

THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Damjana Ostanek Herič took over the family farm after completing her degree in agronomy. At the time of the takeover, the farm, which is dedicated to the production and processing of vegetables, consisted of 2 ha of land and less than 30 acres of covered area. To date, the farm has grown to 7 ha, with a covered area of 80 acres.

Damjana, who runs the farm together with her husband, also an agronomist, and with the help of her retired parents, has achieved this through her decision to invest in the development of vegetable growing and through her entrepreneurial and well-thought-out investments. The farm is formally divided into two branches, one primary-growing vegetables and one complementary – pickling vegetables, but they work hand in hand. Around 30% of vegetables are processed into pickled products.



Figure 1. Damjana with pickled products.

In the beginning, the farm was met with suspicion as pickling was new and Damjana, as a young entrepreneur, faced additional doubts and challenges.

The economic and accounting knowledge she acquired during her secondary school education and her internship at her mother's accounting firm serve her well in managing the farm.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

What began as an idea to provide the farm with an income during the wintertime has led to greater flexibility in the face of weather events and market fluctuations, the development of a private label and new jobs created (two full-time and several seasonal workers).

Today, the products are sold at over 100 locations in Slovenia in total (different farm markets, trade fairs, small shops, restaurants, retail outlets, schools, elderly houses, and wholesalers). It is a leading farm in the field of pickled products in Slovenia.

The company's most important achievements include own vegetable production and own recipes for pickled products, consumption of all raw materials on farm, with no waste, technological progress of the farm - computerised irrigation system, ventilation of greenhouses, semi-automatic bottling, cold stores, own solar energy, which has greatly reduced the cost of electricity consumption for cooling, etc. Finally, financial stability and independence of the farm where the whole family lives.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://kmetija-ostanek.si/www.facebook.com/kmetijaostanek/>