



## STRUHAŘE CHATEAU FARM

*Organic dried fruit from a small chateau farm, grown on trees commemorating World War II.*

### **Identification data:**

Name: Eva Čechurová

Location: Vítkovice u Lubence, Czechia

Farm size: 12 ha of own land

Year established: 2016

Main activities: dried fruits, goats, sheep

Web / Facebook / Twitter: [www.farmastruhare.webnode.cz](http://www.farmastruhare.webnode.cz)

Struhaře Farm was established out of love for the place. In 2009, the Čechura family bought an old, dilapidated chateau, which also included an old orchard. Over time, the family tried to buy neighbouring land and cultivate their surroundings. It was always unused land for many years - whether other orchards or overgrown not maintained land. From the point of view of large farmers, this was a completely unusable.

In 2016, Ms. Čechurová discovered that she spent a large part of her time caring for the place where she lived, and therefore the love of land became the basis for the registration of an agricultural entrepreneur - right from the beginning in the organic farming regime.

The family farm currently farms on about 12 hectares of land, of which about two thirds are pastures and meadows. About 4 hectares are then old orchards. Altogether, there are about 300 fruit trees (apple, pear and plum), many of which were planted before World War II. We have over 40 sheep (27 adult females) and 10 goats. The initial impulse for acquiring animals was the grazing and cultivation of our land. Now the animals are bred to meat sale.

In crop production, the main commodity is fruit and hay. Produced has is mainly used for own needs. The harvest of fruit is very laborious, as trees are big and tall. Thus, the sale of fruit hardly paid off. This led the family to the idea of further processing it into a product with high added value - dried fruit "Struhařské křížaly".

Each package of dried fruits we prepare combines all fruit types we produce and grown in our farm (mirabelle, apples, pears, and plums). We started producing dried fruit in the autumn of 2020. It is a product of organic farming with BIO certification, and right after two months of existence, we also managed to obtain a regional product brand for the product - POOHŘÍ regional product®.

As the product was developed at the time of the coronavirus, the farm focused mainly on direct sales. It thus avoided the risk that stores (cafes, shops) would suddenly close and, secondly, sales margins increased. Informally, the family closely cooperates with several farms in the area, which have better organized sales from the yard (farm sales) and which sell dried fruits as part of own product portfolio. This year, the farm plans to expand fruit processing to include the production of fruit juice.

As part of animal production, the farm offers for sale lambs and small goats for slaughter. In the Czech Republic, the consumption of lamb and goat meat is low and finding outlet is not always easy. At the same time selling in the countryside is more difficult than in the cities. An obstacle is the legislation, which does not allow the legal sale of meat from domestic slaughter. And the family does not want to sell animals to the slaughterhouse. So, the solution is to sell live animals, which the new owner cuts himself at home within 24 hours.

The family invested large sums of money in the farm with a very long payback period. Some investments were made from their own resources (e.g., land purchases, creation and fencing of pastures, purchase of

Viability of small farms managed by young farmers under new "farm-to-fork" strategy (2020-1-CZ01-KA203-078495)

equipment). Some investments managed to obtain financial support from the Rural Development Program (RDP). As part of the "Young Farmer" program, we managed to build a space for fruit processing - a cider and a drying room, and a fruit dryer was purchased. The farm is also successful in obtaining funds within the activities of the local action groups - Vladař LAG.

**Photos:**

