

## CZECH FARM

*Online influencer running a pig farm with intensive non-farming activities*

### Identification details

Name: Łukasz Czech

Location: Królewski Dwór, Lubelskie Voivodeship, Poland

Farm size: 250 ha (140 owned)

Year of foundation: 2015

Main activities: pigs, rape, cereals, legumes, mixtures, advisory, online services

Web / Facebook / Twitter: N/A

Farm is managed by 27-year-old man, who completed the MSc programme in Agriculture. He started the agricultural activity in 2015 when he took over the part of the farm from his parents. The initial utilized agricultural area (UAA) of the farm was 50 ha UAA. Currently the farm is five times bigger and counts 250 ha, including 140 ha UAA owned by the farm manager. The rest of the agricultural land (110 ha) is leased. The farm specializes in pig production and runs plant production. With 160 sows the farmer breeds pigs in a closed herd turnover. Rape (50 ha), cereals (180 ha), legumes and mixtures (20 ha) are grown to provide own animal fodder and for the market purposes. Along with the increasing the scale of production a series of investment was made. It was necessary to build a new fattening house, while two combine harvesters, two tractors, a sprayer, a spreader, an agricultural trailer and GPS equipment were purchased. Those investments were co-financed by the EU under the "Modernisation of agricultural holdings" measure of the Rural Development Programme. The farmer declares that without the financial support from the EU the investments would not be possible for him.

The farmer is not a member of any agricultural producers' group or organisation, however, he declares cooperation with farms belonging to the other family members. They share equipments and organise joint purchases in order to lower the prices. Moreover, the farmer is involved in the Operational Groups for Innovation in the Agri-food Sector. Those Operational Groups are action and result-oriented groups, where all the actors involved need to work together and should have an active role in carrying out the innovative project. The farmer says that the applications for establishing such operational groups are among the most difficult ones from the procedural point of view when compared to the other measures under the Rural Development Programme. However, they are the most attractive in financial terms at the same time. At this time the farmer participates in 15 operational groups, while is going to apply for three other projects in the near future. One of his most interesting activities in that field is SatAgro Operational Group, which provides a wide range of services based on the use of remote sensing. Activity of that Operational Group promotes a precision farming. Thank to satellite monitoring and maps it is possible for farmers to collect and comprehensively analyse the data on soil fertility, the amount of seeds planted or the yield etc. in order to manage the fields in an easy way. One of the users of the SatAgro application assessed that this tool allowed him to reduce the fertilizer doses by 20%, when obtaining higher yield by 15% at the same time.

Moreover, non-agricultural activity is driven on the farm. The farmer provides marketing and IT services, as well as consulting services in the field of applying for subsidies and research and development projects. The farm manager is also involved in social activities and is an active user of social media. His Facebook profile is followed by around 100 thousand people. In order to broaden the knowledge and be a reliable

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

advisor and service provider, the farmer systematically attends relevant webinars, organised mainly by private entities.

He believes that efficient use of machinery and subsidies give the farm an advantage over the competitors and make its position in the supply chain quite strong. Marginalization of the importance of livestock production in favour of development of non-agricultural activities is considered by the farmer in a long run. He is also searching for more profitable crops such as e.g., herbs to improve the income situation of the farm in the future.

**Photo:**

