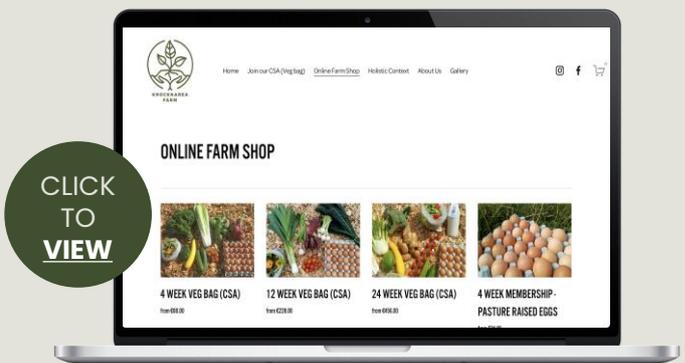
- Veg Bag membership consists of 4 x weeks supply which includes 6 to 8 items each week which are available during the season starting early May. The cost equates to €15 per week.
- Membership of Fresh Pasture Range eggs can be for 4 or 12 weeks, with a choice of 12 or 30 eggs per week.

To reduce food miles, there are three collection points. They also operate a very popular honesty box at the farm gate.

Marketing makes good use of social media



For further information, visit



Watch their video on



Kylemore Farmhouse

Kylemore Farmhouse Cheese



Kylemore Farmhouse Cheese is a farm diversification on the Roche Farm in Abbey, County Galway. Teresa Roche is now the 5th generation to farm the family land in the Slieve Aughty Mountains. Traditional pastoral beef is the most common agriculture activity in the area, but Teresa elected to produce a high-quality dairy product entirely on-site, from milking their pedigree dairy Frisian Holstein herd, right through to manufacturing and ripening. Ireland is a global leader in sustainable dairy products, and Ireland's dairy industry is built on the family-farm tradition. Adding value to dairy is seen as a challenge to many. Kylemore Farmhouse Cheese has taken on that challenge. Teresa identified a gap in the market for an alpine based cheese and is building a national and international brand.

Starting out

Teresa achieves her sustainability goals by implementing sustainable practices that both improve efficiency, sustainability, and the final product.

- Kylemore's Irish style alpine range benefits from the unique Irish milk composition giving a premium offering. One of the best ways a dairy farm can improve its footprint is by improving the efficiency of its cows. Kylemore achieves this by adopting a closed herd approach which is the best management policy for avoiding infectious disease.
- Kylemore farm extends their grazing season, if possible, but also grows and cuts all their own silage keeping complete control over the whole process.
- They also repurpose waste whey on their land which stimulates the growth of clovers which are naturally nitrogen-fixing avoiding the need for artificial nitrogen fertilisers which are large contributors to carbon footprints and pollutants to waterways.



- Teresa also maintains the hedgerows which support the local ecosystem providing important ecosystem services for the farm and surrounding land.
- Teresa upskilled in cheese making through gaining work experience in a local cheese maker Killeen Cheese and travelling to Switzerland to train with Sennerei Andeer. Her previous training as an intensive care nurse gives Teresa a scientific edge.

Sustainability approach

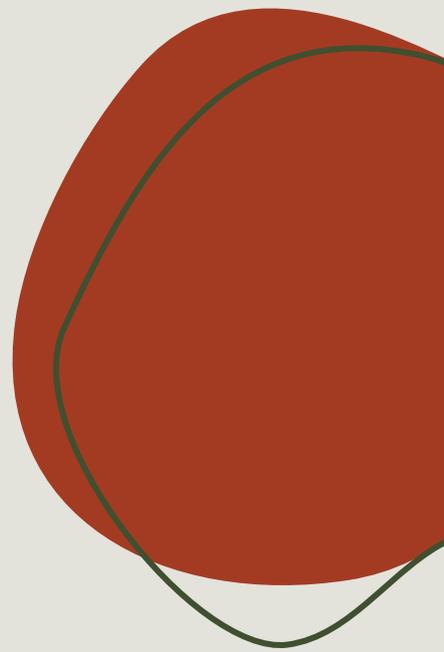
By utilising measures to reduce waste and the necessity for artificial fertilisers, Kylemore Farmhouse Cheese efficiently produce a cheese with a low carbon footprint while not causing any harm to the local environment.

Sustainable Success

Kylemore Farmhouse Cheese has successfully created an award-winning and sustainably recognised cheese entirely in house. They joined Bord Bia Origin Green, Ireland's national food sustainability programme, <https://www.bordbia.ie/industry/export-assistance/origin-green/> which enables Ireland's food industry to set and achieve measurable sustainability targets that respect the environment and serve local communities more effectively. Crucially, Origin Green is about measuring and improving how we do this on an ongoing basis. Independent accreditation and verification are built into every stage of the supply chain.

Sustainable practices have not only reduced their footprint on the planet but have also created a better product.

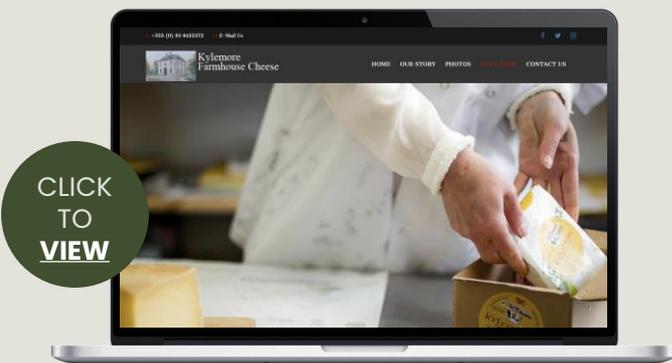
In terms of business sustainability, Kylemore Farmhouse Cheese is sold through a network on Irish cheese distributors and some UK outlets. Teresa set up an award winning Farm Shop and Visitor Centre, providing cheese maker demonstrations, local food showcase, culinary tourism skills development and training and onsite sales opportunities. It has been a huge success. So too is her online shop [Kylemore Farmhouse Cheese](#)



Teresa has been featured in an Irish Government video on Our Rural Future, highlighting the need to encourage more women into farm diversification.



For more information, visit





Leitrim Hill Goats Cheese

Lisa Gifford bought a small holding (1.5ha) in Leitrim in 2018 and since then has tended a small herd of milking goats and set up a small cheese making enterprise. Being small in scale allows this operation to be more ecologically sound than is possible for an intense dairy system.

Starting Out

Leitrim Hill Goat Farm is a small holding with hand-milked goats producing cheese. The cheese is hand made from fresh raw milk on the farm. Extra milk is bought in when required. The cheeses made include a semisoft cheese from goats' milk and a cheese made from a mix of goat's milk and cow's milk. A ricotta is made making use of the whey. All sales are direct to the local market. The farm also has a small flock of laying hens as well as fruit and vegetable garden.

Micro Dairy

Lisa now sells her cheese at the farm gate, at two weekly local farmers markets and also supplies two local restaurants. Production is increasing in a sustainable manner.

Lisa buys in extra goats' milk when needed from another small scale goat farm in the locality and also cow's milk from a local organic Jersey herd. This collaboration is an essential feature of micro dairying.

Additional projects include responsible land management and rewilding of select areas.

Lisa's story is a fascinating one. She is a part of the Taste Leitrim food network, shares her story





Melvin Meadows

Melvin Meadows is a 34ha mixed-use farm in north Leitrim. The land is on a north-facing steep hillside overlooking Lough Melvin. The owners had to look for a way to make the land productive when conventional cattle were deemed too heavy for the sloped terrain, and the tight grazing of sheep was seen to have a detrimental effect on the land as well.

Starting Out

Dexter cattle are an important breed in Irish culture, originating from the early herds of the Celts and being bred in the mountainous southwest for their hardiness and small size. Being the smallest breed in Ireland and the British Isles at roughly half the size of the more popular Herefords, the Dexter was perfect for Melvin Meadows' challenging terrain.

The Melvin Meadows farm converted to this breed in 2010 and now has a small herd of 12 cows. By choosing a breed naturally suited to the Irish landscape, they can be largely self-sufficient in summer months, allowing the farm to engage in conservation grazing, letting the semi-natural, biodiverse landscape to flourish. The cattle who are easily finished on grass, are then slaughtered and butchered locally and the

high-quality meat is sold locally in 10kg boxes of various cuts, promoting 'nose to tail eating'.

In 2020 they trialled egg production with 12 laying hens. They found the local demand to be strong and have since expanded to a flock size of 60. A mobile hen house was designed which allows for the flock to be moved around the land increasing forage management and promoting species diverse meadows.

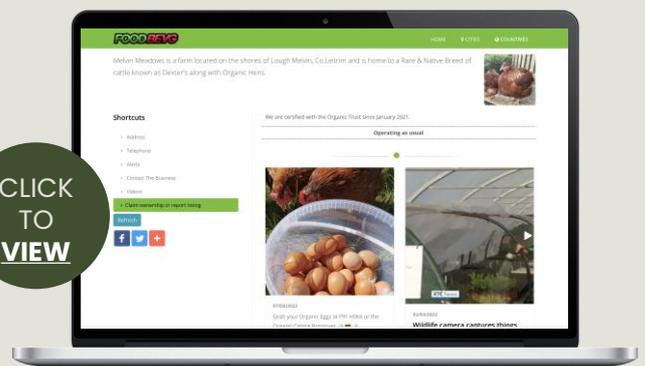
Regenerative Approaches

Melvin Meadows, identified that their land was not suited to conventional farming practices and instead took a regenerative approach to farming that saw them select livestock that suited their land, rather than artificially making their land suit the livestock. By selecting a breed of cattle that is naturally suited to the challenging landscape they have preserved the area while also making their land productive. The hens droppings promote multi-species meadows which are better at naturally fixing nitrogen negating the use of artificial fertilisers. With minimum inputs and direct local sales Melvin Meadows have ensured maximum economic benefit while respecting the land.

In 2021, Melvin Meadows was certified organic, and their eggs and meat boxes regularly sell out. By slightly tweaking the operating system this farm on challenging land is not only rendered more economically viable but is also environmentally beneficial.



For further information, visit:



The Wooded Pig



The Wooded Pig is a family run farm located in Tara, County Meath. It is a mixed use farm consisting of arable and pastoral land as well as native forestry. Ireland has one of the lowest levels of woodland in Europe with the majority of reforestation consisting of non-native species with a yield cycle of 15 years. In order to protect and expand the share of native forestry in Ireland, alternative income sources are needed from the land. Animal welfare is an important issue in pig farming with the majority of pigs in Ireland being reared indoors.

Starting Out

For over 25 years the Herdsman's Cottage of Corbalton has been the home of the Eoin Bird and his family. Today they share their Eden with a drift of free range pigs. The pigs roam and forage the farm's 20-year-old plantation before being processed on-site, into a range of quality, ethically raised Irish charcuterie.

Eoin of the Wooded Pig learnt outdoor pig husbandry while in New Zealand and being primarily concerned with animal welfare, decided to bring his knowledge back to the farm in Ireland. The woodland consisting of oak, ash and beech trees is a natural habitat for pigs and so the slow, high-nutrient growth achieved with the woodland farming leads to a superior product.

The Wooded Pig take the stewardship of their land seriously and also maintain a wild habitat of native species flowers and trees that provide ecosystem services for the farm and surrounding land. They try to provide as much of the supplementary feed for the pigs as possible with barley grown on their own arable land.

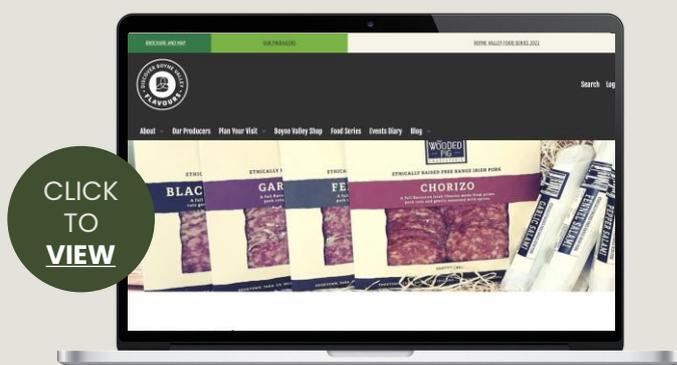


Sustainable

Pig farming is a highly carbon intensive practice with increasingly prevalent animal welfare issues. The Wooded Pig has found a way to improve the well-being of the animals and land through the introduction of sustainable practices.

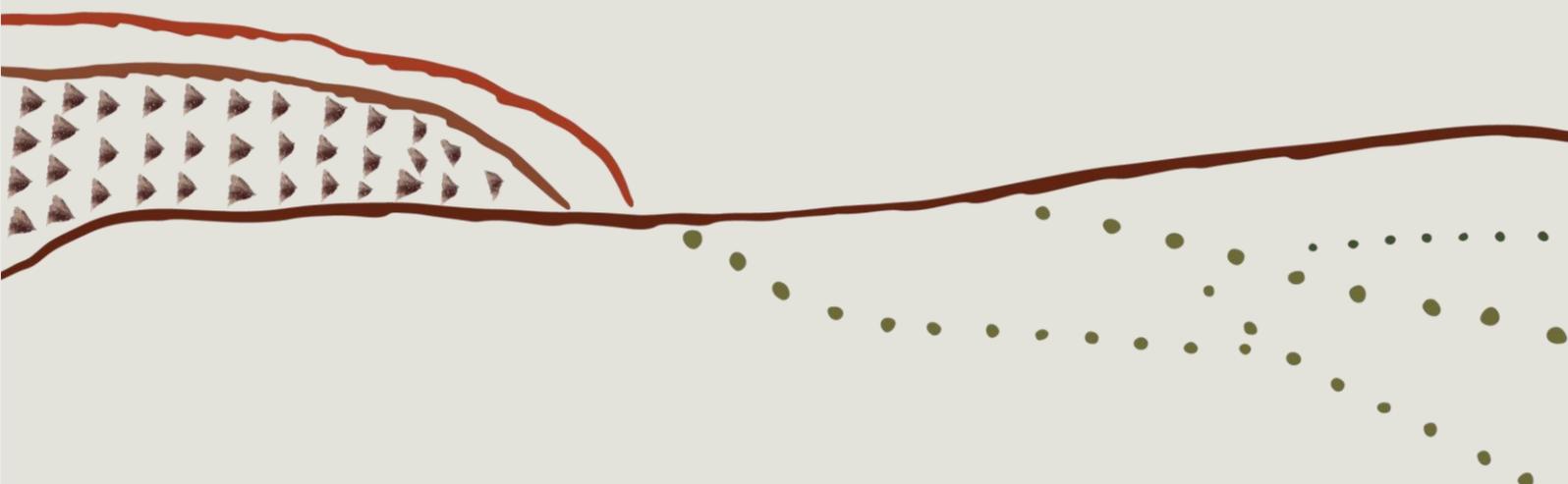
The Wooded Pig as a family owned and run farm provides high quality, sustainable and ethically raised charcuterie. The animals' unique habitat, coupled with the in-house production gives these air-dried meats a truly unique flavour. The process, from start to finish ensures that The Wood Pig's charcuterie is truly unique.

For further information, visit





3 SPANISH CASE STUDIES



Background Challenges:

Lack of knowledge of local products

Lack of positioning of the territory on the gastronomic tourism map

Need to improve environmental sustainability and local economy

Need to support local products

Need to value the Mediterranean diet and sustainable products

Starting Out

A company that has specialised in rice cultivation for generations. They have been growing rice in the ecological environment of the Albufera de Valencia, in the Marjal de Pego-Oliva and other areas of the Comunitat Valenciana for more than a century, always with the utmost respect for the environment. Over the years, they have been expanding their crops to other types of grains beyond rice, in order to meet the new needs of the market and society, always seeking adaptation and innovation, as well as a balance between tradition and innovation.

Supporting local products by mixing traditional and innovative methods.

This project has contributed to the promotion of local product consumption through the sale of rice grown in the area. The NATURAL Product seal reflects the importance of the positive environmental impact they produce in the area where they grow it. They also promote local culture by the hand of rice farming and gastronomy and by planting rice they help to preserve the wet lands of the Albufera, thus supporting the local ecology. They also improve the local economy through the sale of local products.

CLICK TO VIEW



CLICK TO VIEW



Arroz ciudad de Sueca: Rafael Mañez

Background Challenges:

Lack of knowledge of local products

Lack of positioning of the territory on the gastronomic tourism map

Reusing traditional sowing methods

Need to improve environmental sustainability and the local economy

Need to support local products

The need to revalue the Mediterranean diet and sustainable products



Starting Out

Arroz Ciudad de Sueca was born from the passion of the farmer Rafael Máñez for growing rice and for obtaining a higher quality, which led him to take the step of processing, to ensure that his grains reach the table unmixed, guarantees total traceability. Ciudad de Sueca rice is a limited harvest from its own rice fields located in the Albufera de Valencia. Its rice is grown with certified seeds, following traditional cultivation methods and is vacuum-packed, allowing it to be preserved without the use of chemical products.

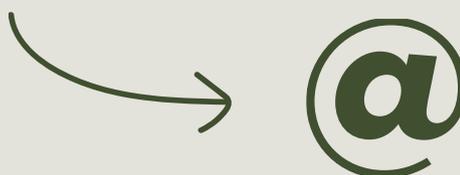
Sustainability

They try to use traditional methods, using the minimum quantity of chemical products.

This project has contributed to the promotion of the consumption of local products through the sale of rice grown in the area. Moreover, as a consequence of the use of traditional cultivation techniques, it manages to obtain a natural product, without added preservatives or chemicals, thus respecting the environment and promoting sustainable development, helping the local economy and raising awareness of the gastronomy of the Comunitat Valenciana.



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Arròs Cèrcol



Background Challenges:

Encourage the consumption of local products

Promote gender equality within the agricultural sector

Need to improve environmental sustainability and the local economy

Need to support the local product

Need to revalue the Mediterranean diet and sustainable products

Starting Out

Cèrcol was born as a protest against an agri-food model that forgets producers and the environment. It is a cooperative that grows and sells sustainable rice from the Albufera in an innovative way: using precision agriculture, contemporary designs and the sale of the rice without intermediaries being present on social networks and talking directly to consumers. All this using a sustainable model, moving towards ecological production models with solar energy equipment and reusable packaging. They are currently taking over 500 hanegadas spread over 30 small fields in the municipality of Sueca. They seek to promote a greater presence of women and young people within the sector. Finally, it must be said that they use Valencian in all aspects of the company.

Sustainable Approaches

Use of environmentally friendly technology such as solar energy and use of reusable materials.

This project has contributed to the promotion of the local product consumption through the sale of rice grown in the Albufera. In addition, it has strengthened the reduction of pollution through the use of ecological cultivation techniques and the support of local sustainability at the hand of the use of renewable energies and materials in order to preserve and develop a sustainable gastronomy that is directly linked to tourism since it indeed is a cultural resource typical of the Mediterranean environment.

As a result of product sales, it has not only been possible to improve the local economy, but also gastronomic tourism has been promoted in the area in order to promote the economic sectors that make up the Mediterranean gastronomy of the Comunitat Valenciana.

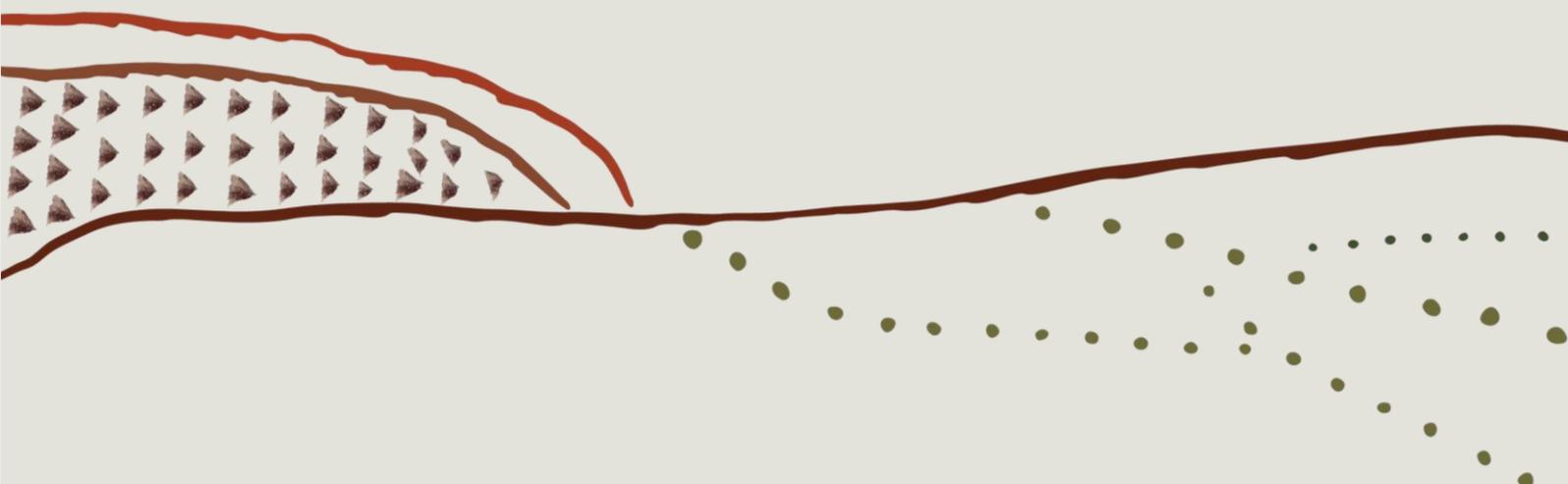


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4 ITALIAN CASE STUDIES



“

This process of innovation and diversification has allowed Fattoria Fiorentino to be less dependent on the unstable market prices of wheat.

”

Fattoria Fiorentino



Starting Out

Fattoria Fiorentino is located in the town of Lucera, in the Monti Dauni, surrounded by wheat and olive fields as far as the eye can see. This estate is not only a cultivation of fine grain but a historical treasure chest, the memory of our past. A Bourbon farmhouse dating back to 1820, it still has cistern wells, an underground oil mill, a chapel, granary pits and a 'garitta', a small building used to control agricultural activities and household goods (oil, wheat and wool).

The farm has decided to focus on sustainable agriculture as it Intensive wheat production practices require a high use of chemical inputs and processing. This has a double negative impact, from an environmental point of view, excessive tillage and the use of chemical inputs causes the loss of biodiversity and leaching of the soil, but this makes production costs to rise.

In 2016, Michele and Chiara who own the farm started to transform the wheat in wholemeal flour with a stone mill which they also produce pasta slowly dry. Thanks to this new focus, they have been able to control all the steps of the supply chain in order not to depend any more from the unstable selling market prices of wheat.



Sustainable Approaches

Michele and Chiara have always paid a lot of attention to the care of the soil, they have always used the least impactful approach possible.

They used to produce mainly wheat, but since 1999 they have built their own stone mill so that they can control their supply chain and maintain the quality of the product, and they have started to produce their own pasta.

With the introduction of goat farming, which produces a very good cheese, they have also been able to internalise the production of fertiliser, becoming a true example of a farm as a system and a circular economy.

Sustainable agricultural practices such as minimum tillage or crop rotation are quite widespread in the Daunian mountains, thanks also to financial contributions from the European CAP to farmers who adopt these practices.

Innovation and Diversification

This process of innovation and diversification has allowed Fattoria Fiorentino to be less dependent on the unstable market prices of

wheat. It has allowed us to close the pasta production chain and to have a 0 km product with much less impact on the environment.

The minimal tillage of the land makes it possible to considerably reduce the emission of CO2 into the atmosphere and also to save a lot on production costs.

Having a product that is completely self-produced within the company makes it possible to meet the ever-increasing demand for quality and environmentally friendly products.





Simona

The Starting Problem

Intensive wheat production practices require a high use of chemical inputs and processing. This has a double negative impact, from an environmental point of view, excessive tillage and the use of chemical inputs causes the loss of biodiversity and leaching of the soil, but this makes production costs to rise while prices continue to fall.

Getting up and running

Simona is a young entrepreneur that spent some time in Germany before deciding to come back in the Monti Dauni and run part of her father's farm.

During her travels, she developed an awareness of the unsustainability of food industry. Once back in Monti Dauni, she studied to find a new sustainable approach of farming. She started by reducing the tillage of the soil and cut down the

chemical inputs. Less tillage of the soil increases its ability to retain water. Simona started to study and research the local crops that suited to local environment and are more resilient and improve the soil with rotation crops with legumes.

Sustainable Approaches

Sustainable agricultural practices such as minimum tillage or crop rotation are quite widespread in the Daunian mountains, thanks also to financial contributions from the European CAP to farmers who adopt these practices.

Outcomes

- Increased resilient of crops
- Less consume of water
- Less consume of chemical and external inputs
- High food quality
- Higher profitability



Zenit 41

<https://www.facebook.com/zenit41/>



The Starting Problem

Small scale farmers, especially those who produce wheat, are facing a constantly decreasing of their bargaining power. On the other hand, transformation industry demand specific characteristics such as a high concentration of protein in the wheat that cause the contraction of grain price (pre current conflict disruption in Ukraine).

Zenit 41 has selected the best wheat varieties for quality and yield per hectare, in order to offer farmers varieties that are appreciable on the market, while at the same time guaranteeing the quality of the products to the consumer.

Getting up and running

Zenit41 was set up with the aim of defending the health of consumers and the dignity of Italian farmers, offering a product, ZENIT DURUM TRITICUM®, of the highest product quality, extreme health standards and high nutraceutical value. Together with health, Zenit41 restores dignity to the highly prized cereal crops of Southern Italy by offering a wheat price which is not influenced by the slave logic of the market but based on the real value of production and processing.

To do all this, Zenit41 follows a very specific, controlled protocol to obtain a product carefully selected to ensure food safety and gastronomic excellence.

Only a few carefully selected durum wheat varieties can become ZENIT DURUM TRITICUM®. For their selection, Zenit41 makes use of the best companies in the field of genetic improvement applied to cereals.

Sustainability

Zenit 41 is unique. It has responded to the crisis in the cereal sector with innovation and research, creating varieties that are appreciated by the market and that can bring value to the activities of farmers in southern Italy, as well as product quality and wholesomeness to the consumers. Its strength lies in having created a controlled supply chain with a specification shared by all stakeholders.

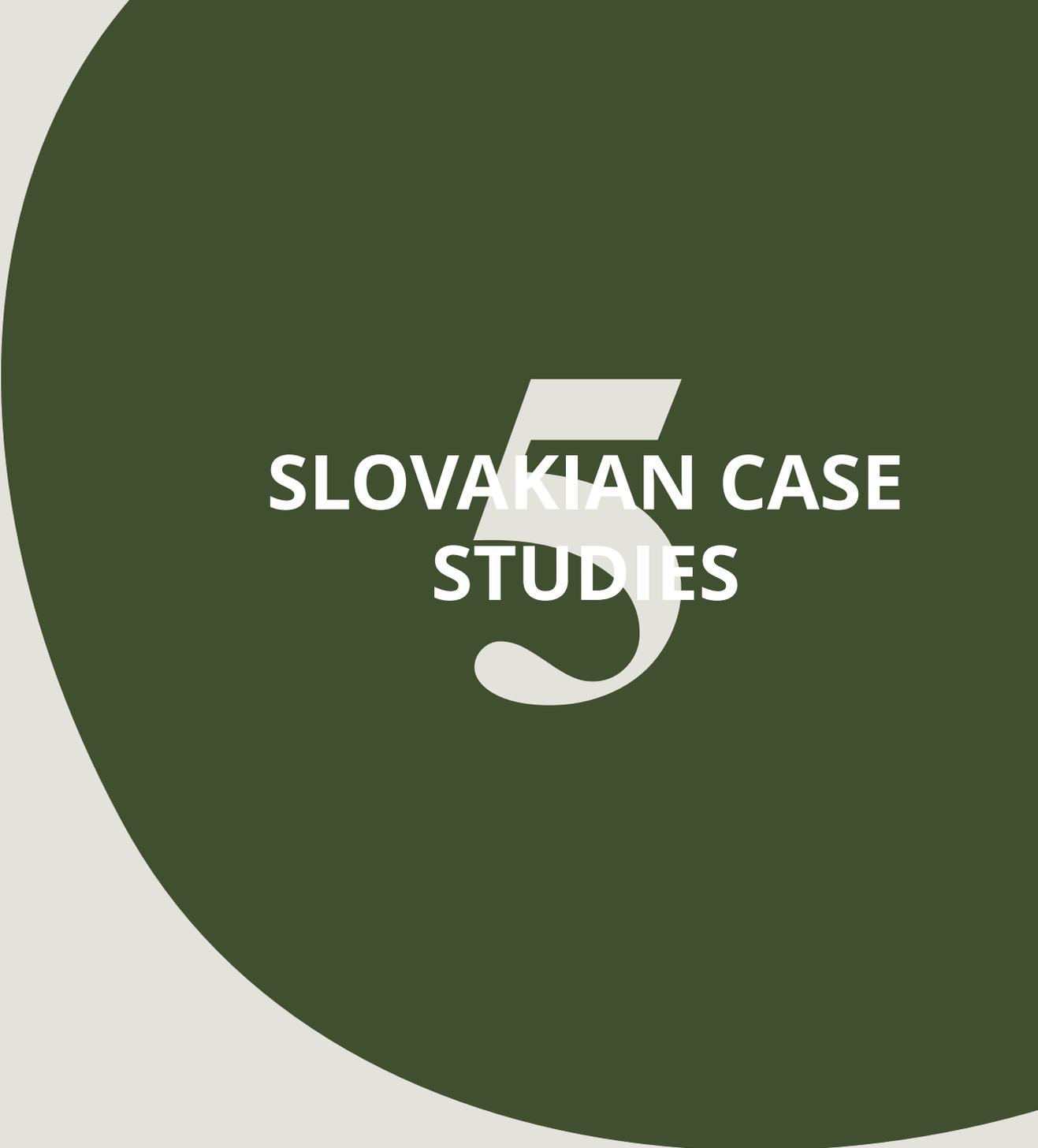


Outcomes

- 39 NUMBER OF MEMBERS
- 20 FARMS
- 1000 CULTIVATED HECTARES
- 40000 QUINTALS OF WHEAT PRODUCED

The Zenit 41 is able to offer a higher purchase price to farmers than the market price.

Zenit 41 has created a production chain that involves all the operators in the system, from the farmer to the pasta producer, and has also managed to obtain a quality label.



5 SLOVAKIAN CASE STUDIES

Agrohouse "Grunt"

Papradno is set in a beautiful natural countryside surrounded by unspoiled mountains offering waymarked country walks and mountain bike trails of various difficulty levels. For advanced hikers we recommend the yellow route through the ridge of Velky and Maly Javornik to neighbouring Czech village Karolinka. Alternatively, you can take a red route to Kasarne or Portas. In winter, these trails are accessible on cross-country skis. Spa lovers can visit the newest spa in Slovakia - Nimnica only 20 km away from the village Papradno.



The AgroHouse offers three facilities:

1

Guest House
"Agropenzion Grunt"

2

Hut
"Koliba Papradno"

3

Farm

The Guest House "Agropenzion Grunt"

is located in the beautiful nature of the Kysuce protected landscape area, in the village Papradno, about 17 km away from Povazska Bystrica. It is well suited for family recreation, agrotourism or holding small family parties, weddings and business meetings.

Restaurant

The guest-house has its own restaurant with the capacity of 30 seats. Our guests can order breakfast, full board, half board or own choice from menu card in Koliba restaurant.

Accommodation

Capacity of our guest-house is 27 beds in double-, twin- and triple-bed rooms (with the possibility of an extra bed in each room). Every room has its own TV and a private bathroom.

Relax

After a long day you can relax and unwind in the homely and comfortable surroundings of the guest house. In summer you can enjoy the outdoor pool or just sit out and relax at the balcony patio. The small garden has an arbour with fireplace ideal for barbecues and you can enjoy a glass of good wine in our wine cellar with a capacity of 20 seats.

Source of information:



Hut "Koliba Papradno"

is located directly on a farm in the village of Papradno surrounded by a beautiful landscape of mountains and grasslands. Koliba is ideal for family functions, wedding parties or business meetings. Agropenzion Grunt is located just 1,5 km away from Koliba.

Restaurant

Restaurant Hut "Koliba Papradno" with the capacity of 50 seats offers a delicious Slovak cuisine and seasonal sheep cheese and lamb meat meals. Nearby terrace with the capacity of 60 seats is heated in winter and rainy autumn days

Accommodation

Capacity of Hut "Koliba Papradno" is 20 beds in two double rooms with double bed and four double rooms with the possibility of two extra bed in each room. Every room has its own TV and a private bathroom.

Accommodation available all year round. Our guests can order breakfast, full board, half board or own choice from menu card.

Relax

There is an outdoor horse-riding arena just in front of the restaurant where you can take a horse riding lesson with a qualified instructor. In summer you can sit out on the terrace with the capacity of 20 seats and open fireplace while your children can play on a spacious outdoor playground. Directly from the Koliba you can go hiking on marked hiking trails.



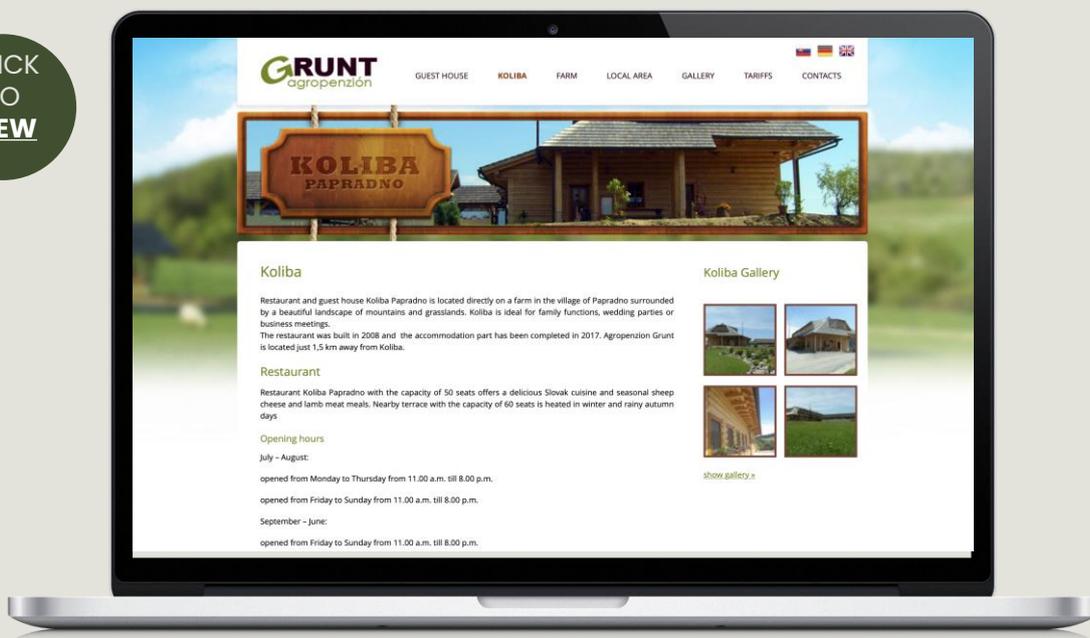
Events

April – Easter season, opening of the shepherd's season, live folk music, sale of home-made products from seep milk and delicious lamb dishes from local farm

May - Shepherd path – opening ceremony in cooperation with the civic association "Bačova cesta"

October – A Hunter's Feast – game meat dishes, live folk music

December- St. Nicholas Feast – traditional pig butchery party with regional pork specialities accompanied with live folk music





The Farm

The Challenge

Kysuce is one of the purest region of Slovakia with lack of job opportunities, but huge potential to promote rural tourism and the sale of local products. The are enjoys good conditions and historical tradition to breed the sheeps and produce sheep's milk products.

Starting Out

Th Farm is situated in the village of Papradno in a beautiful countryside landscape. It specializes in breeding of sheep, cattle and horses. The farm is ideal place for discovering the rural farming and its products.

You will get familiar with the traditional procedures of processing raw sheep's milk and taste home-made products (sheep cheese,

žinčica) or try some of the delicious lamb specialities in the restaurant Koliba Papradno.

The Guest House was built in 2001 by reconstruction of old sewing workshop. The primary idea was to promote rural tourism and the sale of local products from sheep's milk that we produce at our farm. A

few years later the owners built up an outdoor horse-riding arena. The Hut Papradno was built in 2008 and the accommodation part has been completed in 2017.



The Farm Roziak

The Farm Roziak is based in the former village of Môtová, which currently lies in a suburb of the Zvolen town.

Janka feels like a villager woman and residents support her business. The proximity of the town brings availability of necessary services and possible sale of farm products directly in the town. Working with milk or wool and other many services she provides at the farm always fill her all day. She does not miss a city life.

From the point of view of visitors from the town, the location of the farm is advantageous because it is easily accessible for them. In addition, it is in a suburb which has clean and quiet environment. The natural environment provides a peaceful atmosphere unlike the busy city, where citizens spend most of the day. For citizens, it is an oasis of calm and perhaps an inspiration for changes in the perception of the life values and the assessment of its quality. Children living in the town who visit the farm will get to know how production of dairy products or the processing of meat products actually works. They can compare different taste of domestic food and food from supermarkets. This is essential for shaping a behaviour of a future customer, who should consider more products quality than quantity.

Rooted in Tradition

The Roziak Farm is rooted in traditions. Janka decided to stay in the house of her ancestors and beautify their work - the farm itself and shepherding as well. Janka grew up and spent her childhood on the farm. Her husband Jaroslav inherited the same relationship to shepherding. Janka had worked in the Zvolen town for ten years, but after the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the social desire for freedom influenced her personal life. She did

not return to office work after the maternity leave and started a business with her husband.

The business first started with two cows and later the spouses began to devote themselves intensively to shepherding. They managed to get 17 ha of pastures in Kráľová for a long-term lease. Locals regularly used to buy delicious dairy products from them. Later, after a big agricultural corporation left the village of Michalková, Jaroslav regained the land of his ancestors and has begun to breed sheep there. The incorrectly set-up state policy with farm products trading has caused a significant reduction in the number of sheep.

On the other hand, this situation brought the diversification of activities on the farm. Janka has started to deal with wool processing and production of various wool products. Her hobby grew into a business and the ability to teach the craft to other people. Wool processing courses are held on the farm and public interest is growing.

Their children gradually have become involved in the family business. In the farmyard, their daughter set up a small soap factory, where she makes natural soaps with goat's milk.

Janka is also engaged in the processing of dairy products, and in addition occasionally prepares homemade specialties for celebrations, operates accommodation for tourists or picking up shipments. Entrepreneurial activity built on solid roots, traditions, family, and social ties has gradually branched out and many other activities are taken over by children. Therefore, we can characterize Janka as an entrepreneur, a smallholder farmer who is a successful successor on a family farm and who gradually diversifies activities.

Background Challenges:

With a bureaucracy significantly dampening talents in business. Probably every small and medium-sized entrepreneur in Slovakia faces this challenge.

The challenge for the future is to expand the activities in the wool business (for example, the production of clothing called in Slovak "lajblík" which is a specific underwear for women).

Celebrations - wedding ceremonies in a barn. In the past, weddings were usually organized in the barn and Janka would like to continue this tradition. She remembers a wedding of her family in the barn, which had lasted for 3 days. It is important to enable invited guests to feel good and have a pleasant experience of an event.



Janka could not imagine to live elsewhere. She always wished to stay in her parents' house and live out from what the house provided. She illustrates this with a Bible story. It is about a widow who had a debt, and if she was not able to pay off debt, and therefore she could fall into slavery. She received some advice from Elizey:

Woman, see what you have in the house!

This is Janka's attitude to her business. Everyone should rely mainly on his/her background, start working with what he/she has at his/her disposal and derive the goal of the business from this point.

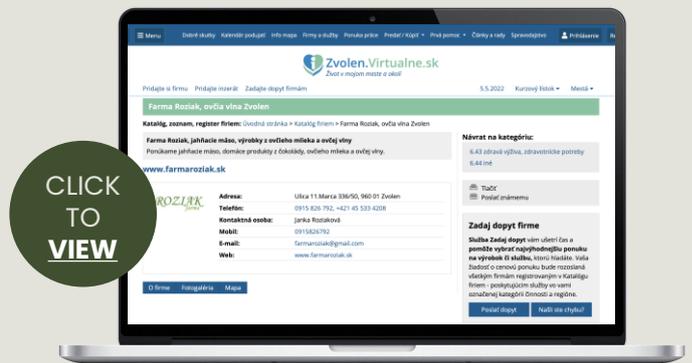
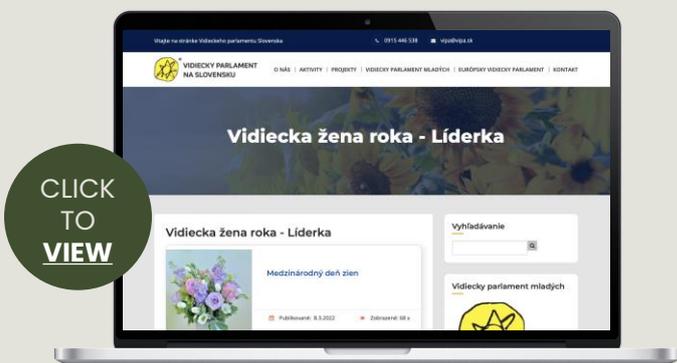


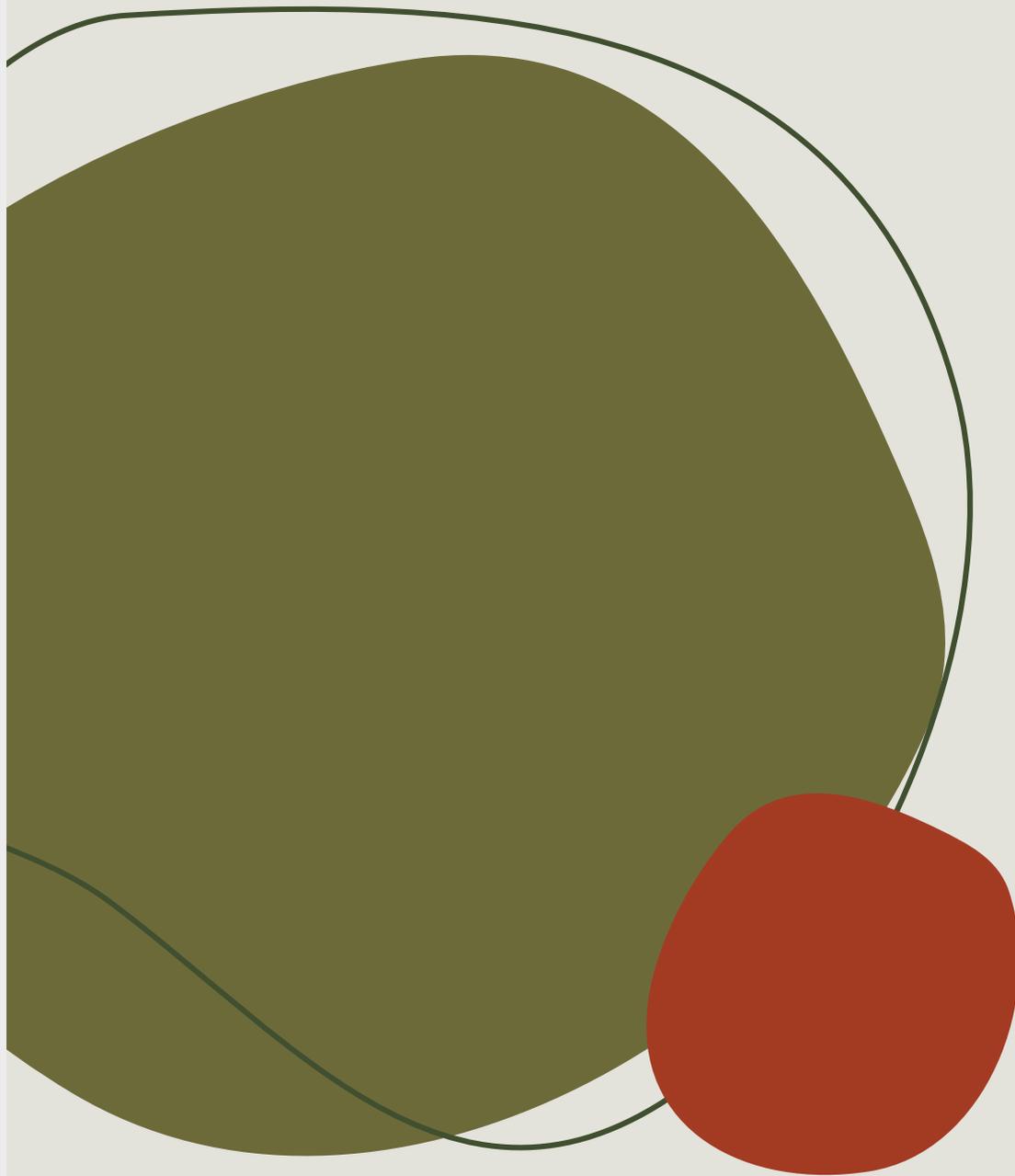
Collaboration with others

Janka has cooperated with OZ Vidiecky Parlament na Slovensku (OZ VIPA SK) for many years. She regularly participates in events, which OZ VIPA SK organizes and brings her experience and knowledge to a wide range of the public. On the other hand, OZ VIPA SK promotes the events of the Roziak Farm. One of the many examples is the course of wool processing.

The successful business model is also evidenced by the fact that Janka received the Leader of the Year award, which is awarded annually by OZ VIPA SK

The town of Zvolen also shares basic information about the Farm Roziak on the municipal's website:





www.small-holders.eu

Follow our journey

