



ZÖLD TANYA

Tibor Bálint - Building customer community, promoting organic production and creating network for online shopping of organic production

Identification details:

Name: Zöld Tanya

Location: Csongrád-Csanád county, Domaszék

Farm size: 10 ha

Year of foundation: 2010 (fully organic farming from 2017)

Main activities: organic farming (crop production and animal husbandry, processed organic food), building a customer community

Web / Facebook / Twitter: <https://www.zoldtanya.hu>

The foundations of the farm were laid down in 2010 by an organic farmer: Tibor Bálint. As of 2017, the farm already had all the certifications needed for intensive organic farming. Main activities are organic crop production (about 100 types of crops, *e.g.* several types of lettuce, cabbage, etc.) and organic animal husbandry (mangalica pigs and sheep). Community building was a basic idea from the very beginning. Not only to build a customer community, but also to operate a network where education, information exchange and the creation of common cultural values take place. In the first years there was a greater but not so relevant interest in the aforementioned activities, but over the years the activity of the members (customers) became less and less. Educational activities include *e.g.* guiding and introducing primary school students to organic farming and harvesting, but parents were not left out either: cooking together, gatherings, sharing horticultural knowledge and pieces of information on health conscious nutrition. The latter ideas can also be considered to be innovative and constructive.

Currently, the community is unfolding mainly around online shopping. The uniqueness of the website, the features of the webshop and the services themselves make it outstanding from other so-called „basket communities” of a similar nature. Examples include weekly deliveries (52 weeks/year), individually configurable baskets, different annual prepayment options, and the delivery of organic ready meals (*e.g.* organic pumpkin pottage). The leader of the community (Mr. Bálint) also cooperates with other organic farmers for full-year deliveries: farmers of the Budapest organic market and he imports organic bananas and citrus fruits from Austria in winter.

Operating a webshop has several benefits: cost savings, better planning possibilities for the whole financial year, time savings.

The community in numbers: approx. 500 newsletter subscribers, approx. 300 active customers

and approx. 100 customers with a regular weekly purchase or an annual prepayment. The latter helps to manage the cyclicity of revenues from agricultural activities. Anyone can join the community if they live within the delivery zone: Budapest and its agglomeration, Szeged and Domaszék. The possibility of nationwide delivery with the involvement of courier companies is also planned.

The challenges of getting users/customers are very strong and difficult. Advertising on Facebook in order to expand the customer base also induces and generates extra financial and professional challenges. *E.g.*, creating marketing contents, managing business activities, etc. The operation, the management and maintenance of the webshop take approx. 2 hours out of 10 hours of daily work.

Benefits to the farmers/members are planned revenues, more accurate feedback on customer needs through the webshop and electronic contact possibilities.

Developments are made and financed from own resources, and most of the profit comes from satisfying online orders. 1 person is responsible for management, who is Tibor Bálint. There are 2-3 employees on the farm who also help in harvesting and, for example, in packaging in connection with home deliveries. It is an open customer community. Limitation is the current scope of delivery, but they are working to expand it. Approx. 30-50 new registrants/buyers join the community on a yearly basis.

The main motivation in starting the activity was first to satisfy his family's own needs with organic products and encouraged by the success, he started building the community and serving the members. The main motivation was a healthier life, nutrition and the promotion of this to others.

The possibility to buy organic ready meals, possibility to deliver for 52 weeks a year, the prepaid system is very flexible, the possibility to compile the contents of the boxes/baskets is also flexible, individual quantities can also be ordered, home delivery are unique features distinguishing the farm from other farms. Another unique feature is that conservation and processing are carried out on the farm in-house.

Among main investments the purchase of machinery/equipment, automatic irrigation system, building of a cold store, the purchase of a lawn mower can be mentioned.

In the short term the farm is planning a joint acquisition of equipment with other local farmers, which is an acquisition of a machine for pressing and grinding seeds. Further plans are the aesthetic arrangement of the area, increasing production efficiency, nationwide expansion. Among their long term goals we find the purchase of modern machines supporting organic farming.

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

Photos:

