

MEIDUKIS FARM

Labour intensive Asparagus farm also with shiitake mushrooms in its portfolio.

Identification data:

Name: Kotryna Meidė

Location: Alukėnų village, Anykščių district, Lithuania

Farm size: 2 ha of own land

Year established: 2018

Main activities: vegetables, shiitake mushrooms

Web / Facebook / Twitter: www.meidukis.lt



Farmer Kotryna started farming from scratch. After graduating from the Academy of Agriculture, he acquired 2 hectares of land. The farm is registered in Anykščiai district, Alukėnai village.

The main goals and motives of farming: the opportunity to live in the countryside and raise children themselves, without giving them all day to kindergarten or grandparents. Lots of space for self-expression in creating and developing a business, independence from the employer, less dependence on the city. Opportunity to contribute to educating people about still quite exotic products in Lithuania.

The farm is non-traditional mainly due to the crops grown and their seasonality. When annual vegetable growers are still thinking about sowing, the farm does the most productive job of the year. They can harvest up to 500 kg of asparagus a day.

Kotryna strives to apply environmentally friendly processes. Weed control - only weeding, mowing. Disease control - after the season, collecting and burning all asparagus stems and their residues. Harvesting - only cut each plant by hand with a knife.

Farm income is diversified by small mushroom production. Shiitake mushrooms are grown naturally outdoors.

Agricultural land consists of 1.75 ha of arable land, 0.02 ha mushrooms. The rest is a garden for personal use. They also own a warehouse for storing equipment and machinery, a mini tractor, a 10m³ refrigerator, a conveyor for asparagus cleaning have been built on the farm.

The farm belongs to the Lithuanian Vegetable Growers Association. However, there is some hostility among young farmers in this association. The prevailing attitude in the long-standing association is that young farmers join associations only for economic gain. While such cases do occur, they would like more support from the association when there is a sincere desire to work in this area. The Lithuanian Vegetable Growers' Association (<https://www.ldaa.lt>) can provide comprehensive assistance in finding sales channels, contacts, cooperating with larger retail chains, and improving their knowledge and skills. Participation in the association's activities is an opportunity to get involved in the preparation of legal acts; applying for support measures is an opportunity to receive several additional points. A problematic aspect of the activities of this association is that it unites more large traditional vegetable growers. However, in recent years, the situation is changing for the better; as more and more young farmers join the association, they are active and try to represent their interests, support like-minded people.

Most of the products from the farm are sold at the market in Panevėžys, farm e-shop, in the stores in Anykščiai, Utena and Vilnius

To date, the farm had little or no economic development. Kotryna is pleased with how much benefit the current area brings and how many challenges. The biggest challenge is the staff shortage. Suppose Kotryna decides to expand and still operate in the 'manual' farm regime. In that case, serious consideration should be given to getting workers from or attracting them from other regions.

It is planned to extend the production of vegetables with different harvesting seasons to handle it themselves or with few employees. It would be optimal to grow 2-4 crops on arable land available so that the costs of finding and selling workers are in balance. But today, Kotryna thinks about more sophisticated asparagus processing leading to high value-added products.

Photos:

