



## ZSOLT CSERGE

*From ministry official to vegetable farmer.*

### **Identifikačné údaje:**

Name: Zsolt Cserge

Location: Svätý Peter, Slovakia

Farm size: 14 ha

Year established: 2015

Main activities: vegetables

Web / Facebook / Twitter: FB Zsolt Cserge

In the South of Slovakia, 15 km from the confluence of the Danube and Váh rivers, the farm of the Cserge family is located. Zsolt has been interested in agricultural production since childhood; his first experience earned with agricultural work in the field of growing vegetables on arable land, later in fruit growing after the establishment of orchards.

After completing his studies at the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, he was employed in a vegetable production and sales association, where he was involved in coordinating the fulfilment of obligations by the members of the sales organization. Later he worked as an international project coordinator, he worked at the Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic as the Chief State Counselor on the Plant Commodities Department, or he was responsible for maize commodity in an international company. In 2015, he decided to settle with his family in the village where he came from and set up his own agricultural business focusing on speciality crop production. Since 2015, he has been an active member of the Association of Slovak Young Farmers - ASYF and assists young farmers in solving administrative and production issues.

In 2015 he decided to prepare the Young Farmer Investment programme application. The success of his application created an ideal opportunity for Zsolt to contribute to the generational renewal and modernize vegetable cultivation. He cultivates 14 hectares of agricultural land, of which 1,5 hectares are permanent grassland, 2,5 hectares of orchards with an assortment of apples, plums, peaches and apricots. The remaining 10 ha of arable land are cultivated with field vegetables, the majority of which are spice peppers and, to a lesser extent, green peppers, onions and Hokkaido pumpkin.

Cultivation practices require Zsolt's precision and efficiency. Zsolt simplified the planting of seedlings by purchasing a planting machine. The farm is located next to a canal, from which it is possible to draw quality water for irrigation. For this reason, Zsolt has invested in the renewal and modernization of the irrigation system, with which it can accurately dispense the amount of water needed. The aim of Zsolt is to minimize the use of plant protection chemicals, specifically pesticides, by providing an inter-row cultivator with fertilization. Nearby arable land is used for conventional cereal and oilseed cultivation by large agricultural companies, thus, the extension of the cultivation area is limited. For this reason, Zsolt sees the improvement of the vegetable area in the construction of a greenhouse, which he plans to cover an area of 0,4 hectares. Currently, Zsolt sells his products directly to the fresh market, and in the case of spice pepper, he has established cooperation with a large processor located near the farm. The area of processing own vegetable production is exciting and the future challenge of the family farm because it is possible to create added value and achieve further economical and technological growth in this form.

Starting his own business wasn't easy. The application approval process was time-consuming and Zsolt had to cover the investments from its own financial resources. As a young farmer, with the confirmation of the approved non-repayable financial contribution, the financial institutions did not show any interest in lending, which further complicated the start of his farming. Zsolt identifies the goals and the associated tasks; as a young farmer, he only needs strength, health and will.

**Photo:**

