

## AUDRIUS MESECKAS FARM

*A farm with berries, fallow deer and unconventional farming*

### **Identification data:**

Name: Audrius Meseckas

Location: Vilkaviškis district, Lithuania

Farm size: N/A

Year established: 2018

They breed: blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, honeysuckle berries, fallow deer

Web / Facebook / Twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/stirniskiu.uogos/>

The farm is located in Stirniškės village, Vilkaviskis district. Audrius Meseckas returned to Lithuania in 2018 after a foreign, money-saving experience. Even before he moved abroad, he knew that farming was his future. Audrius Meseckas benefited from the European Union support for setting up small farms. He received 15,000 EUR. He mainly bought seedlings, a small tractor and 11 fallow deer.

He was well aware that without much land of his own, he would not be able to compete with those who had been farming for years. So he started thinking about non-traditional farming. Starting with just 40 acres of bilberry trees and 11 fallow deer, Audrius Meseckas has planted more than 1,500 bilberry tree seedlings and about 30 fallow deer grazing in a paddock. He also grows strawberries on 1,5 ha of land. Meseckas has both early, medium and late strawberries. There is a little of everything.

Audrius Meseckas actively contributed to the founding of the Lithuanian Berry Growers Association. Since the establishment of the farm, Meseckas has been a member of the Lithuanian Berry Growers Association (LUAA). Together with other LUAA members, he improves his skills by attending seminars on relevant topics.

Cooperates with other berry growers in Stirniškės. It is easier for the farm to look to the future because Audrius Meseckas is not working alone but with other Stirniškis berry growers. So he is not lost in the market - the berry growers of the region are united in an informal cooperative for the time being, and their products are branded under the brand name "Stirniškių uogos". The creation of the "Stirniškių uogos" brand started with planting a plantation of bilberries in 2018 and is now operating as an informal cooperative of a few berry farms. The idea was to grow quality Lithuanian berries and offer them to customers who love healthy berries.

"Stirniškių uogos" has started freeze-drying berries from 2020 and plans to offer a broader range of freeze-dried products. Freeze-drying is the best way to preserve vitamins and beneficial substances, so it is also one of the best ways to process berries.

The young farmer is relatively modest about his farm's achievements. "We are still a long way from the others; we have only been farming for a few years, so we need to get up to speed. We have bought machinery and equipment for the maintenance of the berry patch and the marketing of the harvest, which reduces labour costs and is included in the cost of the berries. ... We still need frost protection, which is a big investment. I think the farm will become viable when the infrastructure is fully in place," says the Vilkaviškis district berry grower.

**Photos:**



**Berry grower Audrius Meseckas with his daughter**

(Source: <https://www.valstietis.lt/naujienos/braske-dazno-ukio-darzo-karaliene/118975>)



**Audrius Meseckas**

(Source: <https://www.delfi.lt/agro/kaimo-portretas/uzsienyje-buvo-vadovu-bet-nusprende-grizti-ir-pinigus-investuoti-i-netradicini-uki.d?id=80641933>)