

## ZARZECKI FARM

*Developing dairy farm managed by a member of Związek Młodzieży Wiejskiej*

### Identification details

Name: Michał Zarzecki

Location: Żebry, Podlaskie Voivodeship, Poland

Farm size: 40 ha (20 own)

Year of foundation: 2017

Main activities: milk, cattle, maize, pastures

Web / Facebook / Twitter: N/A

Farm is managed by 25-year-old man, who completed the primary school, and is taking the part time programme of the high school. He started the agricultural activity in 2017 when he took over the farm from his parents. His motivation to start the agricultural activity were not only an agricultural tradition and enjoyable working on farm but also the possibility of self-employment.

The utilized agricultural area (UAA) of the farm is 40 ha, including 20 ha UAA owned by the farm manager and 20 ha UAA is leased. The farm runs both animal and plant production. Animal stock includes 40 units of milk cattle and 10 units of slaughter cattle. Plant production is carried out mainly in order to provide animal fodder. Maize is grown on the area of 22 ha arable land, while grassland is around 18 ha.

The farmer is not a member of any agricultural producers' group, however, he is a member of the MLEKPOL Dairy Cooperative. That is the largest dairy cooperative in Poland, which associates over 9.5 thousand of milk producers and purchases and processes over 15% of Polish milk of the highest quality. Milk deliveries are under contracts, while relatively high prices and the timely payments for milk ensure stability of the farm income. In order to develop breeding on the farm and improve its conditions it is possible to use the Breeding Development Fund, which was established within the Mlekpól Dairy Cooperative.

Quality of milk delivered is tested at high frequency by the laboratories of the Cooperative's Milk Research and Analytical Center and the milk suppliers are enabled to supervise the milk produced on the farm. In addition, each member of the Cooperative can test somatic cells from individual units in the herd free of charge. It is also possible for the Cooperative members to perform chargeable milk tests for antibiotic residues in milk from treated cows to prevent contamination of milk with residual antibiotics. The Mlekpól Dairy Cooperative established a special unit to supply farmers with the highest quality non-GMO feed, fertilizers and other products needed for milk production. Milk suppliers can make cashless purchases there in the settlement for the sold milk. Fuels can also be purchased by the Cooperative members on a cashless basis. The high quality of the offered products, competitive prices, as well as a convenient form of payment make it easier, cheaper and less burdensome for producers to access all the products needed for the production of the highest quality milk. Each member of the Cooperative can also take advantage of the experience of instructors during farm visits, trainings and individual phone calls.

Apart from the advisory services delivered by the Cooperative, the farmer attends various courses, trainings and field trips. Some of them are organized by the Związek Młodzieży Wiejskiej, which the farmer belongs to. The farm manager is also involved in social activities. He is a member of the volunteer fire brigade, the

10th Lithuanian Uhlands Regiment Sports and Equestrian Association in Grabów, and the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity.

A series of investments was made since the manager has started the agricultural activity. Size of milk cattle was increased and new agricultural machines were purchased. Such a continuous development gives the farm an advantage over the competitors. That is why the farmer is going to maintain investment activity in the future. He would like to increase the farm area, build a new cowshed and buy more machines.

**Photos:** N/A