



## BIOSTATEK VALEČ

*Community-led organic farmyard, which leave from the system of agricultural subsidies.*

### Identification details

Name: Vojtěch Veselý

Location: Valeč, Česko

Area size: 12 ha of leased land

Year of foundation: 2007

Main activities: meat, vegetables, fruits, cheeses, milk, butter

Web / Facebook / Twitter: <http://www.biostatek.cz/>

Agroecological farmer Vojtěch Veselý started cultivating about 12 ha of abandoned pastures and orchards in the village Valeč in the Karlovy Vary Region in 2007. At that time, Vojtěch was 28 years old and strived to lead a clear, easy, fair, and therefore environmentally sustainable life. Prior to that, he successfully graduated from Evangelical Theology at Charles University.

Vojtěch uses the name Biostatek (organic farmyard). The name reflects not just the production, but also processing and distribution of food and drink, both fresh and durable of plant and animal origin. The synonyms of Biostatek could be eco-farm, social farm, or community supported (KPZ) farm, agroforestry farm, authentic or permaculture farm, and more recently, regenerative farm.

Half of the Biostatek land was operating under the subsidy regime, but Vojtěch decided to leave the regime by the end of 2021. From 2022, Vojtěch will not apply for agricultural subsidies and will manage his farm outside the subsidy framework. He perceives that the system of area subsidies is not fair, and he no longer wants to participate.

Vojtěch does not own any land, all the land is leased from the state, the Land Foundation or he has permission to use some land owned by local neighbours.

Cheese, plum jam, lamb, honey, wax, or tallow are supplied exclusively to shareholders associated in closed group called "Obživa". It is a group of community-supported agriculture initiative with its own shop located in Prague. Vojtěch prefers system of mutual trusts between producer and consumer, thus he promotes the system where food safety is ensured by the shareholders according to the agreed methods (Participatory Guarantee Systems).

Original one-year vegetable garden is turned into a permanent. They grow herbs helping to heal borreliosis, migraines, herbs supporting immunity and others. The garden is the aesthetic highlight of the farm, amazing in winter and summer, it is ornamental, healthy, therapeutic. It also contains a labyrinth. The garden is full of butterflies, bees, flowers, colours, and scents. Vojtěch likes farm to be self-sufficient, therefore in garden they also collect the seeds. This required combination of approaches to harvest both seeds and vegetables.

The basic herd consists of 30 hand-milked ewes, which graze on pastures, in orchards, and forests.

Their activities start with a seed (in the ground) or with the birth of a lamb, and activities ends with butter in a glass, a vacuumed slice of lamb leg or a glass of green tomato chutney. Basically, processing agricultural produce is related to the season.

In summer they often use the summer kitchen, pizza oven, smokehouse, equipped Mongolian yurt as well as several cosy and popular small, tiny-houses around the water stream.

Vojtěch lives in an environmentally sustainable way. This is one of the main reasons why shareholders support him. As a result, they also accept that in their practice, the farm follows the most necessary legislative minimum. They try to avoid the supervision of state administrative bodies and their accredited partners. Vojtěch also decided to leave the world of agricultural subsidies. He wants to be prepared for a period when neither the EU nor national budget will support the agricultural sector.

The farm participates in the programs of Environmental Education and Awareness (Ministry of the Environment), recruits interns from the "WWOOF" - World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms, volunteers within the EU Solidarity Corps. The farm serves as a social farm, it employs local disadvantaged people. Vojtěch founded ecological camp place "EkoCamp Doupov", cooperates with the music and cultural festival Povaleč.

After ten years of membership in the young farmer association, he became a member of the small and family farmer association. Being member of an association, he was assisted during preparation of the application for Young Farmer measure under the Rural Development Programme.

Fifteen years ago, there was only a green meadow in the place of Biostatek. Today, the area is full of small buildings which were constructed by Vojtěch and his guests, volunteers, interns. Today he owns a Lamborghini 55 DT tractor. In the past, Vojtěch received about 40 thousand EUR within the RDP support for young agriculture and about 20 thousand EUR from the "Vladař" Local Action Group. The latter support was used for the construction of a processing facility.

Vojtěch meets other farmers from the area, but in principle they help each other only in emergencies or other tense situations. Vojtěch manage the day-to-day management of the farm themselves. He often criticizes the practice of conventional industrial and business-oriented farmers.

In twenty years, he wants to do the same as today. Perhaps Biostatek will no longer be an inspiration for some, as more similar farm will operate in the Czech Republic and around Europe.

#### **Photos:**





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

