The Farm of Gregor Gomol

1. Introducción

La granja está ubicada en la parte suroeste de Eslovenia, en la región Karst de Kočevje, caracterizada por una gran proporción de bosques ricos en vida silvestre, incluida una gran población de osos pardos, clima continental y escasez frecuente de agua en los meses de verano. En el pasado, el área estaba habitada por miembros de la minoría alemana, que emigraron durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. En los años setenta y ochenta, se intentó revitalizar esta área, y en este tiempo también se estableció la granja. El área aún se encuentra entre las más débiles económicamente, con la emigración de personas y el abandono de la agricultura.

2. PERFIL DE PROMOTOR



Nombre
Gregor

Apellido
Gomol

Año de nacimiento
1959

Género
masculino

Educación

University education, agricultural engineering.

3. DESCRIPCIÓN DE LA GRANJA













Address
Staro Brezje 1, 1330

País
Eslovenia

Área agrícola en hectáreas
176.00

Fecha de establecimiento de la granja
1990

Fecha desde que el promotor posee / arrienda la granja
Vie, 01/06/1990 - 12:00

NUMBER OF WORKERS	**FAMILY MEMBERS**	**EXTERNAL WORKERS**
Full time	1	2
Part time	1	0

Descripción granja

The farm is located at an altitude of 800 m above sea level on the Karst plateau where in the past there was a settlement that is now abandoned. The farm was established in the end of the eighties, and all facilities and housing for residents were rebuilt. A farmer and his spouse live on the farm, while two daughters attend secondary school and do not live on the farm during their schooling. Kočevje, the closest urban settlement, is 13 km away. All milk is delivered to small dairy, where it is processed into organic dairy products, especially kefir. Milk provides a steady source of income, and the dairy is well positioned on the market. On the farm, they are engaged in complementary activity of making wood chips and with mechanical services provided to others farmers. The main problems for the farm is dense deer population, which reduces the productivity of grasslands, the lack of water during the summer period and the difficulties in securing the hired labour force.

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4. Agricultura multifuncional y sostenible y Paisajes agrícolas europeos (PAE)

Multifunctional & sustainable farming Key Words
Cooperation
Quality/Organic/Certified production
Traditional land use

Texto libre

Characteristic of the karst region in this part of Slovenia is extensive forests mainly consisting of beech and fir. Characteristic are shallow, uneven, modest soils with calcareous base, permeable to water and therefore unsuitable for intensive agricultural use. The area has already been sparsely populated in the past, due to historical circumstances, and is even more depopulated than other similar areas in Slovenia. Due to the continuous increase in the share of forests, abandonment of farming, emigration of inhabitants, each farm and every piece of agricultural land is important in terms of preserving the cultural landscape. In the frame of the revitalisation program of the region, some of the young farmers managed to re-establish farms in the seventies and eighties. Not all of them succeed to survive but the farm in question did. The farm is in Natura 2000 area and deals with organic milk production. The only support the farmer got in the beginning was the land which he hired from local agricultural company. For purchasing cattle, machinery and resident buildings, he had to invest family savings. He also got some support in the form of animal fodder. For the developing of the farm it was also important that dairy was ready to collect milk on the farm. He also had support in the form of services and labour force from other farmers who came in this area the same way as Grega. He also joined local farm cooperative. The first decade on the farm was the hardest for him. While he was alone, he came in new cultural environment where he had to make new acquaintances and friends. In addition, there were turbulent

political times. The situation on the farm improved after he got his own family, built a new house, switched to ecological milk production, established wood chips production and after political situation has improved with Slovenia entering EU. Agricultural policy was changing a lot during this period, compared to the period when Grega began with farming. Now the survival of the farm depends a lot on RDP support. This is welcome, but getting funding out of them is time consuming, complicated and far not enough for farm to survive.

Consejos / Recomendación

- Farming is a constant fight for survival and it means to work constantly in uncertainty. There are no quiet periods. The only advantage is independence.

- Every farm and its history is unique. It is important to know experiences of others and to listen to their advice, but in the end, every farmer must decide on his own.

5. Consideraciones, formación / conocimientos y consultas / preguntas.

Consideraciones Generales

The farmer has an university education in the agricultural program, but does not originate from the rural environment. After completing his studies, he wanted to establish his farm. He got an opportunity in the emptied area of Kočevska. The main purpose of attracting people who would be ready to settle and farm in these places was repopulation of the area and preserving some agriculture. The new inhabitants did not enter any educational program and did not get any additional support except land for rent. Many people gave up and moved out. Grega succeed because of the support of his family (especially of his spouse who comes from agricultural background, was also working on big dairy farm and is educated in agriculture). Also Grega personal characteristics plays important role in this story. He is stubborn, decisive, communicative and has built a firm social network.

The environment and conditions are not in favour of intensive farming. For survival, other sources of income must be found in addition to agriculture. Under such conditions it is somehow logical that Grega has chosen ecological production and additional multifunctional activity - wooden chips produced for a factory nearby. Because of the environment, conflicts between farmers, foresters and hunters are common. Farmers feel that other interests have priority. However, if some kind of support is provided by the agricultural policy, this is not decisive for the survival of agriculture in the area. Also, compulsory education on RDP measures are not very popular among farmers. Education in farming in these areas would be necessary for people who prepare and decide on agricultural policies. According to Grega, most knowledge has been gained from their own experiences and through the exchange of experiences in the local environment. The future of the farm depends on decisions of daughters, that is if any of them would be ready to stay and run the farm after finishing school. Grega is also thinking about abandoning or adapting milk production after retiring. That would make the work easier. There is also an opportunity to switch to meat production or to reduce milk production in summer months and to make their own cheese.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Gerente formado. • Granja ecológica. • Actividad adicional. • Sin deudas.	• Infraestructura. • Potencial de inversión.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Actividades multifuncionales adicionales. • Inversiones.	• Escasez de agua. • Malas condiciones. • Falta de fuerza de trabajo. • Precios de la leche.

Palabras clave

EAL Keywords
Pasture
Protected area

Farming Key words
~~Dairy farm~~
~~Forestry~~
~~Grassland/Pasture~~
~~Processing~~

Main Training/Skills/Competences

For farming in this area in particular, characteristic features such as perseverance, desire for independence and decisiveness are necessary. The compulsory forms of education are not appreciated. Higher agricultural education is very useful but not sufficient. There is need for sharing experiences, mutual cooperation and spontaneous learning.

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Consultas / preguntas

- How to spread knowledge and skills without forcing them on farmers?
- Are the farmers the only group that needs knowledge and skills about agricultural landscape?

Reconocimiento y renuncia.

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