



THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

ZD Unčovice is an agricultural cooperative situated in the fertile Upper-Morava lowland. It manages 6,100 ha of agricultural land. It focuses on cattle breeding and plant production, selling its own products. It also includes a real estate rental service, and a biogas station. It is also the school farm of the High School of Agriculture and Horticulture in Olomouc. The cooperative has 262 members and employs 178 workers (60 women, 118 men).

The cooperative focuses on innovative practices as it believes that agriculture ceased to be the bearer of the wealth of fertile regions and requires restructuring. The vision is to pass on the land in good condition to the descendants, thanks to the use of modern technology, GIS, the restriction of chemistry, and attention to animal welfare.



Figure 1. Agricultural cooperative Unčovice

Chairwoman of the board of directors M.Sc. Milada Měšicová-Rašková graduated from the Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship of the University of Silesia in Opava, majoring in marketing and management. She is the president of the Olomouc Agrarian Chamber and the president of the Sugarcane Association of Moravia and Silesia. She is 45, married with two children. Her husband is the chief agronomist of the cooperative.

Several projects in the sphere of modernization of animal production, energy or the purchase of machinery are co-financed by the European Union. The cooperative keeps 7,000 pigs, and 840 dairy cows with a production of 8.5 million liters of milk per year. The electricity supplied to the network represents almost 8,000 MWh. Since the cooperative is economically stronger than the municipalities in which it operates, it also provides some services for the residents. It operates two gas stations, heats buildings in the village of Příkazy, and opened a meat shop.



Figure 2. Harvest in Unčovice

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

At the moment, in Czechia, there is a discussion about capping European subsidies for agriculture, with the idea that small farmers in particular behave favorably towards the land and participate in community life. However, in reality, the dividing line is not a question of the size of the company, but of whether the management of the company is anchored in the locality and region. In such a case, large enterprises can work based on precision agriculture and also positively influence the lives of local communities.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://www.zduncovice.cz/>