



AMŠIEJAI FARM

A farm where different colours and flavours reign

Identification data:

Name: Amšiejai Farm

Location: Varnagirių village, Alytus district, Lithuania

Farm size: 6 ha, own land

Year established: 2014

They breed: vegetables

Web / Facebook / Twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057192261756>

Farmers Jovilė and Eivydas Amšiejai started farming in 2014 and moved to the village from the suburbs more than 5 years ago. Jovilė was no stranger to farm work, as she used to help her mother weed, water and pick cucumbers and tomatoes. Eivydas has always been a city boy. In the countryside, they planned not only to spend their leisure time actively (fishing, sunbathing, playing basketball, spending evenings by the fire), but also to devote most of their time to agricultural work – sowing, planting, weeding, watering, picking, mowing and sowing again. So now they farm a small farm (6 ha) and make a living from it.

In the first year, they started growing garlic (1 ha). Later, they built a greenhouse and sowed a small part of it with non-traditional leafy vegetables such as pak choi Chinese brassica, mizuna Japanese cabbage, Japanese mustard, komatsuna dark cabbage, other greens popular in Japan, and menturina, among others. Later on, the area of the greenhouses was extended. The product range was expanded to include different varieties of kale, differing in shape, colour and taste, as well as Chinese broccoli, chicory, Japanese mustard, turnips, pumpkins, carrots, courgettes, chard, various varieties of lettuce, etc. Farmers have also started to grow a rare vegetable, the tuber fennel, which resembles aniseed. Young farmers successfully sell their own produce at the market. Farmers take part in various fairs and festivals to promote their products. In this way, they widen their consumer base and hope to attract more buyers for their tasty harvest.

Vegetable gardeners Jovilė and Eivydas Amšiejai not only grow a variety of vegetables, but now also process them – they ferment them. They get their experience from Jovilė's parents, farmers Dalia and Edvardas Abukauskai from Kaunas region, who have a famous farm “Raugiam viską” (We Ferment Everything), but the young family also develops their own original fermentation recipes – with various spices and herbs. The product range includes more than 20 types of vegetables and fruit. These include the usual head cabbages, red and Brussels sprouts, broccoli and cauliflower, cucumbers, red and yellow beetroots, carrots, turnips and kohlrabi, both regular and with yellow roots, tomatoes, various types of peppers, pumpkins, courgettes, onions, garlic and its stems, sweet corn cobs, green beans, winter varieties of apples, pears, plums.

Vegetable gardeners do all the work on their own, without hired workers. Amšiejus has benefited from RDP support for setting up young farmers. He used the support to buy a tractor with farming implements. This was a strong basis for a start. The young farmer is also investing in modernising the farm.

Main distinguishes from the other farmers are: they nurture a farm for exotic and other vegetables. They grow pumpkins, peppers, aubergines, carrots, fennel, grape tomatoes and green beans, which are still rare in Lithuania. Aubergines are not only purple – they are also white and striped. Carrots are both pale yellow, almost white, and purple. Grape tomatoes come in several colours. Peppers are wavy. Kokaido pumpkins are eaten with the skin on. They are simply baked or boiled without the rind.

The farm's strategy is to grow exceptional produce and offer innovation to its customers. The possibility of introducing goose farming and processing non-conditional and surplus production is not excluded.

Photos:



Iceberg lettuce in different colours

(Source: <https://ukininkopatarejas.lt/darzuose-karaliauja-zalumynai/>)



Fermented vegetables

(Source: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Amšiejų-ūkis/>)