

FARMA NA PERKU

Goat farm with its own processing on the way to sustainability and self-sufficiency.

Identification details:

Name: Kateřina Křížová

Location: Perky - Častrov, Czechia

Farm size: 11 ha meadow

Year of foundation: N/A

Main products: goats, goat's milk, cheese, yogurt

Web / Facebook / Twitter: N/A

Several factors led Kateřina to do business in agriculture. Wherever she went, her grandfather's peasant blood always pulled her back to the real work with the land, the work with the animals. This work is an adventure, sometimes a fight with the elements, freedom, a direct connection with nature. For a long time, she bred horses and had a regular job. She received the first goat as a gift when she helped an acquaintance to load a problem horse into a tow. To the female goat, again as a gift, they received a male goat from acquaintances who did not want to send him to the slaughterhouse. Later Kateřina received goat kids and milk, which she tried to transfer into cheese. Neither the cheese nor the milk had the taste and smell of goats, everyone liked it very much. That's why she started expanding the goat herd. They kept the female goats and bought a second male goat and 15 young goats from a neighbouring farm.

With so many goats, setting up a goat farm was a logical decision. Kateřina reduced the number of bred horses, keeping only her own and pony. During her mother's time, she solved all administration connected to farm establishment. As a mother of two children, she can schedule the day and adapt to their needs. She does not have to be stressed that the child will get sick. In this respect, agriculture is very free and flexible.

The farm focuses on the production of goat's milk, from which it makes cheeses, kefir, and yoghurts. They manage 11 ha of meadows, from which they harvest hay for their own use. With a good hay harvest, the farm is fully self-sufficient in bulk fodder. They need 100 round hay bales a year to be fully self-sufficient. Half of the meadows are fields covered by grass, where yield is 50% higher to permanent grassland. One hectare of meadows is not cut, it serves for grazing.

The farm specializes in the breeding of Anglo-Nubian goats for milk and small goats for breeding. Some small male goats are sold for meat and some are kept by family for their own consumption. There are currently 40 goats and 2 breeding male goats on the farm.

The farm is not a member of any agricultural organization. It is a family farm where all members of the family help and are involved. They are in close cooperation with a neighbouring organic farm. The family receives hay for the animals as a exchange for mowing the 3ha meadow. They also supply milk and cheese to the pension connected to the neighbouring organic farm. Cooperation works very well. Goat farm has outlet and pension guests are happy and return to the eco-farm guest house. They like very much fresh goat cheese and yoghurt for breakfast.

The farm has a small dairy. Cheese, kefir, yoghurt, and cottage cheese are made there. Dairy products are transported to a store in Pelhřimov and a neighbouring guest house. The rest will be sold directly from the farm. No products are discarded. Also, whey is used and transformed into ricotta, or returned to the goats.

The three largest investments are - a tractor with a loader, a hall for storing hay and a small dairy with an outdoor milking parlor. The investment into dairy, milking parlor and a storage hall was supported from the Rural Development Program.

A farmer whose nature is his partner should value this partnership. He should not only take, but also give back. The farm is not yet in organic mode, but that does not mean that the family is indifferent to nature. Family members plant trees, they do not use any chemical fertilizers, they only use ecological sanitation in the dairy. They deliver milk, yoghurts and kefir in returnable glass bottles. Cheese, cottage cheese and spreads are packed in eco-plastic boxes.

In the future, Kateřina plans to switch to a fully ecological regime. She mainly wants to increase the welfare of our animals. She plans to build a new bigger stable for goats, want to buy an electric and quiet feed truck. Also, she plans to increase the amount of land, plant trees. They want to expand the pasture and want to fully self-sufficient in the hay production. In 20 years, she sees the farm as a fully self-sufficient independent unit (including self-sufficient in energy), in a fully ecological regime, which will not be burdensome for our nature and the country's climate.

So far, Kateřina does not regret her decision to be full-time farmer.

Photos:

