



## MILAN JURKY

*The family decided to farm because they wanted to be together.*

### **Identification details:**

Name: Milan Jurky

Location: Vasil'ov, Slovakia

Farm size: 20 ha

Year established: 2013

Main activities: dairy cows and hens

Web / Facebook / Twitter: FB Milan Jurky, FB Darinka Jurkyova

The farm's history began in 1990 when the young farmer's father took the land from an agricultural cooperative company and started farming it as a self-employed farmer. This agricultural activity was not enough to cover living costs, but he had another primary source of income. His grandfather was also a farmer. Unfortunately, due to collectivization and communism, he could not farm professionally. At that time, only production cooperatives were promoted.

In 2013, after returning from abroad, Milan and his wife Darinka decided to do business in agriculture. They bought cattle, professionalized agricultural machinery, and since then, their farm has been their primary source of income.

The family farm is located in the small village Vasil'ov (district Námestovo, Žilina region) in Slovakia. It is a small village and there are 4 more farms located here, serving as a source of income for their owners.

The family farm manages 20 hectares of farmland. They own these 20 ha and because of the fragmentation, which is huge in Slovakia, this ownership is in 1200 plots, but thanks to replacement lands they manage the mentioned area in about 10 plots. The land consists mainly of permanent grasslands (13 ha), from which they produce animal feed for the winter. 7 ha is arable land, where fodder, clover, grass and alfalfa is grown.

The farm is focused on animal production, which consists mainly of cattle breeding. They breed 20 dairy cows (of the Slovak Spotted breed), which produce milk and they use the milk to make regional cheese products. They also raise chickens for eggs for direct sale from the yard. There are 150 laying hens of the Oravka breed.

Milan is the chairman and member of the Association of Young Farmers in Slovakia - ASYF, of which he has been a member since 2014. This membership for his family means mainly the proximity of young farmers with similar problems. In this association, the community share their experience and daily worries. Members of the association can participate in drafting legislation, preparing tools to improve generational exchange and the position of young farmers in Slovakia. Also, foreign visits to farms and the experience of partners from abroad are a huge advantage.

The farm cooperates with young and beginning farmers at regional level; they try to help each other, together they try to promote each other's products. Milan sees positive cooperation between farmers from the surrounding villages, with which they help each other within seasonal work. The advantage of this

cooperation is mainly the lack of staff. In this time of labour shortage, although they are able to solve this shortfall in the labour market, the downside is that each of these farmers wants to prioritize tasks to be done earlier on their farm, which can be a problem for others. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of trust between farmers in Slovakia.

In addition to agricultural activities, this family farm promotes agriculture and rural life through various events and attractions, e.g. "Children's Day on the Farm".

In order to finance their operation, they joined a project to support young farmers through the Rural Development Programme. As a family farm, they wanted to develop further, for which this project was insufficient, so they had to draw on private savings as well as a number of loans. The long administration of the project was also a disadvantage.

The family farm differs from other farmers in their approach to work in that it seeks to apply new practices and new solutions. The farm is open to digital technologies, using various mobile applications for animal registration, animal breeding control, and a digital dairy. They can directly monitor fluctuations in milk production and make different outputs from it. Towards the future, this farm is also open to new and interesting digital processes.

As for their dreams and other plans, they would like to create a multi-generation farm, i.e. a family farm, which will be taken over by their children and they will continue. Milan hopes that there will be a better position for the farmers and their work in the future. They also contribute to this by presenting their farm through promotional activities.

In 20 years, they see their farm using the most intelligent technologies, e.g. milking robots, autonomous machines, ecological, electric or hydrogen-powered tractors and other modern achievements that will be here in twenty years.

**Photo:**

