



Guide Access to Fresh Foods

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PROJECT

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DISCLAIMER ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This Guide was developed within the framework of the project “RWSFF – Rural Women to Sustainable Food and Farming - Fresh Food from Farm to Table”. RWSFF project has been co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union within a key action in the field of Adult Education (KA204).



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AIM OF THIS GUIDE

One of the aims of this paper is to give an insight into the main typologies of LFSs/SFSCs initiatives and to discuss their potential benefits. The second objective of this Guide is to present success cases present in all the countries of the project partners, to provide ideas and suggestions to rural women farmers. The ultimate goal is to raise consciousness on the potential of LFSs and SFSCs initiatives for achieving local development, better market access to smallholders, and higher food quality to consumers, and to consider how these initiatives may be developed sustainably.

A series of slides and a webinar will be associated with this Guide to make it more interactive and able to guide rural women towards new ideas.

This guide will include information, visuals, examples of successful stories from rural women - small local agri-food sector producers, successful initiatives, entrepreneurship and their experience to help other women in rural areas.

The guide will also contribute to:

- strengthening the development of rural areas,
- building jobs in rural areas in line with the abilities of rural women, and
- the efficient use of resources in these areas



Photo by cottonbro from Pexels



TARGET GROUPS

Rural women who are involved or want to engage in agriculture or agricultural produce supply chains. Also, the guide is aimed for a broad audience that is willing to get involved and support more sustainable food production and consumption practices.



LANGUAGES

English, Serbian, Greek, Italian, Croatian



FIELD OF RESEARCH

Rural Development
Agriculture and Food Systems
Fresh Food Economy



KEYWORDS

Rural areas, agriculture, fresh food, agricultural products, food supply chain, direct sales



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The guide is open and available through the project's online platform - Community Access to Fresh Foods for all people who are interested in it.

ruralwomen.eu

**Comments
Suggestions**

We want to hear from you!

Comments and suggestions on the issues raised in this guide are welcome and can be addressed to RWSFF project partners on the project website ruralwomen.eu.



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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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List of abbreviations:

AAFN - Alternative agri-food networks

CAP - Common Agricultural Policy

CSA - Community Supported Agriculture

EAGF - European Agricultural Guaranteed Fund

EAFRD - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

EC - European Commission

EU - European Union

FAP - Fresh Agricultural Products

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization

HoCaRe - Hotels, Restaurants, Catering

LEADER programme (Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale)

– meaning Links between actions for the development of the rural economy

LFS - Local Food Systems

PYO - Pick-Your-Own / "U-picks" schemes

RDP - Rural Development Programme

SFSC - Short Food Supply Chains

SPG - Solidarity Purchasing Groups (Solidarity-based Purchase Groups)



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INTRODUCTION

The present Guide is written to encourage access to Fresh Foods, providing pictures of the diversity of Local Food Systems and Short Food Supply Chains in Europe and their contribution to sustainable rural development. The basic idea of this guide is to present alternative ways and alternative agri-food networks that allow meeting the increased interest of consumers towards localness of food, perceived as having both higher intrinsic quality (more healthy, fresh, and diverse), and the potential to benefit the local community and foster rural development, environmental preservation, agrobiodiversity, and social justice, allowing the participation of small family farms to market.

In the literature, there are many definitions and views on such initiatives and movements, as well as on established and existing market models.

Also in use are various definitions, phrases and terms in this meaning, which describe the very concept of food.

In this context, we tried to merge them into one term "fresh food" or more precisely as access to fresh food. On this basis, we sought access to markets for rural women, small local agri-food producers, by considering existing initiatives contained in Short food supply chains, Local food systems and Direct Sales as an alternative to the globalised agri-food model.

The Guide presents the main features of alternative agri-food initiatives, as well as a general framework and basic concepts aimed at promoting local agriculture and fresh food. The paper especially takes into account that the concept of local food is quite flexible and implies a whole range of definitions, starting from a simple criterion of the distance between the place of production and consumption, to more articulated ones that include other economic, social, cultural, environmental aspects. The Guide further describes the main typologies of these initiatives, starting with those promoted by farmers (both individually and collectively), then analysing consumers-driven initiatives.

Also, the Guide brings some conclusions and recommendations to support the planning of initiatives aimed at promoting local agriculture and related to trends of growing interest in fresh food, including specific measures tailored to rural women.

Also, the Guide includes success stories of women farmers from four countries. **We consider that presenting various examples of practices conducted by rural women is an excellent source for learning and can serve as a form of peer education. We also believe that comparison and knowledge are the essential tools for empowering these women, first of all, to improve their condition.**

To put this information in a well-defined context, this work is divided into the following short chapters, which deal with:

Chapter 1 provides a general framework and basic concepts on fresh, sustainable and local foodstuffs and is devoted to introducing the main features of Alternative agri-food networks and types of direct sales. It describes the main typologies of Local Food System/Short Food Supply Channel initiatives in the EU, together with some dimensions that characterise these initiatives and analyses the possible benefits for producers, consumers, society as a whole and their potential as drivers of sustainability. **Chapter 2** focuses on the concept of community-based food systems observing features of these initiatives and approaches to building a food system that embraces sustainability as a long-term goal to which the community aspires. It considers the aspects of Sustainable Agriculture and provides an overview of the similarities and differences of initiatives and movements such as Sustainable Food and Farm-to-Table. **Chapter 3** starts from the point that customers increasingly want to know where the food they eat comes from, hence this the section develops further insight into Marketing Opportunities with particular reference to Direct marketing and distribution options, as well as Collaborative marketing and distribution. **Chapter 4** is dedicated to the role of Rural Women in Access to Fresh Food and Sustainable Agriculture and emphasises the value of their work, their contribution to agriculture and Food Security, not only as food producers but also as nutritional gatekeepers, caretakers of rich agricultural traditions, and stewards of the land and biodiversity.

Also, this chapter draws some conclusions and recommendations, as well as case study - success stories and examples of good practice from 4 countries participating in the project (Serbia, Italy, Greece and Croatia).

SUCCESSFUL CASES: each project partner provided success stories of women farmers from their countries - Inspirational Women in Food and Agriculture, as well as short examples of women's reactions when a pandemic threatens food availability and access. Here we want to emphasise Learning through a Woman-Women Approach and sharing stories as the Best Seed of Knowledge.

Circumstances in the European Union on this topic are presented in the **Appendix**.

EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE: this section deals with the EU's agricultural policy, its history, CAP's financial issues with a deepening concerning women situation inside it; the final part of this section talks about the future of CAP for programming 2021-2027;

FARM TO FORK STRATEGY: this section presents the new EU strategy on the production and consumption of fresh food to improve health and the environment for EU inhabitants;

FRESH FOOD TRENDS: this section analyses the trend of consuming fresh food products in the EU and how it is linked to each country's cultural systems, level of education and per capita income.



Image by Григорий Калужный from [Pixabay](https://www.pixabay.com/)

Fresh Food - where does our food come from?

— about fresh, sustainable and local foodstuffs

We can source fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, eggs, and meat products locally. Locally grown produce is fresher and easier on the environment and good for our health and well-being. By purchasing local foods we support small farmers, and keep our money close to home, within the local economy where we will see it return the most value.

What does 'locally grown' mean?



Food is "local" if it is grown and harvested within a short distance of where it is consumed, often accompanied by a social structure and supply chain different from the large-scale commercial farms and supermarket system¹.

The term can also be extended to include social and supply chain characteristics.

Local food initiatives often encourage sustainable and organic farming practices, although these are not explicitly related to the geographic proximity of producer and consumer.

Local food movements promote:

- ✓ connecting food producers and consumers in the same geographic region
- ✓ developing more self-reliant and resilient food networks
- ✓ improving local economies
- ✓ advancing the health, environment, community, or society of a particular place²

Locally grown foods are found at farm markets, roadside farm stands, pick-your-own food farms, through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs.

Some grocery stores, in their departments, also have fresh food from local farmers, more likely at regional grocery store chains and not the mega-stores.

"**Locavores**" is a word often used to describe people who are committed to eating food that is grown or produced within their local community or region. They seek out farmers close to where they live, and this significantly reduces the amount of travel time required for food to get from farm to table.

¹ Waltz, Christopher L. (2011). Local food systems: background and issues. Nova Science Publishers.

ISBN 9781617615948. OCLC 899542944

² Feenstra, G. (2002) Creating space for sustainable food systems: lessons from the field. Agriculture and Human Values. 19(2). 99-106.

Local Food Systems and Short Food Supply Chains in the EU

There is a noticeable trend in all EU countries that in recent times local markets and short food supply chains, where farmers sell their products directly to consumers or with a minimum of intermediaries, have flourished.

On average, 15% of EU farms sell more than half of their production directly to consumers.

Local Food Systems (LFSs)

At the EU level there is no precise definition, but as suitable can be taken:

"A food system in which foods are produced, processed and retailed within a defined geographical area"³, depending on the sources, within a 20 to 100 km radius approximately.

Preference should be given to the nearest source whenever possible, however, the perception of 'where the local area ends' is subjective and depends on the context (the density of population, accessibility, and rural or urban character).

In this sense, the term 'local' can also refer to the closeness of the relationship between producers and consumers, based on mutual trust and cooperation.

Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs)

At EU level, a common definition of short food supply chains:

"A supply chain involving a limited number of economic operators, committed to cooperation, local economic development, and close geographical and social relations between producers, processors and consumers"⁴

This definition is complemented by Article 11 of European Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 807/2014 supplementing the Rural Development Regulation, which stipulates that "Support for the establishment and development of short supply chains ... shall cover only supply chains involving no more than one intermediary between farmer and consumer".

³ European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC), Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, Scientific and Policy Report: "Short Food Supply Chains and Local Food Systems in the EU" (Report EUR 25911 EN), ISBN 978-92-79-29288- 0 (pdf), ISSN 1831-9424 (online); Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013;

[https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC80420/final%20ipts%20jrc%2080420%20\(online\).pdf](https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC80420/final%20ipts%20jrc%2080420%20(online).pdf)

⁴ Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 (Current consolidated version: 26/06/2020) <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1305/2020-06-26>

A significant dimension of SFSCs initiatives is linked to the concept of “local food” – it is usually perceived as one of their pillars.

→ Eat where you live! ←

It is often accepted that local food means that it is grown, gathered or raised close to where we live.



Across Europe, a growing number of people choose to purchase food directly from farmers on local farmers' markets, farmgate, through basket/box delivery systems or other community-supported agriculture schemes.

Several factors have led to growing consumer interest in purchasing directly from farmers.

European customers tend to associate local products with:



- ✓ higher quality standards (freshness, nutritional value)
- ✓ healthy eating
- ✓ more environment-friendly production methods
- ✓ a lower carbon footprint

Image by [PublicDomainPictures](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Customers appreciate the possibility to have direct contact with the producers (the ability to personally interact with farmers who grew/raised food and to know the origin of the food they purchase), and the opportunity to support local small farms and agriculture by obtaining commodities at a fair price. Availability of product information such as growing method, guidance about use, recipes, and taste samples also draw consumers to direct-market places.

4 out of 5

European citizens consider that 'strengthening the farmer's role in the food chain' is either fairly or very important

Source: Eurobarometer survey (2016)



Image by [MonikaP](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Some of the features - a brief overview

Local Food Systems (LFSs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) some of the Characteristics

An alternative to conventional longer food chains and way to reconnect producers and consumers and re-localise agricultural production.

There are very varied in nature and practice of Local Food Systems and Short Food Supply Chains in the EU which play an increasingly important role in food supply networks.



Image by Ulrike Leone from Pixabay

A classification of the various forms

- **Direct sales by individuals:** a direct transaction between farmer and consumer
- **Collective direct sales:** producers cooperate to sell their products collectively to individuals or consumer groups
- **Partnerships:** between producers and consumers, where they are bound by a written agreement

There is a large variety and nearly all types of organisations can be found in every part of Europe. Variations can be seen in each organisational type: selling a single type of product or a range of products; cooperatives, voluntary sector or private businesses; selling on the internet; adding products from other farms to one's own supply, etc.

Local Food Systems suffer from a general lack of visibility.

There are numerous benefits for farmers, customers, society and the economy.

Some examples of their advantages include:

- a fairer price for farmers
- access to fresh and seasonal produce for consumers
- food traceable to a known producer
- customers can reconnect the food they eat with the farming process
- fresh, healthy and quality products at affordable prices
- the direct relationship between producer and customer
- a reduced environmental impact
- greater social cohesion and community development at the local level
- fairness and trust
- the potential to create jobs



Image by NatureFriend from Pixabay

The current EU rural development policy 2014-2020 for the first time defines Short Food Supply Chains precisely and places more emphasis than before on them.

Producers wishing to involve themselves in Local Food Systems can benefit from several measures co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Local Food Systems and Short Food Supply Chains have particular social impacts, economic impacts at regional and farm level as well as environmental impacts translating themselves into a clear interest of consumers.

Local farmers usually committed to soil health and safe growing practices, primarily if they are farming organically. Better quality soil and more sustainable farming practices typically impart more nutritious and better-tasting produce. The combination of local farming methods and shorter travel distances causes the food more likely to be fresh and more nutrient-density. Public objectives also can be supported by purchasing local food. Encouraging the relationship between farmers and consumers can lead to improved interaction in the community, and provide space for community members to mutually increase their social capital in terms of networks, inclusion, knowledge and social cohesion. Customers can meet the people who grow their food and ask them questions about their farming methods and pesticide use (if any), etc.

Interest in locally grown food is rising due to its potential to contribute to more sustainable food systems, rural development and healthier communities. Locally grown food often relies on the attachment to nature and seasonal processes in agriculture with the favour of environmentally friendly practices.

Therefore, the motivation for buying and eating local food products includes health and well-being, as well as environmental, community and economic benefits.

SEASONAL FOODS are plentiful at particular times of the year, such as radishes in the spring, apricots in the summer, grapes in the fall, and kales in the winter.

QUALITY PRODUCTS to consumers and **DIRECT CONTACT** with the producer are the values usually highlighted before environmental or economic values.

“ORIGIN” or “TYPICAL” PRODUCTS - the connection with place of production is characterised by the specificity of local resources used in the production process, product history and traditions of production and consumption, as well as their collective and hereditary dimension.

KNOWLEDGE and PRACTICES are usually passed on over time from generation to generation, adapting to the development of the environment and community. Know-how (breeding, handling and processing practices, cultivation techniques, etc.) Knowledge of how and when to eat a product, how to prepare and cook it, how to taste it and how to assess its quality.

HISTORICAL MEMORY and CULTURAL TRADITIONS are created and transmitted over time in the community in such a way that the product becomes part of the common local heritage, and the "origin product" is an expression of the entire local community, values, traditions and habits.



Overview of types of LFS/SFSC in the EU	
Short Food Supply Chains (SFSC)	Sub-classification
<p>Sales in proximity</p> <p>- by farmers acting individually or collectively Produce has to be traceable back to a named farmer</p>	<p>Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)</p> <p>On Farm Sales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farm shops - Farm based hospitality (e.g., table d’hôte, B&B) - Roadside sales - Pick-Your-Own / "U-picks" schemes
	<p>Off Farm Sales – commercial sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmers’ markets and other types of markets - Farmer owned retail outlet - Food Festivals / tourism events - Sales directly to consumer co-operatives / buying groups - Sales to retailers who source from local farmers and who make clear the identity of the farmers - Sales to "HoCaRe" (Hotels, Restaurants, Catering) as long as the identity of the farmer is made clear to end consumers
	<p>Off Farm Sales – catering sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sales to hospitals, schools, community kitchens, etc. <p>The catering sector institution in this case is understood as the ‘consumer’.</p>
	<p>Farm Direct Deliveries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery schemes - a basket or box scheme (e.g., veg box)
<p>Sales at a distance</p> <p>- by farmers acting individually or collectively Produce has to be traceable back to a named farmer</p>	<p>Farm Direct Deliveries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery schemes (a basket or box scheme) - Internet sales - Specialty retailers
<p>Traditional</p> <p>Tend to be farm-based, in rural areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usually operated by farming families and often use traditional and artisan methods 	<p>More likely to take the form of on-farm sales through farm shops, roadside sales and 'Pick-Your-Own' systems, or sales at producer markets</p>
<p>Neo-traditional</p> <p>More complex forms as collaborative networks of producers, consumers and institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usually, they are local food movements driven and supported primarily by urban inhabitants which seek to sustain traditional farming practices through new models and social innovation 	<p>Examples: delivery schemes, urban-located farm shops, collectively owned farming systems usually located either in the city or on the urban fringe</p>

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu IPTS JRC 80420 / REPORT EUR 25911 EN> (page 26)



Farmer-to-consumer direct sales

The direct sale of agrifood products at farms and the buying process directly from producers is a phenomenon which re-expands in all advanced economies and experienced a boom as a result of the ability of producers to retain and strengthen the relationships with customers, responding to their expectations of authenticity and freshness.

Several well-recognised farmer-to-consumer direct sales types:

Pick-Your-Own (PYO) or You-Pick ("U-Pick")

It is a type of farmgate sales direct marketing (farm-to-table) strategy, as a direct sale to the consumers which lowers costs and brings a profit even if prices may be lower. It is an on-farm option with a focus on people who like to select fresh, high quality produce themselves at lower prices and where the farmer sets a price on what customers can harvest themselves.

Customers are allowed and often encouraged to eat while picking, so an entry fee usually covers any produce they may eat. Since some costs (such as hiring farmers to harvest the produce, transportation, seasonal labour, packaging, etc.) are precluded, the products often cost lower.

U-pick options, depending on the type of produce a farmer grows and the farm's customer base, can complement other marketing strategies.



Image by [Ian Wilson](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Roadside farm stands provide access to fresh produce direct from the farmer who grew it.

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA)

It is a model of partnership between producers and consumers where they are bound by a written agreement.

In CSA partnership consumers become farm members, by buying a share in the upcoming harvest, thus, for a fee, they receive a weekly portion (a box of produce) during the growing season.

Ordinarily, end consumers (usually called members) pay in advance for a share of harvest to cover the farm's yearly operating costs. In return, they receive a share of local fresh and seasonal products grown using agroecological or organic farming methods. Sometimes, members even provide labour on the farm.

Consumers are associated with the producers' decisions and work, share part of the risks and rewards of production. Therefore, they are directly linked to the farm and production of food. Benefits for the farmer include a fair price, more stable and secure income and a closer relationship to the community.

According to different countries and regions, there are variations of CSA, but all follow the same essential principles.

In the EU, they exist under different names:

Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS) in Italy

Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture paysanne (AMAP) in France

Relações de Cidadania entre Produtores e Consumidores (RECIPROCO) in Portugal

Solarische Landwirtschaft (SoLaWi) in Germany

Farmers' shops are retail outlets that directly run one or more associated farms and sell products directly from the farm. On-farm sales can develop and become a little more "off-farm", which includes some consumer proximity services, such as the case with opening shops outside the farm or activating home delivery services.

Image by [photosforyou](#) from [Pixabay](#)



Box-scheme involves a subscription by customers (or a group of customers) to the regular (weekly, biweekly, monthly) delivery of a certain amount of fresh vegetables and fruits, and the offer varies depending on the season and availability on the farm. Many box-schemes offer a range of box sizes and allow customers to order additional products, such as jams, meat or dairy products, along with the box of vegetables. Usually, food that is seasonal, locally grown and organic or sustainably-produced is delivered through box-schemes. Delivery is made on the farm, collection point or doorstep, depending on the case. Its might also assume ethically relevant connotations, as with the involvement of disadvantaged workers or having the scheme being carried out in socially depressed contexts.



Image by [969209](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Consumers-driven initiatives:

Besides achieving economic benefits (lower food prices), these initiatives are normally inspired by environmental, ethic, and social criteria.

Solidarity-based Purchase Groups (or Solidarity Purchasing Groups - SPG) are groups of consumers who purchase collectively through a direct relationship with producers, according to shared ethical principles. Typically, SPG is an informal group of between 30 and 80 households (if the number of members increases, a new group is organised, often linked to the previous, to maintain a limited size that allows for the members to build personal relationships with each other).

Consumers' managed shops can be considered an evolution of the SPG model. Consumers directly establish and manage a shop, normally organised in the form of co-operative, adopting the same principles of the SPGs in terms of criteria for choosing producers and product quality.



Image by [Liza W.](#) from [Pixabay](#)





Simplified scheme: Long vs. Short food supply chains

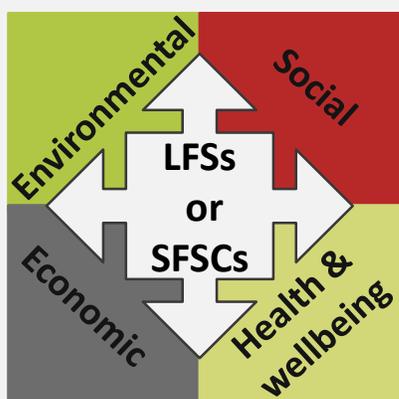
Local Food Systems (LFSs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) as drivers of sustainability

They can increase food supply resilience

- complement to longer food chains and diversify food supply networks
- a wider range of producers
- easier to be traceability checked
- more flexible and adaptable to new situations and consumer needs

Also, they can act as a driver of change and method to increase sustainability, trust, equality and growth in agricultural, food, business, social, health and different policy areas

They can increase sustainability in all its dimensions



A robust local food sector can boost tourism by encouraging the cultural identity of a region around its food products.



Image by [Konevi](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Policy areas in which they can be a useful tool: rural development, integrated food and agricultural strategies, public procurement, business development and entrepreneurship, etc.



Image by [Vane Monte](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Possible policy support mechanisms

- Flexible regulation (e.g., administrative burden, the paperwork and costs linked to food hygiene legislation)
- Local facilities (e.g., storage, processing)
- Access to bank loans
- Additional resources for marketing and communication
- Institutional, financial and political support
- Research, knowledge transfer and information actions
- Knowledge, skills and training

The EU hygiene package includes 'flexibility provisions' (various exclusions, derogations and adaptations) that makes it easier for small producers to comply with the rules without compromising food safety.

EU rural development programme (RDP) measures – *Set of measures at the Member States and regions' disposal*

EU rural development policy, funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), has been providing measures to help in setting up and developing local food systems and SFSC through support for investment, training, the LEADER approach, and organisation of producers.



Sustainability and health aspects

It is not easy to give a general description of the impact on sustainability because there are various practices of growing local food and organising SFSCs.

The lack of a precise definition of the term of SFSC and ambiguity and different interpretations of the idea of local food and localness contribute to the complexity.

There are also possible intertwining, complementarity and conflicts within the three common pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental).

Nevertheless, evidence shows that both close physical and social proximity often have favourable impacts on increase the sustainability in all its dimensions. For example:

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: characteristics that show potential for better quality products. Reliable access to affordable, fresh and nutritious food is important to the food safety, health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (and ethics): refers to the capacity to contribute to the equity, fairness and viability of local communities. It is much rooted in the trustful relations between consumers and producers, solidarity and shared values.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: encompasses advantages in some cases, for example, when pesticide-free/less intensive production methods are adopted or when the use of fossil fuels or packaging is minimised.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY: includes issues such as competitiveness and economic viability, better market access for small farmers, efficient use of and contribution to resources (including human ones), benefactions to communities in terms of creation of jobs and income.

Below is a table in which, based on evidence from scientific literature, reports, expert opinion and practice, the diverse benefits and sustainability aspects are shown systematically. These aspects are categorised under the groups of "health and well-being", "social", "economic" and "environmental" benefits.

The overview focuses on Local Food Systems and Short Food Supply Channels, so the terms local food or SFSCs used are viewed unambiguously.

Of course, the degree of sustainability and benefits varies among different types of production and sales methods, products, locations etc. Also, various farmers and customers may otherwise interpret sustainability and experience different impacts.

The overview is given as a set of potential benefits, and it is recommended that each farmer examines what of that their products and practices match and thus create their own offer or improve the quality of their products. Also, this can be a model for consumer thinking – when choosing the food they use.

Benefits of eating local produce:**Health and Wellbeing****Fresher and Tastes Better!**

Locally grown produce is much fresher, more flavorful and likely more nutritious than produce that has been shipped in from far away.

Higher Nutrient Content

The fresher the fruit or vegetable, the more nutrients there will be.

Most local produce has been picked within the last 24 hours, ensuring it is ripe and at its peak nutrient-density.

Enjoy Seasonal Foods

The cycle of seasonal produce is the most natural way to eat and perfectly designed to support our health. Eating produce in peak season means enjoying these foods when they are the most abundant, which in turn makes them more affordable.

Peak Ripeness

Local farmers allow their fruits and vegetables to ripen fully without chemicals or gas to speed along this process. Locally grown food is picked at its peak ripeness when it is most dense with nutrients.

Promote Food Safety

The fewer processes between produces' source and plate, the fewer the chances are for contamination.

Proximity to the Source

Reducing the travel time makes it possible to transport the foods while they are still fresh, without using chemical preservatives, gasses or waxes used to preserve food for long-distance transport.

Diverse Products' Variety

Small-scale farmers prefer to be able to grow more varieties of fruit and vegetables. It means instead of simply having "tomatoes" people can choose from versatile assortments of tomato types.

Try New Foods

Smaller growers often offer heirloom produce (grown from seeds that haven't been cross-pollinated with other plants) and other varieties. They also may even provide customers with a new recipe or two.

Greater Connection to Food

By shopping locally, people are more connected to the food they eat; knowing who produced it, what farm it came from, and exactly how it got from farm to fork.

Healthier Diet

Increasing knowledge about food amongst consumers can lead to the adoption of a healthier diet.

Opportunity to Talking

Buying from a local farmer allows people to ask questions, learn about their farming practices and gain a better understanding of their food products.

Social Benefits (Community and Ethics)**Create a Sense of Community**

Buying locally grown produce and knowing where the food is from unites people to those who grow and raise it. Instead of having a relationship with a corporate supermarket, people develop smaller relationships with multiple food sources.

Develop Personal Relationships

Developing personal relationships with local farmers can be beneficial to people. For example, they can personally let to know customer when their favourite variety of potatoes or raspberries they love will be available on sale.



Farmers' Socio-psychological Comfort and Self-esteem

Direct interaction and feedback from consumers as ethical recognition and appreciation of farmers' work, can increase farmers' belief that their work is necessary.

Survival and Revitalisation Rural Areas

SFSCs can provide new possibilities for survival and revitalisation to the marginal rural areas and agriculture. Also, they can potentially reconfigure periurban landscapes (periurban agricultural land).

Reconnect Urban and Rural Communities

The impact of some SFSCs in urban areas (such as regular farmers' markets) can go beyond the mere commercial relationship and into a higher social cohesion of the population in these areas (education and sensitisation of the people, creating new opportunities to meet food and social and economic needs)

Strengthen Local Culture and Identities

By putting in value (traditional) local products, production and marketing methods and knowledge and consumption habits, small-scale farmers and food processors help to sustain the traditional knowledge and skills (especially knowledge about local varieties).

Sense of Belonging

The very values and meanings attributed to a product and its origin can develop a sense of pride, social cohesion and belong in a certain area and community.

Economic Benefits**Support Community's Economy**

By obtaining produce from local farmers, the money stays within the local economy (close to home). This works to build the economy in the community. Also, the produce travels through fewer hands, so more of the spent money actually gets back to those who grew it.

Support Local Business

By purchasing locally grown food, people support their local farmers and help grow the local economy. When people buy locally grown food, they are supporting their local community, and their money goes back into producing more local food for them. (When people buy food in the supermarkets most of the cost they incur goes to the transportation, processing, packaging, refrigeration, and marketing of that food, and not necessarily to the farmers themselves).

Fairness and Dignified Income

By understanding the "real" costs of agriculture and food production, consumers increase their readiness to pay for products they know and trust. It in turn allows producers to receive a dignified income for their work.

(Re-)vitalise Local Economies

Buying locally grown food can increase or help re-circulate community income, boost the agro-food sector and create new jobs as well as preserve small and medium farms which are at the core of local rural economies.

Fairer Power Relations

From passive or subordinated food chain actors' producers and consumers become active and sovereigns who establish rules, organise and control their trade relations.

Environmental Benefits**Help to Preserve Farmland and Green Space**

Purchasing locally grown food helps maintain and preserve the green space and farmland in the local community.

Agro-biodiversity

Many local small-scale farmers contribute to agro-biodiversity. As they are keen to cultivate diverse varieties, reduce the reliance on monoculture (single crops grown over a wide area to the detriment of soils), encourage the diversification of local agriculture and crop variety, and raise traditional breeds.

Encourage Sustainable Agriculture

Many local farmers practice multifunctional farming, grow organic products and use the crop rotation method (these aids in reducing the use of pesticides and pollutants and keeps the soil in good condition rather than depleting it).

Organic and Natural Methods

Farms that produce food for local markets are more likely to use organic and natural methods, reducing air, soil and water pollution.

Environmentally Sustainable Way

Products sold in local food systems are generally produced in an environmentally sustainable way, using less of inputs such as pesticides, synthetic fertilisers, animal feed, water and energy.

Less Packaging and Energy

Locally grown or raised foods require less packaging than in supermarkets and less energy for storage, as they are fresh and seasonal. Also, they use fewer polluting methods of production, and cutting transport distances conserve fossil fuel, possibly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Less Waste

Since purchasing local shortens the distribution chain, forcing food directly from the farm to fork, less waste is produced in the process. This can mean less packaging via transportation and shipping, but it also means less environmental waste from pollution and less food waste as well.





Image by [Kerstin Riemer](#) from [Pixabay](#)

The concept of a community food systems

An approach to building a food system that considers sustainability – economic, environmental and social – a long-term goal to which the community strives.

It is sometimes used interchangeably with "local" or "regional" food systems.

For example, a farmer grows sheep, sheep meat is processed, and processed sheep meat is purchased by local consumers and then taken to their dinner table. It all happens within a short distance and creates a community food system.

Four pillars of community food systems (Rutgers University):

Proximity refers to the distance between various parts of the food system. The closer the farm is to our table, and our meal, it increases the likelihood that enduring relationships will form between various parties in the food system - farmers, processors, retailers, restaurateurs, consumers, etc.

Food security means that individuals, households and communities have access to quality food. Community food security addresses food access within a community context (especially for low-income households) and the simulation of developing local food systems.

Self-reliance refers to the degree to which a community meets its own needs when it comes to food-producing, processing, and selling their own food. While the aim of community food systems is not total self-sufficiency, increasing the degree of food self-reliance is a significant aspect.

Sustainability refers to implementing agricultural and food system practices that do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their food needs. This means that the environment, animals, people, and communities are all taken into consideration during each step of the way.

Step into the realm of Sustainable Food and Farming

The Sustainable Agriculture

— rooted in organic, agroecological, biodynamic and regenerative practices

Interest in sustainable agriculture has existed for a long time but has been gaining momentum since the mid-2000s.



Sustainable agriculture producers grow a diversity of crops, raise animals primarily on pasture and use techniques such as cover cropping, crop rotation, beneficial insects and other non-synthetic methods of pest control and mulching. They use its own inputs (manure from animals, feed grown on the land) and operate its outputs (crop waste, manure) in a closed-loop cycle. These practices contribute to soil fertility, clean water systems, biodiversity and other benefits to the ecosystem, rather than depleting them.

What is Organic and Transitional Food?

If a farm is not certified as organic, it does not mean that it is not sustainable.

Organic Food

It includes vegetables, fruits, grains, meat, milk, and cheeses produced by methods complying with the standards of organic farming which features practices that cycle resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. It has been produced without the use of chemical pesticides or synthetic fertilisers, does not contain genetically modified organisms.

Transitional Food

It has been grown under provisions that meet organic growing standards but lack either the required length of time for the land to be free of chemical usage or the process for proper certification has not yet been finished. These products are not allowed to be labelled as organic, but labelling them as “transitional” enables you to support farmers who are moving towards certification.

What is Sustainable Food?

In essence, Sustainable Food refers to food (plant or animal) that is produced by ecologically principled methods that cause little or no harm to the earth or its habitants — plants, animals or humans. It ensures that the environment, land, communities, and people are protected.

Sustainable Food System includes

- **Preserving Environment**

Farmers that abide by sustainable practices protect biodiversity and allow healthy ecosystems to flourish.

- **Animal Welfare**

Farmers that abide by sustainable practices protect animal welfare and treat them with care.

- **Protecting Public Health**

Food should be safe for those consuming and not harm human health.

- **Helping Communities**

Farmworkers, food producers, and all those who work with the food we are eating or drinking — should be provided with working conditions and wages that are fair. In doing so, this can support and benefit the local economy and community.

Sustainable Farmers raise their livestock in ways that allow them to graze or forage, move outdoors freely and express natural behaviours.

What is Farm to Table?

Farm-to-table is a phrase that can mean various things to different people. At its heart, farm-to-table means that the food on the table comes directly from farms.



Let us take a deeper look into the definition:

The Lexicon of Food⁵: “The Farm to Table movement advocates for locally sourced food that is seasonal, fresh, and organically-produced. It also has been promoted by both farmers and chefs as a means to connect consumers to the source of the ingredients in their meals.”

Similar phrases include locally-sourced, farm-fresh, farm-to-plate and farm-to-fork.

Social Movement Farm-to-Table

Farm-to-table restaurants supply their kitchens directly from local farms or their own plot.

Dining Where the Food Is Produced

In strictly form, farm-to-table refers to food being prepared, cooked and served directly on farms, it means the table is actually at the farm.

They often offer a tour of the farm with the farmer, showing and describing the methods used to raise the meat, poultry, fruits and vegetables, and educating guests about the steps of the food-cycle and their choices impact on people, animals, economy and planet. As such, these are educational meals as well as food that is local, fresh and seasonal.

Direct Relationship between Farm and Restaurant

Farm-to-table promotes serving local food at restaurants, through direct procurement from the producer and emphasises a direct relationship between a farm and a restaurant. They can offer local food to attract customers, highlighting the local provenience and typicality of the prepared food, along with local recipes, values, traditions and habits - as a part of the patrimony and historical memory of the local community.

Buying Farm-to-Table Ingredients

Farm-to-table also refers to buying food directly from growers, with the table being the one at customer house.

Farm-to-table includes a form of **food traceability** where the origin of the food is identified to consumers – celebrated as "**knowing where your food comes from**".

⁵ <https://www.lexiconoffood.com/definition/definition-farm-table>



Sustainable Food or Farm-to-Table — What are the similarities?

The ideas of Sustainable Food and Farm-to-Table movement are different, but they share many similarities. At the forefront is the concept of designing a reliable food system that is beneficial to humankind (both present and future).

The focus is on:

- ✓ Optimal health and nutrients for communities and minimising the risk of diet-related illnesses
- ✓ Seasonally locally produced food - healthy and fresh food for all community members
- ✓ Direct link between those who produce food and those who consume it
- ✓ Preserving the environment and communities, including alleviating the need for food transportation
- ✓ Public to participate in the promotion of local food and community
- ✓ Encouraging local farms and businesses so that communities can grow financially and money circulates



Farm-to-School Connections

"Farm-to-school" connections are newer forms where producers can directly sell commodity through the school meals programs during the school year and summer programs.

Schools, colleges, and universities represent a largely untapped opportunity to strengthen the market for farmers and increase access to locally grown, high-quality foods for young people.

→ or public institutions aimed at enhancing local production and local gastronomic traditions and culture



Image by [Jill Wellington](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Knowing Where Our Food Comes From

The starting point is that customers increasingly want to know where the food they eat comes from, to understand the steps and methods of production and processing; which is an excellent chance for the small local agri-food producers who come into direct contact with their customers.

Getting food at a farm means going directly to the source.

Talking directly to the farmer who produces the cattle from which those ribs of lamb were cut, who grows the pumpkins or produces cheese, collects honey or eggs, provides the consumer with a direct link with the land, the very soils from which their foods come.

Marketing Opportunities

An advantage is to establish the **brand** as a producer and purveyor of healthy and fresh food.

- ✓ build consumer trust
- ✓ provide authentic and credible products

Consumers' search for healthier foods - increasing numbers of them paying more attention to **food labels**.

The concept of clean label food and beverages — is nothing new, but it has been thrust into the spotlight over the past few years.

Innova Market Insights (innovami.com) – the multinational market research firm has been watching food trends for over 25 years and annually unveils a Top 10 Trends report. They, based on their latest Consumer Survey 2020, announced Top 10 Food and Beverage Trends to Accelerate Innovation. Transparency is a clear winner and leading trend for 2021.

#1 TREND TRANSPARENCY TRIUMPHS

a clear winner



3 in 5

...global consumers say that they are interested in “learning more about where their food comes from and how it is made”

3 in 4

...global consumers say that they expect companies to “invest in sustainability”

Source: Innova Market Insights (2020)

A **CLEAN LABEL** and **SUSTAINABILITY** is a part of that trend.

Product information is of major importance!

Demand for greater transparency incorporates consumers' expectations for information about the entire life cycle of a product and throughout the whole supply chain.

Clean label is the significant norm when it comes to food and beverage products.

Lifestyle trend towards a cleaner life raises and expands consumer expectations about a **CLEAN LABEL**: aspects include human/animal welfare, food supply chain transparency, plant-forward nutrition and sustainable sourcing.

Consumers are willing to pay a higher price for a food or drink product made with ingredients they recognise and trust.

SUSTAINABILITY takes centre stage – consumers want their everyday actions to positively affect the environment.

Consumers want to know

Where their food comes from?

How it was produced?

How it was sourced?

What the product contains?



Connect with your customers. Tell your story. Sell your food.



Food producers with creative, **meaningful storytelling** can connect with consumers in a new and different way.

There are a variety of ways to direct market food products.
All methods are based on **developing a relationship with the end consumer**.

Direct marketing and distribution

Direct marketing strategies: producer sells commodity directly to the consumer or end-user (without intermediaries), thus authenticity and trust are mediated through personal interaction.

Face-to-face sales provide the opportunity for customers to meet and talk directly with the farmers who grow the food they are purchasing. Also, farmers can learn more, directly, about what their customers need and what their customers want to know about the food from their farms. These relationships give crucial feedback to farmers when making planting decisions, evolving customer education, and developing marketing strategies.

Examples of direct marketing models: farmgate sales, Pick-Your-Own, farm shops, farmers' markets, roadside sales (roadside stands), community-supported agriculture, mobile marketing, and mail-order sales

Next to selling fresh farm products, additional direct marketing opportunities for producers can provide services related to agricultural products, such as tasting and providing meals. The most widespread example is **agrotourism**.
 → In its strict sense implies hospitality and catering activities on the farm, besides the regular agricultural production
 → In a broader sense, it enables the provision of a wide range of services – from camping, food and wine trails to work experiences on the farm

✓ The supply of many food products through direct channels will fluctuate following the local harvest calendar.

• Mobile marketing
 • Internet marketing

• Mail-order sales
 • Online sales

Collaborative marketing and distribution

Collaborative marketing strategies: more than one producer works together to sell their products

These options where food producers work together to be more efficient in getting their products to consumers and extending their reach to new markets, increase in popularity.

The collaborative marketing strategies are helping individual farmers be more competitive and take full advantage of market opportunities.

Examples of collaborative marketing models: partnerships, shared arrangements, producer co-ops, food co-ops as a member-owned club or store, multi-farm CSAs, food hubs



Rural Women in Access to Fresh Food and Sustainable Agriculture

"If women in rural areas had the same access to productive activities as men, agricultural and farming production would increase and we could feed approximately 150 million more people." (FAO, 2011)

Rural Women in Access to Fresh Food and Sustainable Agriculture

Women in rural areas play a crucial role in the life of their communities, but their work receives less acknowledgement, and their activities generally prove less profitable. Rural women contributions to agriculture are mostly unsighted or almost entirely ignored.

Women still face barriers - there is a gender gap:

- less access to productive resources such as land, livestock, human capital, new technology
- less enjoy access financial service, credit and loans
- more limited access to training, information, extension services, public services, social protection and markets

Female farmers lack knowledge or awareness as to the importance of gender mainstreaming in land management and agricultural work, and they have challenging to balance their farming work with the family role.

According to FAO, if women farmers had equal access to resources as men, they could increase their yields and food production by 20 to 30 per cent.

(FAO, July 2011)

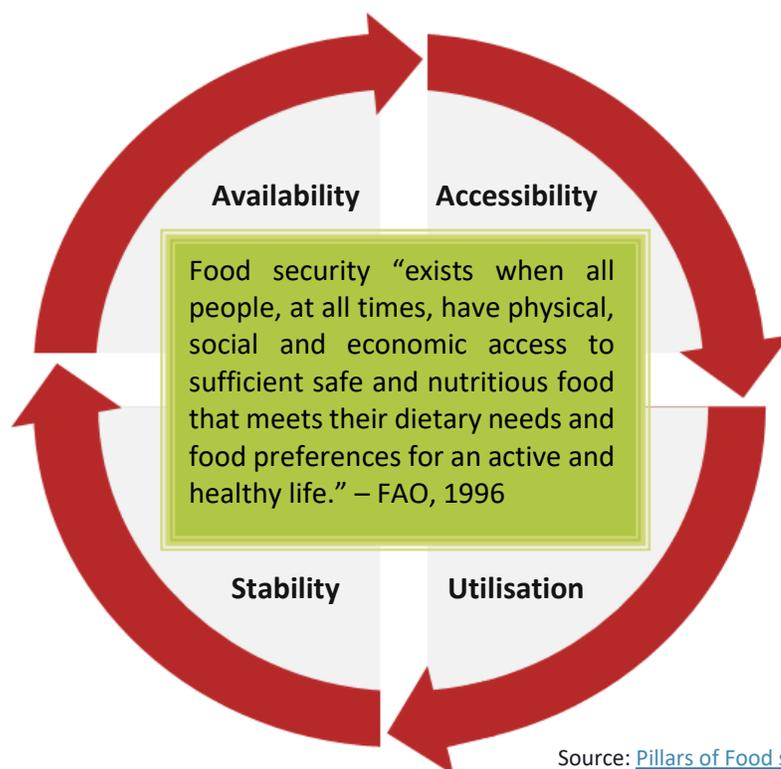
A few statistics data – Inequalities in Europe: More than 80% of women living in the countryside collaborate with or assist their husbands, 28.7% of agricultural workers are women and agricultural holdings managed by women are 40% smaller than those run by men. (Eurostat)



However, women make significant contributions to agricultural production, food security and nutrition, rural economies, land and natural resource management.

Rural Women take care of household chores, nutritional needs and the education of their family members, and perform agricultural and livestock tasks. So, in addition to their role as primary caretakers for their households, rural women activities typically include sowing, cultivating and harvesting crops, caring for livestock, selecting, processing and preparing food. Also, rural women engage in marketing and trade, especially on local markets where they sell any surplus from their harvests. Moreover, they take care that any income they may obtain from selling surplus commodities invest back into the family in the form of food, health care or education.

Rural women play an essential role in all 4 pillars related to **Food Security**:



Significant is the value of the work of rural women, not only as farmers and food producers but as nutritional gatekeepers, caretakers of rich agricultural traditions, and stewards of the land and biodiversity.

The Convention on Biological Diversity recognises "the vital role that women play in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity".

Female farmers, especially those involved in small-scale cultivation, possess the appropriate skills for both managing and preserving biodiversity. Rural women have traditionally been in charge of storing food and seeds, choosing, improving and adapting the different varieties of crops to the external conditions and passing on their knowledge from one generation to the next.

Obvious is that women play a notable role in the conservation of agricultural diversity, so this knowledge and skills should be taken into consideration.

Creating a more Sustainable Food System includes not only recognising and acknowledging women's work and role in agriculture but also providing forceful support to women in their current efforts and potential to be pioneers of change.

Conclusions

→ Potential of Local Food Systems (LFSs) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) initiatives

Access to markets is a significant factor for many small-scale female farmers to generate income and increase the productivity of their holdings.

Current trends in the food sphere and shifting the focus of consumers to fresh, healthy, sustainable and local food open up new opportunities for rural women and they can see their chance in the consumer niche of these characteristics. In this context, it is crucial to highlight the importance of Social Innovations, Education and Awareness-raising actions to bring about change (new relationships, new mentalities).

Specific measures tailor-made for rural women

- design special measures and educational programs for rural women to improve their position and become more competitive and capable of changes and challenges in the market

- make human resources improvement services and special measures tailored to rural women more accessible

When planning support measures and educational programs for rural women, it should be borne in mind that the high workload on the farm and in the household would make it difficult for them to be actively involved in the programs.

Suggestions and recommendations for coordinated actions that would contribute to greater involvement of rural women in the observed trends of growing interest in fresh food

SOCIAL INNOVATION

- create opportunities for rural women to take the helm as regards changes within the agricultural sector, driving and fostering Social Innovation processes that develop short (direct) systems for food delivery and access by changing the relationships, perspectives, and ways of thinking and acting of the actors involved, which leads to the achievement, above all, of social goals that benefit everyone
- consider how LFSs/SFSCs initiatives may be developed sustainably, allowing for higher resilience in front of global market disruption

EDUCATION - INCREASING SKILLS

- study those avenues which may allow the empowerment of rural women and access to knowledge and technology which enables them to achieve greater performance
- provide additional training, adult education and other programs, following the needs of rural women, including training on entrepreneurship, innovation in agricultural production, marketing and markets, as well as the formation of co-operatives
- greater mobilisation of training providers, using appropriate and innovative training tools, mechanisms and methods to build the skills needed to develop short (direct) systems for fresh food delivery and access and higher performance, including strong support for rural women
- support nutrition education using culturally and socially appropriate nutrition messaging, which can create a demand for locally grown food

NETWORKING AND MOBILITY

- Rural women should form associations and networks, because in that way it is easier for them to implement their ideas and they are more engaged.
- support and encourage networking of rural women, exchange of knowledge and experience, both at local and national and European level, including mobility for the acquisition of knowledge and experience, and women's cooperatives

RAISING AWARENESS

- raise consciousness on the potential of LFSs/SFSCs initiatives for achieving local development, better market access to female smallholders, and higher food quality to consumers
- create awareness campaigns promoting diet diversification and the nutritional, environmental and economic benefits of locally grown food

The Story of Sharing: the Best Seed of Knowledge – Learning through a Woman-Women Approach

We bring you the story of a woman with a curious spirit who selflessly shares her knowledge through YouTube channel and social networks. This is a great example of how women in love with nature and the countryside can share their knowledge and learn from each other by spreading awareness about healthy fresh food. So, in front of you is the story of a woman who turned her YouTube channel “Alhemija – GardenIn” into an educational workshop for the production of happiness in which everyone is welcome.



Svetlana Marjanović (GardenIn)

 YouTube Channel: Alhemija - GardenIn
Zavidrug bb, 32300 Klatičevo (Serbia)

<https://gardeninmagazin.net/>

https://www.instagram.com/gardenin_magazin/

<https://www.facebook.com/gardeninmagazin>

Although Belgrade is my hometown where I live and work since I realised that my son is growing up without ever climbing a tree and not knowing what the mulberry fruit tastes like ... everything has changed. I decided to arrange the abandoned family property and make it a spot that will represent a detox oasis, a place of harmonisation and balance of urban bustle. And as people dismissed the idea that serious food production



could only be done on weekends, it was a trigger to prove to myself and others that any idea backed by tremendous desire and love is halfway to realisation. And in order not to leave everything at the level of retelling and theory, I started recording the steps I take, whether it is about unusual plant species that I grow (Momordica, peanuts, yam, turmeric, ginger ...) or it is about the kitchen recipes created along the way, which are included in a book about edible flowers called "Flower Snacks." Soon the YouTube channel became an educational workshop for the production of happiness in which everyone is welcome.



In my work, I am driven by great curiosity and constant admiration for Nature, insatiable hunger for knowledge, long-term investment and personal upgrade through thematic books and empirical research, pioneering spirit and entrepreneurship, courage, propensity to experiment and explore alternative food sources, synergies with plants, and consequently a multitude of ideas that want to be realised, simplicity and a deep missionary need to spread my experiences in socialising with plants further ...

As for the difficulties, the biggest problem is the physical distance between my place of residence and the garden. There is also poor road infrastructure, as well as frequent disconnection of the internet connection ... but all that is negligible in relation to the feeling that flashes when the seed sown by my hand grows into a fruitful plant...

Today, thanks to new technologies, it is easy to find the answer for any dilemma or question, and the isolation of the property, i.e., physical distance is not such an obstacle, because friends, as well as people of similar sensibility, at any time have the opportunity to make contact and share their emotions, impressions and often grateful for the ideas, tips and recipes that I place on the "Alhemija" channel.

It is very difficult for me to talk/write about myself because it inevitably looks like some kind of boasting in the end. Instead, I would like my stories, recipes, plants that I "gave birth to" and nurtured as a nanny, a garden whose curator I am, to tell about me. My wish is to save from oblivion useful, tasty and medicinal plants (such as ryegrass, which is used to make homemade "lemonade" richer in vitamin C than the original) that our ancestors, as well as the inhabitants of other meridians used, by incorporating them into modern recipes that suit the taste of the modern family and the current moment.





More than advice and theorising, I think it is much more important to provide a personal example by which I try to inspire women who would like to be responsible to their family (in terms of caring for the quality of food they provide), who would love to be useful and creative (because nature is an inexhaustible source of inspiration and the best-supplied bio market on the planet), which are not passive, but have the energy and strength to be leaders in agriculture, without losing a smile on their face. Every woman who believes in herself and her work, after a hard day in the garden, deserves to be satisfied with the other roles she plays (wife, mother, chef ...). So, there is no time for waiting, no one will do it for us, the time is now!



Success Stories - Inspirational Women in Food and Agriculture



Rural Women role is pivotal to the functioning of a healthy and sustainable food system. Beyond the fields, women are running to make every aspect of the food system more sustainable, equitable, and innovative. We are continually inspired by the hard work and creativity of women farmers, entrepreneurs, small-scale producers of agri-food and farm owners – rural women who work in agriculture and build a better food system.

Although countless rural women deserve recognition, this guide presents 39 women from four European countries who inspire others and make access to fresh food available. The guide will present in pictures and words rural women running innovative projects, family farms, cooperatives or initiatives - to provide examples of good practice or innovative approaches with the potential to be applied in other areas/countries across Europe.



Katsi Eleni ('Ikotechnia')



Tyrnavos, Larissa (Greece)
"Ikotechnia" (Oikotechnia)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100016708896244>



I work 4 years in this field. My business is an "Ikotechnia", since the procedure takes place at home and in Greek 'ikos' means house and 'technia' means art. The raw materials, which are mainly fruits, are produced by my family. Peanut butter, almond butter, raisins, liquers, marmalades and local desserts are the main products of my business. I sell them mostly in farmer's markets and through the word of mouth of friends and relatives.

It is no necessary to own specific equipment, but when I do, I borrow from my coworkers or friends. Special equipment could be a dryer for fruits, for example.

The advantage of owning an Oikotechnia is that I can work from my home and be able to take care of my children. In the morning I work at the farmer's markets by selling my products and I return home by the time my children arrive from school or a little later. The difficult part is that is not a well-paid job and in order to become plenty of coworkers are necessary.



To women who would like to establish their own 'Ikotechnia', I would advise them to be patient and love what they are doing, because it won't be easy. However, it is incredible to meet people, to love your work and establish friendships and a solid client team.





Elisa Marennà



via Fabio Massimo 67
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Marennà Farm is a project of healthy and sustainable food for those who want to eat safe food obtained with respect for the environment. But also to those who want to rediscover the contact with nature and get closer to horticulture. We give the opportunity to those who wish to adopt a garden, their own garden, which we cultivate according to the principles of natural agriculture. We do not use, therefore, pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, and we take advantage of the associations between vegetables and flowers that we sow in large quantities in the gardens to attract useful insects and



pollinators. Those who adopt a vegetable garden can choose the vegetables to be grown in it, visit it whenever they want, give it a name, participate in its cultivation, personally harvest their own vegetables, and thus be certain of the quality of what they eat. And if he doesn't have the time to do the harvesting, we will take care of it, delivering the products of the garden to their home every week.

In addition to the cultivation of typical vegetables of our territory, we have added small cultivation of legumes and tomatoes for sauce, and

more substantial cultivation of tomatoes Sanniti Verneteco. The latter is a Slow Food Presidia of the Telesina Valley, and has the peculiarity of being preserved in the open air and eaten raw during the winter. We grow it from our seedbed in a completely manual and sustainable way, with the intent to increase production in the area, so as do not to lose the crop and tradition so precious to our Sannio.



Our farm is located in a good geographical position; we are, in fact, in the valley of Titerno, at the foot of Monterbano, in a preserved area, rich in animal and plant biodiversity, and sheltered from sources of pollution of any kind.

In our 'vegetable gardens for adoption', we minimize the waste of water and the use of non-recyclable plastics. We try to promote soil fertility with good agricultural practices, so that plants grow strong and resistant to pests.

In this way, our 'adoptive gardeners' can bring to the table a seasonal product, always fresh, with the flavours of the past and rich in nutrients. In addition, they can follow the entire short chain, from cultivation to harvesting, thus acquiring a greater awareness of the seasonality of what they eat and how this choice has a positive impact on the environment around us.



At the moment, our project, born as a hobby about two years ago, is developed around about thirty



gardens. We hope for the near future to be able to structure it better, in order to fulfil all the requests for adoption that come to us.

Initially, we found it very useful to use social media to spread the word about our project. Even today, they are of great help to us to keep our adopters updated in real time on the evolution of their garden.

In addition, we are developing a system of environmental monitoring in the gardens, in order to minimize water consumption and make our small agricultural reality more and more sustainable.



*Natural Gardens
in Sannio*





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At the Guran station, near Vodnjan, on the road to Barban, there is a family farm and rural tourism Casa Rustica. In addition, there are Holiday House and Rooms.

The Bozac family has been living on this family farm since 1992, when they came up with the idea to renovate the old property. I am the owner of this family business, and I was born on this estate.

The whole family works diligently, enjoying the arrival of each new guest and looking forward to each new encounter with them. All intentional guests or passers-by, as well as all customers of Guranis services, are welcome to the Guran estate, to our tourist accommodation and rural tourism facilities.

During the day, guests can enjoy refreshing drinks or coffee. For breakfast we offer local Istrian delicacies, mostly from our own production (various jams, bread, cold cuts, cheeses, yogurt, fruit, sweet pastries), as well as organic breakfast and breakfast according to



special needs. For lunch or dinner, we prepare typical Istrian dishes (various pasta such as fusilli, gnocchi, ravioli, pasta with various sauces and stews, and various meat plates with our products – cheese, prosciutto, etc.)



The rural tourism facilities have a beautiful fireplace in the large room, where you can enjoy yourself with friends and relax, and they are all especially attractive in winter, making you feel warm and welcome. In addition to guests staying in our rooms, we accept reserved groups of up to 30 people, and with a qualified professional we can organise various types of workshops: cooking, preparing domestic winter preserves, making cakes, coloring, stone processing, growing plants, etc.



Guran Estate
Rural tourism – Domestic products

Guests and visitors can taste and buy our local products and unique souvenirs and participate in creating their own products.

We have been thinking for a long time about people who have various health problems and cannot eat regular food, who deny themselves travel and have to stay at home.

I thought, and we came up with something new and good for all those who have to be on a gluten-free diet, or are on a vegetarian diet, or want to start a new lifestyle because of health problems or because they simply want a new lifestyle, full of health and energy – for all of them we have prepared very rich menus with completely raw food.

In addition to a rich menu of raw food, we also offer an active vacation with cycling, horseback riding, quad adventures, sailing, canoeing, swimming, spa, makeup, walking, nature trips, workshops, lectures, evening entertainments and many other interesting things important for good health.





Sladana Radović



PPG Radović

37251 village Globoder bb, Kruševac
(Serbia)

www.facebook.com/sladzano.radovic

For many years, my family has been engaged in market-oriented primary vegetable agricultural production (almost 40 years). We cultivate about 0.8 ha, of which 0.35 ha are under greenhouses. The main agricultural products in our business are peppers, tomatoes and lettuce. We have both winter and autumn production, so we grow lettuce in winter, while we grow other listed crops in summer and autumn. We have no additional workforce. My two sisters and I manage agricultural production with the support and help of our parents. I believe that our strength lies in the experience, qualified

members of the household, the application of new technologies (irrigation networks, anti-hail systems, greenhouses) and the use of quality and proven inputs. Weaknesses are high unit production costs and low price of products due to distribution through resellers rather than directly to end consumers.



In this traumatic year under the COVID, we were working at a loss due to the extremely low prices of our products, even though we had an available market. We saw the solution in the diversification of the



production line. We added two additional crops (cucumber and cherry tomato) to the crop rotation. The new technologies we apply refer to the possibility of mitigating the consequences of weather disasters (different types of anti-hail nets and shading nets, greenhouses, hothouses) and drought (irrigation).

We allow our products to speak for themselves and to spread the word about their quality.

I think that it is a good opportunity and a chance for women to focus their attention on the processing of agricultural products, because they are products with higher added value, and they are more profitable than the primary ones. And also, the key to competitive and sustainable agriculture lies in the various forms of associations (organisations, associations, cooperatives). My advice is to turn to the application of organic production methods or to certify products (standard G.L.O.B.A.L .G.A.P). Also, it would be desirable to focus attention on marketing. First of all, I mean the packaging and appearance, and then the distribution channels (direct or online sales).





Christina Dalavika



Skretas Fruits

Larissa, Thessaly (Greece)

<https://www.facebook.com/skretasfruit>

The business was launched in 2005 by my husband. The company trades fruits that are of our own production. Some years ago, due to a health issue, my husband was not able to be on the top of business and consequently, the management passed in my hands.

Our whole family and relatives are also part of the business, in order to ensure its sustainability.

Over the years we have developed mechanical equipment and use refrigerators and packaging materials with the support of modern technological means.

The strong part of this business is that provides me with the opportunity to work with my family, while the profit is enough for all of us, offering a good quality of life.



As a disadvantage, I would mention the fact that it is not an ideal workplace for a woman to be, due to the fact that it is a male-dominated field. In the beginning, I faced serious obstacles because of my gender and disrespect for my working skills. After some years, the situation is getting better but sometimes is still present.

Considering the pandemic, thank God, has not affected our business negatively at the moment. However, the first signs are appearing day by day. There is a general spirit of uncertainty, and we are facing dilemmas due to the pressure from buyers to low our prices even more.



I would suggest to women who want to follow this career path, to be well prepared either with experience or related studies because especially in Thessaly the competition has been constantly increasing.

Of course, you need to love your job and have a lot of patience.



Fresh & Early
Fruits





Franca Norelli

AgriBottega Fontana Stella

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I am Franca Morelli, and I am the owner of the farm Fontana Stella, located in Campania on the slopes of the Regional Park Taburno Camposauro, a few kilometers from the spa town of Teleso Terme.

We are located at 365 meters above sea level, and we have as business extension about 7 hectares, cultivated with olive trees (with exclusively secular plant) and cereals.



In 2014 comes into operation, our mill. Resuming an ancient milling technique, the stone one, which mainly aims to preserve the integrity of the wheat germ and all its nutritional and organoleptic properties.

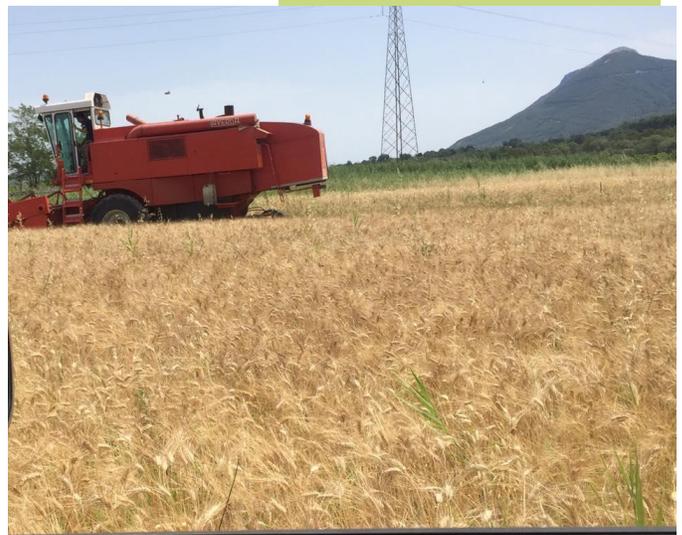
At the same time, an artisanal fresh pasta laboratory is created, as well as an oven for the production of various types of bread, the fruit of tradition and the peasant memory, and other baked goods.



A small portion of the farm is used as an experimental field for the reproduction and selection of seeds of ancient varieties of cereals such as Saragolla (ancient variety of durum wheat); Risciola (ancient variety of soft wheat); Farro (the oldest wheat in the world), Marzellina (ancient variety of durum wheat) and rye (called 'iermano', always cultivated on the plain of Prata).

The recovery continues with some varieties of vegetables such as the tomato verneteco sannita, from the consistent skin that is collected in late summer and then be stored under the porches of the houses, sheltered from the weather, so as to be preserved throughout the winter, the bell pepper beneventano, tomato guardiolo.

These productions are inserted all 'inteno of a supply chain project, belonging to the Slow Food circuit.



Strengths

- direct sale
- production and processing
- family business

Weaknesses

- products not accessible to everyone (because of costs and quantities)
- company location a bit uncomfortable to reach for the end-user





OPG Milena Predan

OPG Predan was founded in 2004 in the area of Vodnjan.

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 E-mail: milenapredan@yahoo.com



We are engaged in the production of cosmetic products from raw materials produced on the farm.

We grow fruit and honey on our farm and we make cosmetic products from our own olive oil and medicinal herbs (face cream, body milk, oil, peeling, lip balm, soap).

We started the production of cosmetic products in 2011. In the beginning, soaps based on olive oil, and soon the production expanded to moisturizers, body-milks, lip balms, etc.

All our products are completely natural and are based on raw materials grown on our own farm, without the addition of parabens and preservatives. Today, from our range, we can offer you products based on olive oil.

We also organised during the global pandemic this year and supplemented our website with one new project: "Domestic web market"



By registering in the "Domestic web market" we get the opportunity to:

→ quality, efficiently and cheaply present production resources, own products, production technology, location of activities, easily and economically build visibility – 'image' of our products and business as a whole, by choosing the most favorable ways of sale and payment plan, and with well time management





Julijana Kiževska



PPG Julijana Kiževska

Pearl Island BB, Novi Bečej
(Serbia)

I have been engaged in agricultural production for the last 5 years. In the beginning, I was exclusively engaged in field production, but since two years ago, I have expanded my agricultural activity to viticulture and vine growing. I am the owner of a vineyard that spreads over 2 hectares, of which in one part there are grapevines of high-quality indigenous wine variety Muscant Crocan. Although this vineyard is mostly nurtured by a "woman's hand", of course, I have significant help and support from my family.

The agricultural farm is still in the initial phase, and I consider the cultivation of a high-quality Muscant Crocan grape variety to be my significant advantage. It is a type of grape unique in the world that thrives only here on the Pearl Island.

The brand of wine from this grape was very well known and appreciated, something by which Novi Bečej was recognisable and my wish is to start its production again and renew the old glory. On the other hand, this is a rather sensitive demanding grape variety and requires a lot of attention and care.





Modern machines significantly facilitate work in the vineyard, but this agricultural activity still requires significant human work and engagement throughout the year. Also, the Internet opens up great opportunities for entering the market in terms of both promotion and sales. For now, I am satisfied with my placement of grapes on the market, and I plan to raise an additional 3 hectares in the coming years, as well as the development of my own winery.

I support and encourage women who are engaged in agriculture or would like to get involved in agricultural production. Although it is difficult to engage in agriculture, it has its beauties and advantages, such as working in nature. I would tell other women to do everything they do with love

and then they will be rewarded. If a woman is well organised and develops a strategy, she gets the opportunity to become independent, earn her own money and improve her household budget.





Palatou Mairi



Trikala (Greece)

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011003507379



The business was launched 25 years ago by my husband. After his death, my daughter and I have undertaken the olive groves and continue the organic olive oil production. Recently, we applied for the certification of its organic origin.

The strong part of this business is that our product improves people's health and wellbeing. It is also a pleasure for us to work on our own land and be independent. However, the business is not profitable enough, to become our main profession. As a result, we are working as employees in other professions and we are taking care of the olive

trees in our free time. Especially, the pandemic has greatly affected our clients and as a result, income has been eliminated.

We do not utilise any special technology in the production part. Regarding the promotion of our work, it is done mainly by word of mouth. Personally, I don't know how to use technology and as a result, I cannot promote my work through social media. My daughter is responsible for this part.

My advice to any woman who wants to follow this path as a career is to love nature and trees. If they are unable to cope with hard work and have no other source of income, especially in the beginning, they should avoid becoming farmers. It is very difficult and not paid. This occupation requires a lot of patience and passion, as money is not an incentive.





Simona Zerbinati



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www.facebook.com/Terrevive
www.instagram.com/bergianti_vino



TERREVIVE

Terrevive farm was born in 2008 in the hamlet of Gargallo di Carpi, province of Modena, from the idea of Gianluca and Simona, following their studies in Agricultural Sciences and their renewed vocation for the countryside and natural agriculture.

Since the beginning, the company has adopted the Biodynamic method as an agronomic technique; a cultivation technique that, in addition to respecting Nature, respects the sensitivity of the people who work on the farm, who have made their own principles such as respect for the environment, biodiversity and human well-being, all in balance with the forces of Nature.



The agricultural activity focuses on wine from Lambrusco grapes, seasonal vegetables, aromatic herbs, cereals and ancient varieties of fruit trees. The products are sold directly in the farm store or at the farmers' market of Carpi, in order to support and promote the short-chain and the direct contact between producer and consumer.

Terrevive is part of the association WWOOF Italy "which connects volunteers and natural rural projects by promoting educational and cultural experiences based on a non-profit exchange of trust, to help build a sustainable global community."



All the agricultural activities carried out, along with wine tourism, educational farm, social farm and the presence of animals, create a complex agricultural organism that is the basis of Biodynamics, as well as traditional agriculture.

Strengths: biodynamic agriculture as environmental protection and product quality; transparency in production processes and certification of processes (organic and Demeter); climate of familiarity and welcoming capacity; strong propensity for collaboration and openness to the territory.

Weaknesses: difficulty in achieving economic sustainability, difficulty in managing bureaucracy.



COVID has impacted our work, wine sales, our main product, has dropped drastically, as we mainly sell to wine shops and restaurants which, in turn, have been greatly penalized. Even the garden has been greatly reduced, as we had no manpower (social projects of apprenticeship or woofers) in the period of March-April 2020. We have tried to strengthen the local and national home sales and shipping of wine to individuals with the activation of PayPal and contract with GLS.



The Agroturizam Ograde estate is located in the heart of Istria, in the village of Lindarski Katun, near Žminj, in the area of the town of Pazin.

The history of the village is interesting. The word katun is of Roman origin and means a temporary pastoral settlement. Such settlements sometimes, due to their favorable conditions, outgrew the village. This also happened with Lindarski Katun. This area was inhabited by shepherds in the 15th century and as the place was favorable for cattle grazing, shepherds stayed in it. They limited their meadows to dry stone walls. The dry stone wall is a fence created by stacking stone, without any binder. Even today, numerous dry stone walls are visible throughout Istria, as well as small, stone shepherd's houses, which have become a recognisable Istrian souvenir.

Our property is located on the edge of the village in an area of 18,000 m². In the past, the entire estate was surrounded by a shepherd's dry stone wall – a fence, and shepherds have always called it "Fences". We have kept that name to this day.

Our greatest loves are animals, nature and agriculture. Share that love with us and be our guests. The greatest pride of our household are horses, but we pay the same attention to our ducks and geese, chickens, pigeons, dogs and cats. Since we produce various types of products in the traditional and natural way for the needs of our household, we decided to offer these somewhat forgotten 'old flavors' in a suitable ambience: in a stone tavern - by the fireplace.

We have designed new activities for all who want to experience pasta workshops and the making of sweets "Pazinski cukerančić" (on the list of the intangible cultural heritage of the RH), cooking traditional dishes, preparing fruits and vegetables for the winter, spinning wool and knitting baskets - eco-estate Ograda, near Žminj, is the right choice. Interestingly, you do not have to pay for everything, but you can also "earn" something.



If you engage in seasonal farm work such as planting, sowing, picking and harvesting fruit, hoeing, mowing and harvesting hay, for example, property owners will reward you with lunch or dinner.

So, we tried to stay in touch with people in the fresh air because the COVID pandemic had a big impact on our work. We hope that everything will return to normal as soon as possible.





Nevena Popov

Health food shop



PPG Nevena Popov
Novi Bečej (Serbia)

<https://www.facebook.com/mbiotika>



In 2018, my husband and I bought an old orchard that we landscaped and rejuvenated. This process of renewal continues, so that every planting season we renew old trees and plant new fruits. We opted for a 'mixed orchard' in which we grow several plant species that grow together and that make the orchard a stable and fruitful ecosystem. We try to take care of the orchard while applying the principles of sustainability, respecting the environment and people, so any fruit and plant species are welcome in our orchard if it is useful for the orchard. It is important that the orchard as such be healthy, stable and diverse, and thus fertile while preserving biodiversity and balance with nature. We grow cherries, apricots, pears, blackberries, and the most common are apple trees. Our activity is primarily focused on growing and directly selling fresh fruit through a health food store owned by my husband. In this way, we have combined production and sales through the family business, and we always supply the local market with fresh and healthy fruits, while supporting and promoting a short supply chain and direct contact between producers and consumers.



In this regard, I consider as my main advantage this possibility to place the produced fruit directly on the market through the already developed trade. I would definitely add dedication, flexibility and teamwork here, which greatly alleviates all the daily difficulties.

Weaknesses are the current lack of storage space and thus shortened fruit freshness time, and even higher losses, ie the lack of processing plants, which would expand the range of products we offer.

New technologies and the Internet offer an advantage in fast advertising and easier access to customers and the market, so that once unimaginable opportunities open up, especially in terms of market positioning and more efficient sales. Specifically in our case, through the social network Facebook, we regularly inform potential customers about news and current events.

For women, as well as for men, both in business and in agriculture, success requires patience and perseverance. It is important not to allow society to belittle your work based on gender by knowing that you have done your best and to stand shoulder to shoulder with other members of your household.



Teamwork always gives the best results, no matter who is leading the team.



Tourtouni Georgia



Trikala (Greece)

www.facebook.com/tzortzina.tzortzinakos



The business was launched 25 years ago by my father. After his death, my mother and I took over the management of the olive trees. We produce organic olive oil, without medical interventions and fertilizers. Since it is a demanding business, I have developed partnerships in order to certify our products as organic. In addition, I attend training and seminars in order to be able to respond to this venture.

The advantages of the business are that the olive oil produced is pure and in high quality, accompanied with all the benefits for human health. A weak point is the lack of support from the government and the high taxes. Also, Covid-19 has seriously affected our business. There was a change in customer habits during the pandemic and especially during the lockdown. People did not buy, as they were afraid to invest their money in an expensive but qualitative product like organic olive oil.

In order to promote our products, I use social media platforms. I have not developed a specific promotion strategy, however.

My advice to women who want to work in this field is the following: You should not rely on grants and support from the state. It is recommended to seek other producers and work as a team, because each producer alone will face serious difficulties to maintain a viable business.







Località Pontorio 8

02026 Rocca Sinibalda, Lazio, (Italy)

www.colleberardino.itFacebook: [Azienda-Agricola-Colle-Berardino](https://www.facebook.com/Azienda-Agricola-Colle-Berardino)Instagram: [colle_berardino](https://www.instagram.com/colle_berardino)

Our farm, Colle Berardino, is located in the heart of the Latium Apennines, in the town of Rocca Sinibalda, a perched village with a beautiful old town and a castle among the largest and most little known in Italy. At first here there were only olive trees, then the passion for beekeeping and honey broke out.

It's already some years that we take care of our small handkerchief of the Apennines, experimenting with sustainable agriculture and respectful of the environment that surrounds us.

In our fields, we grow legumes and cereals. We take care of a small orchard composed of varieties now forgotten: Verdaccia plum, Apple Francesca, Ravenna cherry, Visciole and many others. A vineyard with grapes typical of the area (Malvasia del Lazio and Cesanese). Together with our bees, we produce excellent millefiori honey.

The main strength of Colle Berardino lies in the peculiarities of the territory in which the company is located... we are in the middle of a protected nature reserve and this allows us to cultivate land in a treasure trove of biodiversity. This strength, however, can often be a point of weakness because every day we have to fight the damage caused by wildlife... but just be more astute and use ad hoc fences!

Another point of weakness is the lack of long-term planning that is often difficult to achieve due to the company's limited resources in terms of employees.





The proximity to a metropolis like Rome allows us to experiment with a wide range of alternative sales methods such as GAS, farmers markets and deliveries of all kinds on online reservations.

The COVID period was by far a period of renewal with regard to the classic types of sales that we normally implemented. In the space of a few days we received many requests for shipments throughout Italy and some European countries, so we tried our hand at organising orders and various

shipments. As far as home deliveries are concerned, we are trying to group together several companies that have the same ethics as we do, trying to organise delivery shifts in order to optimise movement.



Colle Berardino





Vesna Peteh (OPG Peteh)

The seat of the family farm "Peteh" is in Rovinj, Moncierlongo bb (road Rovinj-Rovinjsko selo). In our fields, we are engaged in the production of seasonal vegetables and fruits.

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<http://www.peteh.eu/>



The restored olive grove stretches along the south-western slope of the Monte Cavalle hill, along which we raise new plantations from year to year, exclusively of autochthonous olive varieties. Olives are grown organically without the use of pesticides and fertilizers. The fruits are picked by hand, in early October and processed the same day.



We produce three ecological extra virgin olive oils "Monte Cavalle", namely two varieties of Buža and Rošinjol and a blend of Buža, Rošinjola and Karbonaca, in packages of 250 and 500 ml. The oils are of top quality, as evidenced by the numerous medals won in recent years. We opted for three oils because we believe that we have enabled the application of our oils on/with all dishes, from mild Buža through a medium blend of Buža, Rošinjol and Carbonaca to bitter and spicy Rošinjol.

This year has been especially difficult because we place our oils on the market through various events and in restaurants. There was significantly less traffic and numerous events were not held, due to COVID restrictions, the restaurants were closed. The only way was to step up internet promotions and online sales. We are really grateful to our regular customers who made their purchase online.





Tijana Marković

You can find the products at:

www.zenskapijaca.rs



PPG "Marković"

Suvodanje village, Valjevo municipality
(Serbia)

Facebook: [tijana.jovanovic](https://www.facebook.com/tijana.jovanovic)

Our agricultural farm Marković is mainly engaged in cattle breeding, although we also have planted plots of raspberries, blackberries and some plums (which are for home use). My father-in-law started this business about 15 years ago, then my husband continued, and I joined them 5 years ago.

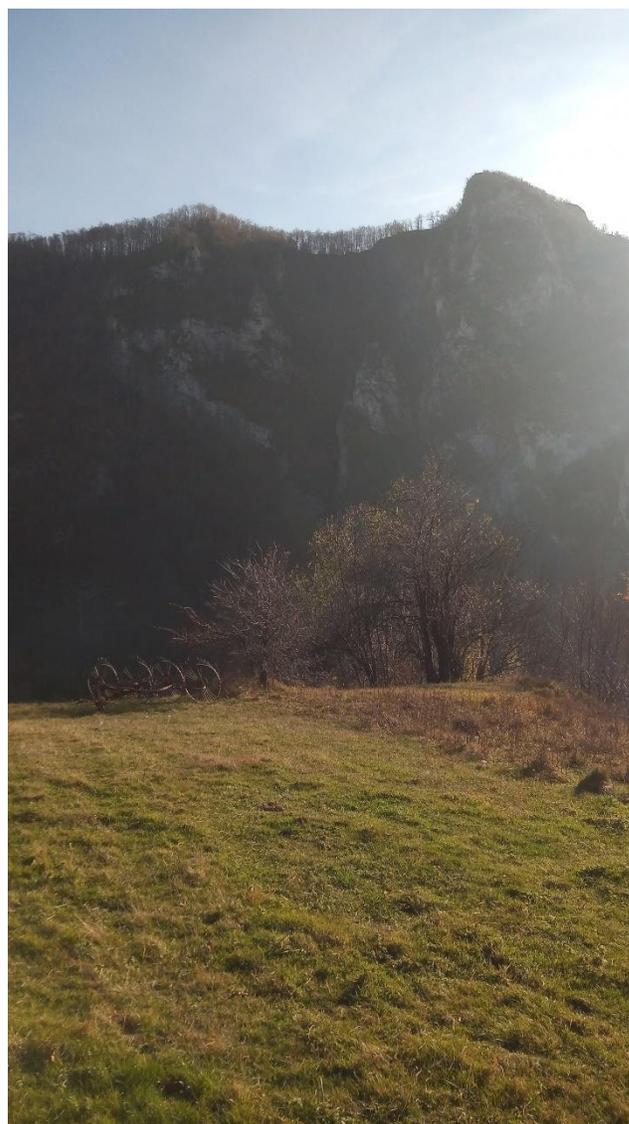
Slowly, step by step, we have developed a multifunctional agricultural household that has quality and healthy products in its offer throughout the year with mostly direct sales.

Serious problems faced by rural farmers are poor infrastructure and the lack of guaranteed prices for agricultural products. On the other hand, the beauty and advantage are that we work on our property, breathe fresh air without aero pollution and produce healthy domestic products.

I think that new technologies can help farmers a lot. Today we live in a time where everything is based on the internet and the role of social networks is

important. This provides an opportunity to promote our products and to spread our marketing campaign through social networks, and to reach more people. At the same time, the use of the Internet allows us to find out about various benefits and conveniences offered by the state and foreign funds.

I deeply believe that health lies in nature. There is nothing more beautiful than living in the countryside, farming, breathing mountain air and consuming clean water and food. Therefore, I strive to harmonise my agricultural activity with nature and respect for the environment, so that I can offer fresh and healthy



products on the market. I would recommend everyone to visit the village as often as possible, thus helping the villagers to survive and make a living from their work, and in return, they give healthy and quality food.



The time of the coronavirus affected all of us and moved everyone's plans. We, as farmers, suffered a lot of damage, since the export and purchase of cattle stopped and the markets did not work. Therefore, as an association of women farmers of the Kolubara district, of which I am a member, we have made it a little easier to sell our products. In the first wave of the pandemic, with the help of the ŽUKO association, we opened an online women's market through which we sold our domestic products with home delivery.



Avra Panousopoulou



Agia Larissas, Greece

www.facebook.com/Yiam.Avra

<https://yiam.gr/>



My love for cooking and the need to find a way to use our agricultural products since 1999, were the reasons I started processing them for us and later came the idea to sell them. I set up a workshop first in Franzis in Lamia and the products Yiams started to be sold in the best delicacies in Athens and all over Greece and now I am in Agia of Larissa which is a small town near Kissavos mountain. Yiams (my products) have crossed Greek borders and are available in delicatessens in Europe and America.



I am very lucky to do what I love, and I want to believe that through my work I will be able to keep some traditional recipes, those who eat Yiam will be thanked and I will put a stone to learn the traditional Greek cuisine, to love and evolve, and to we bring her back to the current housewife in what a modern way, helping her to marry good food with a lack of free time.

In the Yiam jars, you will find pure flavors made with a lot of fun, a lot of attention, a lot of taste and original flavors for all your quests related to good food.

I reached the peak of productivity in 2009 with 170 different codes, from sweet and savory delicacies hidden in beautiful jars. Jars that capture the products of the Greek land, combined with love and imagination.





In these jars are jams, appetizers, pastries, chocolate cakes, and sesame pies, yogurt cheeses, caramelized onions with mushrooms, sweet Florin peppers and spicy, green ketchup, green tomatoes all love highlight the taste of Greek products.



The main obstacle in the plans is the situation. I feel like I'm in an unfriendly environment, which is Greece. One year the taxes are 2500 euros, and the next year the way of taxation changes and you must give 7500 euros. But then it's too late to change something to redefine strategy and you are forced to make violent moves, reduce codes or staff and make moves that are not strategically correct.



In Greece the obstacles are huge. Like any attempt to venture - and so you have to love it a lot to be able to fight it.

If I could give any advice to women who want to follow this career is to do it, if they love it. It is a very difficult job because it has many areas that you have to be good, and you also have to face and defeat the Greek bureaucracy...

Social media has helped me a lot in promoting my work, especially abroad. There are many opportunities through online platforms for people to get to know you before buying your product but also to listen to the reviews of others and be encouraged to buy.

With the COVID situation at first, it did not seem to affect us, however, the people became more cautious with their finances, so the number of orders fell.

I hope we are able to handle this situation and remain alive, healthy and productive, because fear is the biggest enemy.





Agitu Ideo Gudeta

A beautiful story of integration with a tragic ending

 Azienda Agricola La Capra Felice (Italy)
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www.lacaprafelice.com
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Agitu Ideo Gudeta from Ethiopia has been living in Trentino for several years to pursue her passion and challenge: living in harmony with nature and recovering the beautiful Pezzata Mòchena goat from extinction.

With joy and determination, Agitu has recovered 11 hectares of abandoned land and has developed it as an uncontaminated pasture for her herd of goats.

Thanks to the passion and knowledge she learned from her maternal grandmother, Agitu raises goats and processes cheese using traditional methods, which today are increasingly necessary for sustainable and quality farming.

Farm "Happy Goat" (La Capra Felice)



The challenges in agriculture for a woman entrepreneur are always many, but Agitu does not let herself be intimidated even by the risk that her flock could be attacked by bears. To protect her goats, she decided to take some "original" countermeasures: "When I see footprints or signs of its presence," she says, "I lock myself in my car with firecrackers. It's enough to make a little noise and my 'neighbor' knows it's better to go somewhere else."

Agitu's commitment is also to defend the territory and propose a model of a sustainable organic farm that can function as a stimulus and encouragement for those who wish to create new ways of living, working and living together.

The company was born from a project of recovery of abandoned lands and local rustic breeds. It deals with goat breeding carried out through biological method and transformation of the raw material, goat milk, and direct sale of the derivative. Organic cheeses are made from pasture grass, yogurt and also cosmetic products with goat's milk. The company was founded in 2010 and currently, after several moves, operates in the municipality of Frassilongo, in the Valle dei Mòcheni, raising the pezzata mòchena goat, a breed in danger of extinction, and the chamois of the Alps.



Now the company is working to recover disused structures to create a mountain economy generated by abandoned buildings and land. The intent is to promote a local micro-economy able to enhance the territory. The farm raises a flock of 180 goats of the Pezzata Mòchena and Camosciata delle Alpi breeds, 50 laying hens and grows vegetables. The uncontaminated pasture spreads over several hectares of land, recovered from abandonment. There, in that corner of the mountain, there is also the small artisan dairy and social agritourism.



Gudeta became a national symbol of environmentalism and successful refugee integration in Italy after being lauded by politician Emma Bonino. In 2019, she was a nominee for the Luisa Minazzi-Environmentalist of the Year prize by Legambiente. She was sometimes referred by the media as "La Regina delle Capre Felici" ("the Queen of Happy Goats")



On December 29, 2020, Gudeta died, aged 42, in her apartment from blows to her head with a hammer. It was reported that she suffered sexual violence too. Her body was discovered by neighbours after she missed a business appointment. Adams Suleiman, a Ghanaian seasonal worker she had hired, was arrested and charged with murder.



OPG Marija Komić



OPG Komić is engaged in the production of medicinal herbs, olive oil, honey and the collection

of wild herbs, as well as the production of products for cosmetic and food purposes. We treat all our plantations (olives, lavender, rosemary, sage) with ecological means and this year we are entered in the Register of subjects in organic production for growing and processing plants to the final product. We base our production concept on the traditional use of plants of the Istrian peninsula with an emphasis on a scientific approach and the proper use of resources. We are very active in education and practical workshops to act on people's awareness of better choice and use of products for food and cosmetics, emphasising the nutritional and medicinal properties.

We especially emphasise the educational part of the younger population that takes place at the primary school level, so that in the last four years through the project "Wild plants in nutrition - science and tradition" educated and practical workshops pointed out the value of wild plants throughout the history of our region, the scientific dimension of proper consumption, recognition and potential dangers of inadequate approach to the topic.

Of course, we felt a heavy blow through the COVID 19 situation, we find it difficult to get out, but we do not give up on production.

Our product range is as follows: face creams, lip balms, various balms, body oils, hydrolate, essential oil, bath salts, bags with dried lavender flower. The following products are in the development phase: hand cream, soaps - liquid and solid, suntan oil, deodorant stick.



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Danijela Marković

 PPG; Oglađenovac, Valjevo (Serbia)
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Danijela Marković is a young farmer from the Valjevo area. On her property in the village of Oglađenovac, she makes delicious jams, sweets and juices from fruit.

You can find the products at: www.zenskapijaca.rs

Far from noise and pollution, at 340 m altitudes is our village. Our family farm "Marković" is tucked away in its beauties, surrounded by forests, meadows and springs. The farm is traditionally engaged in fruit growing, mostly plum and blackberry cultivation. We also process our fruits and vegetables into delicious and healthy handmade winter-preserves, keeping the tradition of our grandmothers.



The basic feature and what we proudly point out is that we strive for quality, not quantity. I believe that the main strength and advantage of our farm lies in the preservation of nature and the uniqueness of the terrain on which we grow our fruits, as well as in careful processing using traditional recipes, but also in the readiness to adopt new knowledge and skills. What I would rate as a weakness and what I should work on is the insufficient visibility of the products I prepare with care and love. Aware of this shortcoming, which is a stumbling block for most women involved in agriculture and the production of fresh and healthy food, we are trying to find a solution in e-commerce. Therefore, in the desire to become more interesting to the market, several of us founded an informal group that started selling products online through the platform www.zenskapijaca.rs.

For women who are farmers or would like to engage in agriculture and produce fresh and healthy food, I would say that quality and patience are key to success.



Georgia Giannarou



Astypalea island, Dodecanese,
Greece

Local confectionery and products

My business was launched 20 years ago in Astypalea.

I was able to create tasteful local confectionery and I had my own fields and animals, so I decided to earn my own income so as not to depend on my husband.

Our family owns a hotel, in which we are mainly working in the summer season, so then things are more stressful for me for combining both professions at the same time, Fortunately, my sisters were willing to help me combine them, so it became easier to maintain it through these years.



Ζαχαροπλαστική "Ζαγορά"

I produce local sweets, the so-called "xerotigana" that are offered as a wedding treat. Tourists are also fond of them so in summer they are in great demand. I also create local cookies, fresh milk, rusks, pastels and conserves. Most of them cover the needs of the citizens on our island but there are also some that I promote in Greece through friends and acquaintances. My business is not formal as I cannot maintain the costs due to high taxation. In case, my business becomes more profitable, and I can cover the costs, maybe this will change.

The advantage of this job is that it offers me financial independence and at the same time I work with my family and maintain the local tradition. The downside is that many times I may not be able to cope with the high demand, especially in summer due to the fact I am working also in my husband's

hotel. On the other side, in winter I have a very low income, which is barely enough.

In terms of technology, I have not used anything special other than a flour machine. My daughter suggests me to put the products on Facebook and promote them abroad. We have put some photos on her Facebook page, but I am afraid I may have problems with the tax office since my business is not registered.





Now, with the COVID situation, I can say that although I did not have much income, I helped my family a lot during this period. Our tourists have been fewer this year in Greece and the family income from my husband's business decreased dramatically. Also, the people of the island preferred to cover their needs internally rather than buying from Athens, so my winter clientele increased somehow.

Those women who are thinking of following my path, they are welcome to do so. I suggest them to implement it officially and to promote their work through Facebook and to gain customers from abroad as well. It is a very nice job when you love it and even better when it supports you financially.




Angela Maria Zeoli

Oro del Sannio



San Croce del Sannio, Campania, Italy

www.orodelsannio.itwww.facebook.com/OroDelSannio/www.instagram.com/orodelsannio/www.pinterest.it/orodelsannio/twitter.com/orodelsannio

I inherited "my" project from my mother who had, in turn, inherited it from my grandmother. The farm, in fact, a total of 10 hectares in the village of Santa Croce del Sannio in the province of Benevento, has always been run by women. As a child, I followed my grandmother to the discovery of medicinal herbs and waited for transhumance shepherds (a type of pastoralism or nomadism, a seasonal movement of livestock) who, twice a year, crossed the royal sheep-track Pescasseroli-Candela, stopped in the valley below my house, weaved the rushes to make "fascère" (containers) and gave cheese and ricotta to us, children of the district. Fascinated by the plains and the animals, my university course at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences was a foregone conclusion, with which I hoped to improve the business. Paradoxically, my university studies had dealt a severe blow to my romantic conception of rural life. I learned that modern agriculture must be productive, intensive, must exploit the land and animals, use chemical fertilizers, pesticides and fungicides to obtain the greatest possible amount of products. Once graduated, now convinced that the "stamp" of the land of my family could not guarantee me a future, I had sought work elsewhere.



It took me almost thirty years to return exactly where I started from, with the newfound awareness that the land should not be exploited but kept as gold. So I took over the farm from my mother and gave it a new name, Oro del Sannio, and a new life. No longer traditional agriculture but an organic agro-herbal farm, cultivation of medicinal herbs, vegetables from historical cultivars recovered grown in synergistic gardens, multifunctionality, rural hospitality, educational farm, production of natural cosmetics from food raw materials, a small flock of sheep for the production of wool and farmyard animals.



The strengths are many, from the proximity of the farm to the millennial route of “the royal sheep trail Pescasseroli-Candela”, historical route of transhumance and authentic mine of biodiversity, from which come the seeds of medicinal plants grown on the farm, to the presence of a spring downstream of the farm that allows the constant supply of water for irrigation, the natural fertility of the land, never exploited for intensive agriculture, the presence of forests that allow easy hiking trails.

The size of the farm, with only 7 hectares of cultivable lands and fragmentation are certainly a point of weakness, as well as the altitude (high hills, 700 m above sea level) and the harsh climate that limit the production cycles and excursions.

New technologies offer opportunities that were once unimaginable even to companies like mine, far from large urban areas and traditional tourist routes. The company is a supplier to Rainbow GAS (Ethical Consumer Group) of Benevento and uses e-commerce mainly to sell olive oil, which is quantitatively the most important product.



The company, given its small size, has niche productions that it sells mainly to the Rainbow GAS and to local customers. Also relevant is the activity as an educational farm.



The COVID has drastically limited sales and reduced school visits to zero. In order to offer schools a profitable and safe visit, we realised a didactic area of about 1000 square meters, next to the farm center, with officinal plants (aromatic, alimurgic, dyeing, liquor, medicinal), a small orchard of forgotten fruits and a 'path of the senses' that is a path bordered by officinal plants and paved with different natural materials, to be walked barefoot.





Ester Geissa Đurić

The owners of the Baioco oil mill are Ester Geissa Đurić with her husband Andrej.



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I am an agronomy engineer with a specialisation in Mediterranean plants and olive growing. During my experience, I identified the problems of chemical processes in agriculture, their irreparable harmful impact on plants, animals, soil, the entire ecosystem, and thus on humans.



The Baioco Oil Mill has been operating since 1918, and in 1996 it became the property of the Đurić family, maintaining the land's tradition and supplying top-quality extra virgin olive oil. In 2003, we started with the introduction of modern machines, and today we continue technological innovations to improve product quality and sustain the production of one of the best extra virgin olive oils in the world.



There is an interesting anecdote the locals jokingly say that olive oil instead of blood flows through the veins of Andrej Đurić, the head of the family, since he always talks about olive growing with passion and zeal. Andrej has the ability to convey his passion to others; he did it with me, his wife Ester Geissa Đurić, too. Today we run our family production together, and I am in the position of director. For us, this job is more than a passion, it is our natural predisposition. We are born and raised surrounded by olives, we breathe with them, we live with them, we rejoice and suffer with them, and we consume olive oil from an early age.



We are a guarantee for customers. In addition to producing high-quality extra virgin olive oil, to have a BIO certificate, we must pass rigorous inspections in all fields of production - from olive groves, harvesting, the arrival of olives in the mill to the control of the overall production process. It is a long and expensive procedure, but we stick to it with pride.



We apply the process in 2 phases, we pick the olives by hand, and we use water minimally, which achieves a very high quality of the oil.



In the last phase of production, by separating the pulp from the fruit stone, we get the so-called "nocciolino", clean, dry and top-quality that is 100% organic and immediately ready for use. We were the first in Croatia to start the production of this energy source, which is much cleaner, cheaper and more caloric than pellets and firewood, and we also use it to heat the oil mill and our house.

Biological production is the future, protection of humanity and struggle for the survival of the planet. By investing in knowledge, technology and ecology, we have become a modern oil mill with one of the highest quality and award-winning oils. We are proud to belong to that small circle of farmers who contribute to the well-being and future of our children and the entire Earth through responsible agriculture.

Faced with a drop in visits to our store in Vodnjan (due to limited movement due to the corona crisis), and to make sales more affordable, we improved our website with the webshop www.baiooco.eu. We are encouraged by the feeling that people are increasingly turning to quality, healthy and biological nutrition.



Jasmina Milivojević



PPG
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(Serbia)



I have been actively growing vegetables since 2013, and I inherited the household from my father. I was born in Austria, but my homeland attracted me with its beauty, climate and fertile land. Thus, were born new ideas and a desire to try in my own business. Thinking about what I could grow on my 2 hectares of fertile land, I decided to turn my ideas into the production of vegetable crops. I returned to my fatherland, to the

village of Vrelo in the municipality of Ub in the Kolubara district, and started producing seasonal vegetables. I have developed vegetable production on 4



hectares, of which I have 2 ha and rent 2 ha. In the fields, under the open sky, I produce seasonal vegetables. 17 greenhouses (each 30 m long) have been set up on 6,000 square meters to extend the vegetable production season throughout the year. I grow zucchini, sweet peppers and cabbage from plant crops. I offer a variety of types. So my fields are colourful when yellow, green and red bell peppers ripen, when the red and green cabbage cover the land or when the zucchini bloom and bear fruit.



Strengths

- motivation, harmony, determination and perseverance
- knowledge and experience
- greenhouse vegetable production
- without credit burden
- high-quality fresh vegetables

Weaknesses

- lack of manpower, processing machinery and adequate distribution vehicles
- undeveloped sales network

Working in agriculture is difficult and risky. I would tell women to primarily produce healthy and quality products because survival on the planet depends on ourselves. I would also tell them that they should not be afraid to enter this type of production and not be timid of challenges. I advise them to diversify their agricultural production and opt for more different crops because if you lose on one harvest, you can cover it by profits from other crops.





Derveni Vasiliki



Ampelakia Larissas, Greece

Chestnut production

My family received some fields from the Forest Service in 1935,

approximately 50 acres. We planted chestnuts and for the past 45 years that I have undertaken the leadership, we have been taken care of them.

In the past years, chestnuts were not in great demand. It is difficult to be preserved and, besides, the fields were in an inaccessible area, which was very difficult for us. However, the past 10 years for chestnuts' demand has been rapidly growing. As a result, the chestnut landowners became more interested and began to take care of their land, bringing a machine to irrigate. Because it is a mountain, no tractor can enter and the biggest problem we have been facing is that as a material it rots easily.

Chestnut is divided into categories. Category A is difficult to be produced in our area (Ampelakia) due to the microclimate of the area. As a result, big supermarkets did not buy it. Weather conditions must be favorable for such a production to take place. Category B, which is the most common here, is exported to Italy where is in great demand.

The strength of this business is the independence it offers. It allows you to work in your own land and place and at the same time the rest of the year to deal with other crops because chestnut is a seasonal crop. Otherwise, agricultural work is always much more difficult, you can work and not be paid. Some years ago, it was more difficult. In recent years, thanks to the local Cooperative, things have been improved. The difficulties I encountered this year with coronavirus were the challenge in finding staff. Due to the restriction on transportation because of COVID, workers from other areas could not come to work in Ampelakia. The chestnut requires to be picked at the right time so as not to spoil. The result was that part of the production was lost because of this situation.



I would advise a woman who wants to follow this career path is to love the ground, learn as much as she can and dare to start it, even if she does not know how to work from the first day. And to know that she will work in adverse conditions especially when she cannot use tools.





Il Fuco e L'Operaia is a family farming project that was born from mine (Federica) and Valerio's passion for natural and environmentally friendly agriculture and farming. The project was born in 2014 and turned into a real company in 2016 where I am the owner and Valerio an employee. Today we breed more than 200 families of Apis Mellifera Ligustica with the permanent method on the territory of Cerveteri, we cultivate an olive grove with more than 350 plants Frantoio, Leccino and Pendolino varieties. We produce mixed-flower honey, propolis, beeswax and swarms; we offer services such as pollination of greenhouse and field crops and swarm recovery. We also deal with ApiDidattica through experiential workshops aimed at children and adults, and we offer for events and weddings Bombomiele (favors) made with honey. Our strengths are passion and teamwork, without which all the daily difficulties would be insurmountable. The size, we are a small company, easy to manage and very flexible. The long-term planning, we have started a company and weighed the investments making small steps and adapting the path to our needs and possibilities. Training has been and will be the basis on which to base our future designs, as well as necessary to enhance the value of the productions and position them within the market for effective sales. Choice of productions difficult to achieve. Weaknesses are excessive customization of activities can lead to short-sighted decision-making and management risks. This is a good way of ensuring that the firm's products are competitive. Social showcases, marketplaces and e-commerce are great opportunities. One of our main sales channels is direct sales, since there are no busy markets, we decided to invest in e-commerce and social media marketing campaign.





OPG Ana Sarvan



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I am the owner and the only employee of the Sarvan Family Farm. At the beginning of the year, I applied to the certification body AgriBioCert, which performs the first supervision for organic agriculture, joined the association Istrian eco product, and I offer my products at eco markets.

- From an early age, I spent every free moment with my grandparents on their property near Lobarika, where, in addition to cultivating the land, they also fed pigs, only to continue with cultivating the land and growing vegetables over the years. Of course, at that time, I did not even think, let alone fantasise, about cultivating the land and growing vegetable as my occupation. However, working in the European East, returning to Pula, daily trips to Koromačno and back, the birth of my daughter, the rift between work, child, kindergarten and caring for the elderly and tired grandmother Maria and grandfather Velja, made me think more intensely about priorities and desires.



And, I said - enough! Three hectares of land not far from Lobarika stood semi-cultivated, quite neglected, and everything with a hint of "eco" was interesting to me, followed by a conversation with my parents, who, surprisingly, unreservedly supported me, grandparents were delighted even if they were not sure what I really want, brother Nadan promised all the help... and here I am. I cultivate almost one hectare of land, I study intensively and absorb knowledge, the first year is behind me, I still produce only fresh products, but I hope to grow enough and start processing.



For now, I rely only on direct sales, on my property, and I am also present at the solidarity ecological markets in Pula, Rovinj and Novigrad, and through solidary ecological groups, I also place products on orders.

I must emphasise that for us, small certified organic producers, who are not taken care of too much by the system, the unification in the Istrian eco-product association, sales at Solidarity eco markets, and mutual socialising and exchange of experiences opened the possibility of better work and progress, marketing products and production maintenance. We supported and helped each other throughout the pandemic.





Vesna Milić

My agricultural household is engaged in field farming and cows breeding. I inherited the property from my grandfather, and otherwise, the farm has existed for over 100 years. In the beginning, it was 9.5 ha, inherited, and later it visibly expanded from the purchased 5 ha. Due to the expansion of livestock, we have additionally leased a large part of arable land. Thus, today on our farm, we cultivate a total of 60 hectares. My husband Aleksandar and I work on the estate every day, while the older daughter helps with milking cows and other household chores, and the younger daughters help with collecting hay. Currently, we are sowing corn, soybeans, wheat and sunflowers. We produce alfalfa from fodder plants, and we have meadows with grasses for grazing livestock. We sell a smaller part of the annual land yields, while the larger part of the harvest we use to feed fattening cattle and cows. Income from the sale of milk supports the whole family and provides working capital for investments. So cows and heifers bring us income and joy and glory. At the livestock exhibition, our household was declared the best livestock producer in the Kolubara district, and we also received the award for the best heifer.

The strengths are the love for work in agriculture and the lowland climate in which the property is located. The weaknesses are that the mechanisation is outdated and needs to be renewed with a more modern tractor and attached machines.

I would like to tell women farmers - not to be ashamed of working in agriculture because it is the most beautiful job, even if it is one of the most difficult. It is necessary to get up with the birth of the sun to achieve everything. But, you are your own chief... A woman must be skilled in organising everything well. Harmony, mutual respect for all family members and instructing children to accept daily household chores are also significant. For years, a great love for both animals and native fields has been developing. It is a truly wonderful feeling when your heart is full because you watch the fields bloom.



PPG

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<https://zenskapijaca.rs/>





Eliza Ntoulis – Marmeliza

Naousa, Greece
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My business is Marmeliza Company. It was founded in Naousa, Greece in 2012. The idea came from the huge quantity of the produced fruits in my area and process them to products that are closely linked to the local tradition. The aim is to produce natural, tasty and aromatic jams with or without sugar, desserts, dried fruits and sugar-free pestil based on the traditional way of preparation.



The strengths of the business are the immediate access to the abundant raw material that is available in the region of Naousa, Greece. Another one is that the products are a result of the inspirational mixture of local tradition, customs and traditions. The packaging is also inspired by this field, especially from a tradition called Janissaries and Boules. Weaknesses of the company are intense competition.

New technologies contribute significantly to the operation and development of the business. The new technological equipment for production allows the company to have a more extroverted character and to export products to European countries and the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, the effect of Covid 19 was significant because sales have decreased due to the situation and especially the cancellation of large exhibitions has played an important role in the non-development of partnerships and sales of the company mainly abroad.

The only advice I could give is that nothing is as easy as it seems, and it takes perseverance and patience to achieve the goals!





Armanda Sirotić Buzet



OPG Armanda, Croatia

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Organic honey



Our OPG is engaged in the production and sale of honey and bee products from our own apiaries. Although we are located in the very center of Istria, the diversity - climate and vegetation - favors that in this relatively small area we enjoy the benefits of various honey plants or bee pastures. Starting from the north of Istria, Čićarija, which is rich in heather to the center of Istria where thousands of acacia trees reign. After their flowering, thorns turn yellow in the karst areas, followed by chestnuts, while the blue of the medicinal sage spreads along the south and eastern coast of Istria. The declining agricultural cultivation of central Istria favors a variety of flowers, which gives a distinctive taste to meadow honey. This diversity of the plant world

allows us to taste nature in its original form. As we have been engaged in beekeeping since 1980, our goal is to produce and preserve honey and bee products in the most natural form possible, so that the preserved ones reach the consumer's table. We try to make our beehives as well as the treatment of the bees themselves as in harmony with nature as possible, so we decided to start with the organic production of honey. Since 2002, we have been under the expert supervision of AgriBioCert Omišalj (we have been registered in the Register of Organic Producers since December 2004), which proves that certified organic honey comes to the table of consumers from our apiaries. Through all these years, we are recognisable on the market as A&Z honey from Buzet. We are currently the only certified organic honey producers in Istria. In addition to honey, we offer flower powder, propolis and honey complex, honey with dried fruit, honey with Ceylon cinnamon and bee cream.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, we focused all our efforts on web sales and inclusion on online sales portals. That way we managed to somehow get to the end of this year in hopes that the next one will be better. We have certainly suffered economic losses and fear and uncertainty.





Liana Agostinelli



Agostinelli Liana Farm

Contrada Campanaro n. 2,
82018 San Bartolomeo in Galdo BN (Italy)

The farm Agostinelli Liana was born from a generational change in 2009. Located in the hills of Fortore, in the province of Benevento, in the village of San Bartolomeo in Galdo, we grow cereals, legumes and vegetables. In the pipeline, there are several projects including the processing of products through a mini-laboratory, because we believe that in this activity there can be a large part of the margins that we need to grow the farm. My farm has also been the instrument to start dealing with agricultural policies, becoming president of the Campania region of the young farmers of the CIA. In this way, I was able to get to know many realities and imagine what the future of my farm could be. The farm takes many advantages from the direct sale of products. Being products of



excellence cultivated without irrigation, it was easy to win customers that with their word of mouth have allowed increasing sales. Unfortunately, today we still need to improve the infrastructure to be more physically reachable, to be better known through the web, and to close the supply chain within the company. The web offers every day the possibility to enter different sale sites. To date, we are also present on the sales portal of CIA (Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori / Italian Confederation of Farmers). But we still do not fully exploit all the opportunities that modernity and technology offer us.

Covid has had a strong impact on agribusiness in general, and also for our company, especially due to the lack of labourers to harvest the produce, right at the time when Covid itself has produced more purchase requests.





Marija Đurić

Mara's Pantry & Tasty corner d.o.o.



Maršala Tita 87, Ruski Krstur
(Serbia)

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www.facebook.com/marinspajz



How did Mara's Pantry come about? I first heard about chokeberry a couple of years ago, when I started consuming it on the doctor's advice for immune recovery. It was hard for me to eat it fresh because it is harsh, so I blended it into my mix of fruit detox salads with ginger and honey. I quickly came up with the idea of how great it would be for something healthy to be

tasty, so I used my experience as a technology engineer to create products. We planted berries on the family farm in Ruski Krstur and started production. Thus was born the idea of Mara's Pantry... I rounded out the process - from the field to the jar. From the field, where I grow chokeberry and other berries with a lot of love and attention, the fruits end up in jars of delicious sweets - jams, fruit spreads and juices. My guiding thought is to create a blend of modern and traditional products. I make a combination of healthy and delicious. My mission is to create healthy and delicious products. Healthy food, healthy life. It is necessary to have a clear goal and an elaborate development plan. Tasty corner d.o.o. I founded in December 2018 to market products.



Strengths - raw materials grown ecologically with personal control, products of original recipes, quality in the first place



Weaknesses - entering the market because small entrepreneurs in development often cannot cope with great competition and financial preconditions to display their product on the shelves of large markets (large retail chains for listing products require certain financial resources per item, but this is not ultimate financing just to be in their offer; all this changes the price of products on the shelf, which is often unrealistically high for the end consumer, so a company without large working capital cannot operate for a long time, especially since the payment currency is often up to 360 days...)



Due to the COVID pandemic, this is an extremely difficult period for small entrepreneurs and farmers. We lost the chance to communicate with customers during this year's agricultural fair. All fairs and negotiations have been cancelled. So I am developing a webshop and connecting with small manufacturers. Digital marketing, interaction with customers through social networks, sales through a webshop, availability of information relevant to product development and expansion of the product assortment - all this is of great significance for a successful business.



When you prepare something, the essential spice is love. I like to say: "Don't pick green apples because they will be sweet and beautiful later". This job requires time, dedication and patience. Be informed and follow modern trends because that is the only way you can succeed.





Doudounaki Eleni

The Family Farm



Varipetro, Crete island (Greece)

www.facebook.com/doueleni

www.facebook.com/The-Family-Farm

The farm became the property of my family a century and a half ago. Initially, it had olives, vines, pears, figs, citrus. When I created my own family, I became aware of the quality of food and thought that all parents want to offer their children the best quality in terms of health. So, I thought of offering them my own production free of pesticides and other agrochemicals. Seven years ago, I turned my crop into "organic" following exactly the instructions of the "experts".



The conversion of a farm from conventional to organic, includes a period of time in which the products are not considered organic nor conventional, and as a result, they cannot be sold. This entails financial loss. Besides, organic products are not always good-looking and therefore may not be sold.



The thought of organic desserts came in an attempt to create something handmade as I learned from my mother. Thus began the idea of creating organic jams.

The innovation I introduced was the production of organic sugar-free jam for people who are dieting or suffering from diabetes.

The raw materials I process are the goods of the organic estate; orange, lemon, grapefruit, clementine, despolo, avocado, in a dessert, jam and chutney without added sugar. For sweetener, I use grape juice. I have been awarded the Inovagro Prize for this innovation.

In the field of organic food standardisation, the use of any additional preservative, enrichment with pigments





or fortifying flavours is prohibited. Also, everything that is written on the label of the jar must be organic such as cinnamon, anise, pepper and more. I process the fruit "from the field to the jar" immediately and in a small household quantity of one and a half kilos of fruit at a time. Most of my products are products with "0 kilometres" which means that they have respected the environment by zeroing the burden of transport with an ecological footprint. And around the discovery of Cretan local raw materials, special personal relationships and collaborations are built and the local economy is strengthened.

The strong point of the business is the fact that it is a family business and we all are instilled with the passion to offer the highest quality products possible. The weak parts include that organic crops need a respectable capital on which to rely financially during the period of the conversion but also in case of unexpected weather conditions which can threaten the products. In other words, it is extremely difficult to begin a business like this without capital which will allow you to survive when the loss is greater than the profit. With the heavy taxation in force in Greece, it is almost impossible for such a company to survive without the support of the state or a sponsor or a European program. Technology has certainly helped us to promote as we use social media to promote our products.

I would advise women who want to deal with this subject, to be willing to sacrifice a lot of personal time and to be ready for any eventuality as the situation is difficult. To be an organic farmer you have to want it! Be sensitive to the environment, the integrity of the soil, water, air... sensitive to bees lost for profit. You remain sensitive even when production decreases dramatically making economic sustainability difficult. Maintain respect for what you have chosen to do by continuing to offer healthy products with a richer taste and with respect for society, the environment and traditional culture.





OPG Zvijezdana Križmanić



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Our agricultural farm was founded in 2003 and since then we have become more and more intensively dedicated to agriculture every year. We are located near Pazin, the village of Veli Ježenj, 8 km away by road to Pula. Historically, our village is known for the great bishop Juraj Dobrila, whose birthplace is Ježenj. It is rich in offers of apartment tourist accommodation, which gives the advantage that tourists can enjoy local products from the heart of Istria. We want customers to recognise domestic production and with products from our family to be confident in the quality of domestic products directly from the field to the table.

From ancient times, agriculture in our family has been the main activity that has nourished many generations, so we have continued. We grow seasonal vegetables for the needs of markets and regular customers. From vegetables, we grow onions, garlic and potatoes (varieties Mona Lisa, Marabel and Red scarlet). You can also find red chicory and various salads, spinach, spring onions and other various seasonal vegetables in the seasonal offer.



We have recently planted vineyard peaches and, depending on the placement and sales, we intend to expand production. A novelty is the cultivation of tayberry, a very grateful fruit species that honors us with its fruits in early summer. Specific aromas and flavors suitable for fresh consumption and production of jams, spreads and juices for their own needs, and soon for the needs of customers.

Since 2018, we have started greenhouse production of green vegetables to extend the season throughout the year.

The Covid 19 pandemic has really changed the way we market our products, we have joined the web markets with seasonal vegetables and some of our fruit we have also activated the sale and delivery of baskets that we deliver to customers to order. The crisis is certainly being felt, but we are looking positively to the future.




Rosita Mastrota

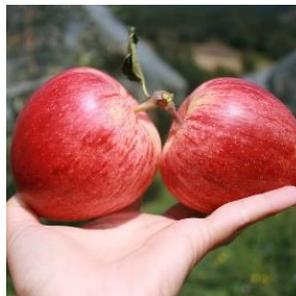

Radica Farm
87070 Cerchiara di Calabria
San Lorenzo Bellizzi (Italy)
www.facebook.com/leMeleDiRosita

I'm Rosita Mastrota, and my farm "Radica" was born from the desire to not abandon a land so beautiful, but so difficult as Calabria. After inheriting land in the mountains, in San Lorenzo Bellizzi and Cerchiara di Calabria, where sometimes even the roads are not present, with my family we decided to revolutionise everything and plant apples and berries while continuing with the cultivation of wheat and legumes, a crazy choice at the beginning but turned out to be successful then. We started with 100 apple trees

and 25 berries, today we have 1500 apple trees and over 3000 berries. A small reality for sure, but it is agriculture that I like to define as not organic, but respectful of the environment and people.

The strengths are many in my opinion, being a small company, it is easy to manage with only the help of my family, thus managing to follow the same thread. We innovate, always taking into account the tradition, we aim at quality and not quantity! The weak point is the lack of infrastructure. Thanks to fairs, festivals and local markets we made ourselves known, but a big help was given by social networks... because yes, if you know how to use them, they help a lot!

Every year I used to organise the open day in the company, it was a wonderful moment, that this year for the covid I could not replicate – Usually, we welcome families and schools to tell about our territory, in addition to the fact that we do mostly direct sales and therefore we are limited in this... I had therefore to give up hire person in the company during the collection. For direct sales, we had to fix a day and time with customers, a different appointment from the usual, but that ensures that we can bring our products in the homes while avoiding assemblages.





Dragana Antonović



PPG Antonović, Novi Bečej (Serbia)

www.facebook.com/dragananikola.antonovic

www.facebook.com/groups/225590969015860

PG Antonović is engaged in the production and sale of fruits and vegetables.

As a family, we are dealing with agriculture for several years, and we always focus on direct sales primarily to customers in the local community. I am a registered agricultural producer of strawberries. In addition to this berries fruit, on the family farm, together with my husband Nikola, we grow seasonal vegetables - potatoes, cabbage, onions, tomatoes, etc.

I had several attempts at my work. I first started growing raspberries. However, this proved to be the wrong choice. Problematic sales and low prices forced me to give up the raspberries, so I reoriented myself and planted strawberries on the land where the raspberries were. This production gives satisfactory results for now. At the very beginning, I set high standards and always try to maintain them despite the problems I face. Besides, strawberry is one of the most delicious morsels - at the time of ripening, it is a regular and welcome fruit on almost every table. In the challenging and troublesome first year of growing strawberries, we managed to lay a solid foundation and springboard for further work. Strawberries are of high quality, sweet and delicious. We pay great attention to small local customers, who can praise our products first hand. Besides, freshness, sweetness and fragrance are significant for customers, and they get quite lost by selling fruit in markets and shops. Those who buy once regularly return to buy our strawberries...





As I have already mentioned, we are committed to direct sales, and in that, we are greatly helped by social networks through which we promote our products and inform customers. Besides, in 2020, we started selling from the estate, at the stand from home. At our stand, we sell our agricultural commodities, but also

the products of other local farmers. Thus, fresh agricultural products come from our shelves to the kitchens and homes in our local community. Our stall is gradually developing into a small shop of agricultural commodities - fresh fruits and vegetables and processed products such as marmalades, jams, juices, pickles and the like.



Agriculture requires a lot of work and patience, and a lot also depends on the weather conditions. I would tell women to believe in themselves and the strength to cope with the challenges in agriculture. I advise them not to be discouraged and not to give up.





Zotou Aikaterini Eleni

Organic and Wild



Kalives 63100 Chalkidiki, Greece

www.goldentree.eu

Instagram: [eleni_zotou_golden_tree](https://www.instagram.com/eleni_zotou_golden_tree)

www.facebook.com/goldentreepdobioorganicoliveoil
[KalyvesChalkidikis](https://www.facebook.com/KalyvesChalkidikis)

Eleni Zotou is a sole proprietor or “one-woman business”, an organic farmer of olive oil trees, and owner/producer of the Golden Tree brand of olive oil products.

Golden Tree was created with the vision of selling agricultural products directly from the producer to the consumer. Our olive products and by-products are produced responsibly with the observance of all the required health and safety procedures, while the distribution of our products is carried out without intermediate suppliers, as much as possible.



We harvest a small organic grove of old olive trees, located in the mountainous region of Chalkidiki in northern Greece, producing high phenolic extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) of high quality. The olive groves are unusual: located in protected Natura Areas, they contain wild and half-wild olive trees that are at least 350 years old. For the preparation of the olive oil and other olive products, authentic, traditional Greek recipes are used that offer unique taste experiences.

The pure and exquisite ingredients, in combination with the secrets of our tradition, produce the most delicious, healthy and natural results.



For us all, the olive is precious and blessed and we leave nothing to chance and nothing to waste. The human resources of the company come exclusively from the agricultural sector and have many years of experience in the cultivation of the olive tree. Using an updated version of the traditional production process, we carefully and respectfully avoid harming nature, thus producing EVOO with no residues of pesticides. The precious golden liquid of the tree comes directly from the growers, without preservatives, use of toxins or other interventions. The fruits are harvested while they are still on the trees, producing an olive oil ideal for children and adults as part of a healthy diet. Our utilisation of the latest technologies and modern methods of production and packaging is key to the way we operate and reflects our sense of responsibility towards the consumer. With a focus on providing impeccable service and customer satisfaction, we acquired quality assurance certifications.



The company's activities are not limited to the Greek market but also extend abroad. In this way, we contribute to promoting the Greek diet and its benefits to health and longevity to a global audience.



Eleni's focus on producing high-quality and healthy products has led to numerous prizes in international competitions. Golden Tree EVOO "WILD ATHOS" received the Gold Award for two successive years (2016 & 2017) during the "Olympia Health & Nutrition Awards" for olive oil that meets or exceeds the requirements for the official EU health claim for olive oil (more than 250 mg polyphenols per kg of olive oil). In fact, the premium product green olive oil "WILD ATHOS" received more than 17 international awards during 2016-2017 for its health benefits, since it has been reported to contain more than 1000 mg polyphenols per kg of olive oil.



Aleksija Farina (OPG Farina)

We are located in the municipality of Višnjan in Farini.



Farini 16, 52463 Višnjan, Croatia

Phone: +385(0)52449624

E-mail: opg.farina@gmail.com

Agriculture is a branch that has traditionally been passed down from generation to generation in the family for several generations.

The owner of the farm is Alessandro Farina with his wife Aleksija.



The main activity we are engaged in beekeeping, fruit growing, vegetable growing and olive growing.

Beekeeping on our farm dates back to 1986. From then until 2008 to us, it was just an incidental hobby of a few hives. Due to the increased interest in honey and other bee products, we increased the number of hives to 15 and established our OPG. Today we count about 50 beehives located on two stationed apiaries, and the main pastures are acacia and meadow.

Encouraged by the fact that we have free land with the possibility of irrigation, the same year (2009) we started with the trial planting of blackberries and raspberries.

Realising that the soil and climate suit them, every year we slowly expanded the plantations because the interest in this type of fruit has grown, especially since the cultivation is fully



adapted to eco principles. Today, raspberries and blackberries cover an area of 0.4 ha. Raspberries are mostly species that bear fruit several times a year, while blackberries yield once a year, and their harvest lasts about 40 days during July and August. In the next few years, we intend to expand the plantations to 1ha, and by entering the eco supervision from 06-2015 we want to further guarantee our customers to eat healthy and organically grown fruits and vegetables.

Although the older part of the family (parents) has been growing vegetables for many years, with the increased demand for organically grown food, we have started producing various types of organically grown vegetables in the open. The most common crops are potatoes, onions, various herbs, tomatoes, peppers, legumes, leafy vegetables, pumpkins and other seasonal vegetables.



In addition to bees, fruits and vegetables, we also grow olives that were planted a few years ago. We have approximately 200 olive trees, most of which are varieties of Leccino, Pendolino and slightly smaller Istrian varieties Bilica.

The situation of the COVID pandemic has led us to sell all our products exclusively on the doorstep, at specialised fairs of indigenous products throughout Istria and through the web market.





Giulia Antonuccio

I am Giulia Antonuccio and I have an organic farm in the town of San Martino Valle Caudina. The name of the farm is Masseria della Contessa. I produce vegetables and rare beans. Together with my husband we have a door to door delivery service and we are working on a small processing laboratory with the products we grow.

 **Masseria della Contessa**
 Via Torre s.n.c. - 83018 San Martino Valle Caudina (AV) – Italy
<https://masseriadellacontessa.com>
www.facebook.com/lamasseriadellacontessa

Masseria della Contessa is a young company, which fully represents the famous "return to agriculture". The guidelines we follow are represented by respect for the environment and nature. For this reason, we have



chosen organic farming, small productions and crop diversification. We also choose to grow plants that are beneficial for the soil as they provide nutrients (legumes) and useful for the ecosystem because they attract pollinating insects such as bees and bumblebees (aromatic and medicinal plants). We intend to "do our part" trying to protect the environment and restore dignity to the farming profession, thus obtaining products of excellent quality.





Our strengths are several: the house located near the land we cultivate; the proximity to the city of Naples that allows us an almost daily relationship with the market and our customers; a land suitable for the cultivation of both vegetables and legumes

Our weaknesses are just as varied: the territory in which we live is not easy, and we receive little support. Our social isolation is also not stimulating in this area. There is also, little interest from the locals, the climate is wet and cold in winter



E-commerce allows us to work more easily for the organisation and logistics of our door-to-door vegetable service. It also facilitates the purchase by our customers and has definitely increased the number of our customers. In terms of sales, we had an increase during the lockdown as we deliver door to door. We had a slowdown regarding suppliers, procedures in place for the processing lab, and a

slowdown regarding some calls for proposals we were participating in that have stalled.



Short Examples - women's reactions when a pandemic threatens the availability and access to food

The COVID 19 pandemic, considering the curfew/lockdown, has led to many problems and obstacles and mostly affected the organisation of the production process and the placement of products on the market. Rural women in agriculture faced extra challenges with the sale and marketing of their products. They had serious financial losses as people had difficulty buying. Also, all agricultural fairs and negotiations were cancelled, which was a huge obstacle for many of these farmers. Among all difficulties with COVID and the impossibility of direct sales in the presence, for many women, this was an opportunity to create a marketing campaign on social networks, add new products, crops or services. Also, some of them offered customers the option of e-commerce, ordering via Facebook and home delivery.

Below are some examples of how women farmers face and try to overcome these problems.



Svetlana Marjanović

I experienced the new "covid situation" as a challenge. As I try to discover something good in every evil, so a pandemic is, paradoxically, an opportunity to return to ourselves and nature from which we have become alienated on many levels. After facing and adapting to the newly created reality, deep introspection, the question of what I can do for my loved ones, as well as for all people of similar sensibility, followed. I started spending time with plants that have a strong antiviral effect, and at the same time nothing is written about them, and they are not in use at all. This is how recipes were created in which I use forsythia (a plant that is a frequent inhabitant of our gardens), lungwort, as well as chrysanthemum. Of course, I first try all the recipes in person, then I test the opinion of family and friends, and only then I share them via my YouTube channel "Alhemija - GardenIn".



Katsi Eleni

COVID-19 has affected us mostly in the second lockdown on November 2020 rather than March 2020. Right now, I am unable to work every week as I used to, since the restrictions allow us to work every two weeks to avoid crowdedness in farmer's markets. This situation has brought us to poverty.



Il Fuco e L'Operaia

For us, the biggest change is in the organisation of work time. We have a young son who could not go to school, so we had to reorganise. One of our primary sales channels is direct sales, since there are no busy markets, we decided to invest in e-commerce and social media marketing campaign.



Nevena Popov

As with all aspects of society, the situation with COVID has partially affected our work. The very fact that working hours were shortened and that curfew was introduced on weekends (when we would otherwise work) had a lesser effect on sales. Fortunately, production and work in the orchard did not suffer because it requires a small number of people and involves working outdoors. To compensate for the reduced working hours of our store, we have offered customers the option of ordering via Facebook and home delivery. At the same time, in this way, we have reduced unnecessary crowds in the sales facility.



Maremma Farm

In the last year, due to the pandemic, related decrees and regulations limiting travel, some of our "adopters of vegetable gardens" have been unable to get to their gardens. However, we have also been contacted by many people, especially city residents, eager to come and see our gardens up close. COVID has, in fact, made people more aware of the importance of protecting the environment in which we live, also by making sustainable food choices, which affect not only the environment but also our health. We hope that in the near future we will be able to activate delivery services even at greater distances than at present, to meet the needs of those who live in large cities.



ST Guran 21

In this stressful year with the COVID situation, we have worked hard to improve our offerings and presented our ideas in digital forms.



We hope this situation ends soon.



Association of women farmers of the Kolubara district

Due to the impossibility of placing goods on the market, we gathered a large number of women farmers from the territory of the Kolubara district. In the first wave of the pandemic, with the help of the ŽUKO association, we opened an online "women's market" through which they sold their domestic products with home delivery. So, the pandemic was the trigger for the start of online sales on the platform www.zenskapijaca.rs, where those interested can buy fresh and healthy products directly from farmers.



See more about agrifood sector and coronavirus in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)

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EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE

APPENDIX



1. European Agriculture

1.1. Brief history of the CAP and of its aims

Among the common European policies, the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP), a partnership between agriculture and society, and between Europe and its farmers, exists since 1962⁶. The CAP is one of the few common policies to all the countries of the European Union, managed and financed at European level with resources from the EU budget. Since the beginning, the common market was based on four principles: the free movement of people, services, goods and capital.

And it had four basic objectives⁷:

1. To improve life conditions of the agricultural population and to satisfy farmers with the intervention price. This was done through a guaranteed minimum price for agricultural products established by the European Community. The price of the productions could not go below this;
2. Overcome the inability to meet the demand for food through boosting the agricultural enterprises productive capacity (limiting the factors of the production, increasing the technological development and using better agronomic techniques);
3. Stabilise the markets;
4. Ensure affordable prices for consumers.

To these objectives, others have been added, as the needs of the society changed over the years:

- help to tackle climate change and promote the sustainable management of natural resources;
- preserve rural areas and landscapes across the EU;
- keep the rural economy alive by promoting employment in the agricultural sector, the agri-food industries and associated sectors.

The CAP during the years, had an evolution that led from a product support policy that sought a sort of European food autarchy at the cost of generous financing, to a market and environment-oriented policy.

Today these needs meet with environmental, social and free market issues that often challenge the founding principles of the CAP.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cap-glance_en

⁷ <http://www.terrelab.it/2016/02/pac-la-politica-agricola-comune/>



Many propose to decrease the weight of the CAP and to stop subsidising farmers and rural realities. This can be conceived only by those who do not know the propaedeuticity of rural environments, and the cost that would have to maintain otherwise abandoned territories without local farmers.

On the other hand, it would be much more important to evaluate the costs and the results obtained, so as to modify the CAP where necessary, and adjust it to new needs. The logic should be to strengthen the EU intervention in agriculture, demonstrating its effectiveness and not, as many would like, a semi dismantling of this policy.

This because agriculture differs from most other productive activities for some specific reasons:

- despite the importance of food production, farmers' incomes are about 40% lower than non-farm ones;
- agriculture depends more on the climate and weather conditions than many other sectors;
- there is an inevitable time lag between consumer demand and farmers' ability to meet it;
- agriculture plays a very important role in maintaining the territory, which would otherwise have to be carried out by non-agricultural businesses, at a much higher cost;
- in addition to the basic function of producing food, they play the role of maintaining soils and biodiversity.

Trade uncertainties and the environmental impact of agriculture justify the significant role played by the public sector for farmers.

The CAP intervenes in various ways:

- providing income support through direct payments⁸ which guarantees income stability and rewards farmers for environmentally friendly agriculture and the provision of public goods normally unpaid by markets, such as the care of the rural area
- adopting market measures⁹ to cope with difficult situations, such as a sudden drop in demand for health concerns or a contraction in prices following a temporary surplus of products on the market
- implementing rural development measures¹⁰ with national and regional programs to meet the specific needs and challenges of rural areas

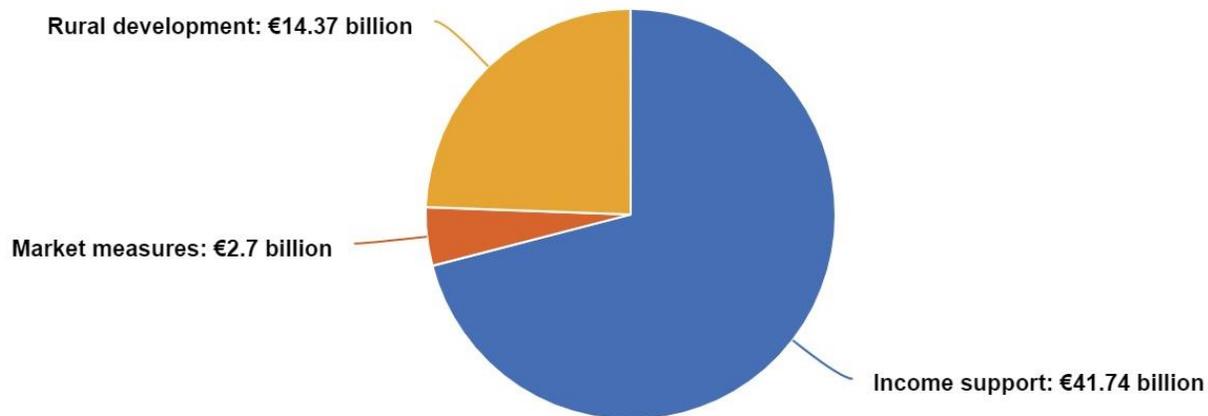
⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/income-support_en

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/market-measures_en

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en

1.2. CAP Financing

EU support for farmers in 2018 amounts to 58.82 billion euros¹¹.



Source: [Ec.europa.eu](https://ec.europa.eu)

The level of support provided to EU farmers by the overall EU budget reflects the many variables needed to ensure continuous access to high quality food, including functions such as supporting farmers' income, action against climate change and the maintenance of dynamic rural communities.

The CAP is financed through two funds under the EU budget:

- EAGF (European Agricultural Guaranteed Fund)¹²: provides direct support and finances market support measures
- EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)¹³: finances rural development

Payments are managed at national level by each EU country, which publishes information on the recipients of CAP payments, in accordance with EU transparency rules.

In summary, it can be said that the CAP defines the conditions that allow farmers to perform their functions in society in the following ways:

Producing food

- There are around 10 million farms in the EU and 22 million people work regularly in the sector, providing a great variety and abundance of accessible, safe and good quality products
- Being net exporters of agri-food products ensuring food safety

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cap-glance_en

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/financing-cap/cap-funds_it#eagf

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/financing-cap/cap-funds_it#eafRD

Development of rural communities

- farmers allow many upstream services to exist given the need for supplies of material for their business
- other jobs are created downstream in rural communities, especially in the agri-food, trade and tourism sectors. Overall, the agriculture and agri-food sectors offer nearly 40 million jobs in the EU
- in the 2014-2020 programming, in order to favor this sector, the CAP envisages a large investment in rural areas for the development of technologies, fast internet lines and for the construction of infrastructures

The CAP promotes a sustainable agriculture as fundamental requirement for getting funded through the **conditionality**¹⁴.

Evaluation of the CAP

The European Commission regularly consults civil dialogue groups and agricultural committees to better define the rules and policies governing agriculture. The expert groups provide contributions to the European Commission, for example the Task Force for Agricultural Markets on Unfair Commercial Practices.

The European Court of Auditors also plays an important role in controlling agricultural expenditure.

The European Commission regularly publishes public opinion reports (also called Eurobarometer) on Europeans, agriculture and the CAP. Eurobarometer surveys, which take place in all EU countries, provide valuable information on citizens' perception of the various aspects of the CAP, including knowledge of the support provided, performance, quality, environment and importance of the CAP.

1.3. The future of the CAP 2021-2027

The new CAP will focus on old objectives and new ones born from an environmental and social awareness. Based on 9 objectives, the CAP of the future will continue to guarantee access to high quality food and strong support for the European agricultural model.

The 9 objectives of the future CAP¹⁵ are:

- ensure a fair income for farmers

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/environmental-care-and-climate-change-objectives-future-cap-2019-jan-25_en

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap/key-policy-objectives-future-cap_en



- increase competitiveness
- rebalance the distribution of power in the food supply chain
- actions to combat climate change
- protect the environment
- safeguard the landscape and biodiversity
- support generational change
- develop dynamic rural areas
- protect the quality of food and health

The European Commission proposes a more flexible system, simplifying and modernising the way the CAP works. The policy will shift the emphasis from compliance and rules towards results and performance¹⁶.

The new way of working will also entail:

- streamlining administrative processes: countries shall submit only one strategic plan covering direct payments, rural development and sectorial strategies;
- making environmental protection easier: through a set of standards and objectives at EU level, each country shall adapt environmental and climate actions to the reality on the ground;
- simplifying support to young farmers: a single strategic plan will enable a consistent action for generational renewal covering both direct payments and rural development. Moreover, young farmers will have easier access to complementary income and installation support as EU eligibility criteria will be reduced.

Concrete proposals:

- increase the level of support per hectare for small and medium-sized farms
- reduce the amount of direct payments to be granted to individual farms above € 60,000, limiting payments to € 100,000 per farm, in order to ensure a fairer distribution of payments
- allocate at least 2% of the allocations for direct payments to young farmers, to be integrated with financial support for rural development and with measures to facilitate land access and land transfers
- ensure that income support is reserved only for real farmers

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en#a-new-way-of-working



- protection of wetlands and peat bogs
- crop rotation instead of diversification
- help the new generations of farmers to start their own business, through the tutoring of young farmers by older ones
- stricter requirements for food safety and quality
- the streamlining of administrative procedures
- simplification of environmental protection
- simplification of support for young farmers

In this context, it reiterates the role that the CAP will have in promoting:

- employment, growth and quality investments;
- the circular economy and the bioeconomy, contextually strengthening the protection of the environment and the fight against and adaptation to climate change;
- the transfer of research and innovation to the production sector;
- the promotion of the digital economy in rural areas and the digitization processes of agricultural enterprises;
- actions in favor of the protection and integration of migrants who live and work in rural areas.

2. Women and EU Agriculture

Women are an essential element of rural areas and of the common policies destined to them.

Despite the centrality of women, it can be said that there are numerous differences and difficulties for their situation, compared to that of men.

From statistical studies, it is evident that there are many more women than men who leave rural areas. This is certainly caused by situations of difference in opportunities that rural areas offer according to gender.

Consequently, adequate policy measures are needed to tackle such challenges. Equality between women and men is recognised in the Treaties since the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. However, results of recent studies and reports show that progress remains insufficient and many inequalities between women and men persist.

The RWSFF project, as well as many of the European agricultural policies, are intended to improve their situation through the following goals:

- Empowerment of women in the economy and closing gender gaps in the workforce, which are key to achieving sustainable development goals
- Women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, increases economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive development outcomes
- Women's economic equality is good for business, since companies greatly benefit from their organisational performances

The repeated conclusions of many studies indicate the following:

- In the EU, young women are less likely than young men to be in paid work, education or training. This inequality is reflected in their professional and payment status, so women still do not earn the same wages as men and do not have the same access to, or control over, productive resources such as land.
- Women's time spent on unpaid labour severely limits their capacity to participate in income generating activities. In all regions of the world, women spend at least twice as much time as men on unpaid domestic work.
- OECD estimates that closing the labour force gender gap by 2030 could yield a potential average gain of 12% to the size of the total economy across OECD countries. If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30% and raise total agricultural outputs.
- Generally, women have little power and control over decisions that affect them and/or their resources, be it in their households, communities or societies as a whole. Women participate less in formal politics than men and are underrepresented at most levels of decision making.
- The EU's financial investment in gender equality, as well as the results achieved, have not systematically been measured – they take the form of mainstreaming gender equality in many types of different interventions across sectors (EC, 2015).
- Although women in rural areas of the EU make up just below 50% of the total rural population, they represent 45% of the economically active population, and about 40% of them work on their family farms. Moreover, their importance in rural economy is probably even bigger, since their participation through the informal rural economy is not statistically recognised. Female entrepreneurs represent only one third of self-employed people in the EU and women farmers represent 30% of the total number of EU farm managers.

Women tend to have smaller farms than men, and are usual to take more calculated risks than men. In the field of innovation women's ideas are as marketable as men's, but they are not recognised by predominantly male stakeholders (COPA, 2017).

Due restricted opportunities in local labour markets, women (mostly highly-qualified) have to outmigrate from rural areas at a higher rate than men. Out-migration is essential for rural women to access higher-quality occupations.

There is a specificity that always has to do with an informal role of women in rural areas: their role of domestic caregiver that becomes a significant barrier to mobility.

Women empowerment has to create the conditions to get equal work opportunities for women and men concerning freedom, equity, security and dignity.

Within the common European policy framework guaranteeing gender equality, Member States have to identify strategic priorities in terms of labour market outcome achievements, as well as a better understanding of the overall productive work of both men and women. The first step is to recognise that men and women may not have the same opportunity and treatment in the workplace and women may face different constraints around family and work engagement (Hillesland et al., 2016).

It 'a very serious fact that female employment in rural areas often have no formal recognition, as almost a third of women's employment globally is in agriculture, forestry and fishing.

The EU's 2020 strategy goals foresee participation of women in employment and economic growth, and in this respect agricultural and rural areas could make a significant contribution.

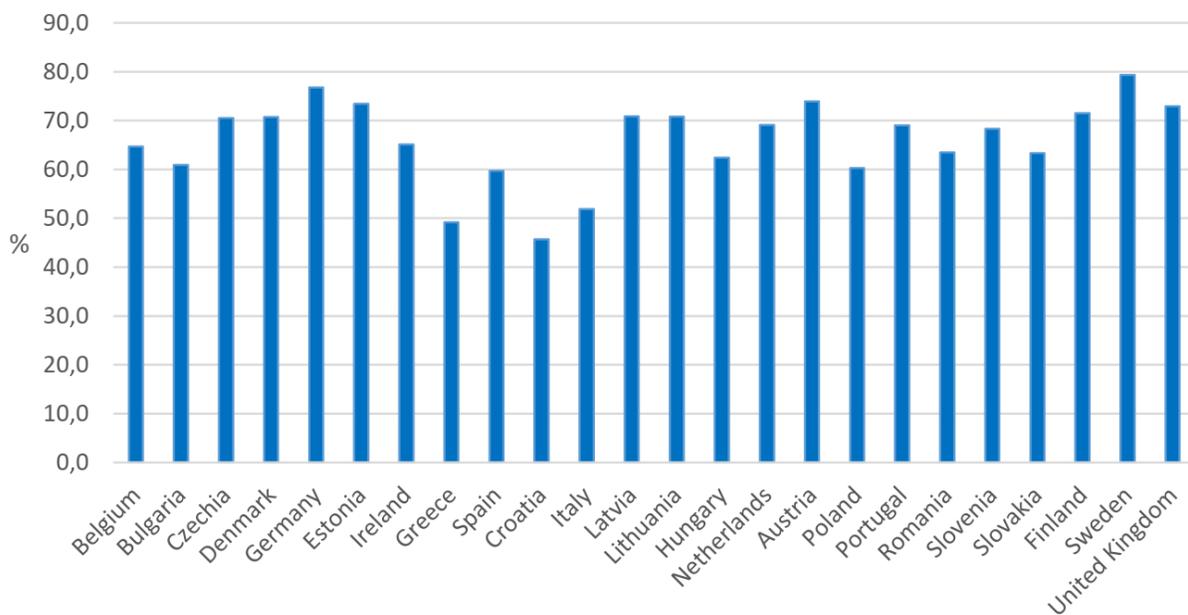
In the last decade in the EU, agriculture was the seventh largest employer of women, but this data may be misleading as it does not cover the informal rural economy, in which women are still involved. Women play a key role in rural families, communities and economies, and they are also important as farmers. In addition to paid farm work, women still assume the main share of unpaid responsibilities involved in the running of families and communities. Some women's work is under-reported, as women tend to classify and report themselves as not in employment, particularly when undertaking unpaid agricultural work.

For the three different degrees of urbanisation there was almost no difference (0.5%) between EU-28 employment rates: in 2015, the lowest employment rate was recorded among people living in rural areas

(69.7%), while the rates for cities (70.0%) and for towns and suburbs (70.2%) were only marginally higher¹⁷.

The EU employment rate for persons aged 20 to 64 stood at 72.2% in 2017, the highest rate ever recorded for the EU. The employment rate was still higher for men than for women in all EU Member States, but the employment gap at EU level reduced. Since 2002, the employment rate of women has increased overall in Europe, and the largest increases for female employment rates were observed in Malta, Bulgaria and Germany. In 2017, the highest employment rates for women were found in Iceland (84.5%) and Sweden (79.8%), whereas the lowest female employment rates were recorded in Greece (48%) and Italy (52.5%).

Share of women in employment in predominantly rural regions (age class: 20-64 years), EU-28, 2017



Note: Data for Cyprus, France, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Malta is not available

Source: Eurostat

Informal economy involves a higher percentage of women than men, in the majority of countries analysed.

Informal economy includes workers who work in informal sector enterprises (not officially registered) and those workers who hold informal jobs (jobs lacking basic social or legal protection and employment

¹⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/59433.pdf>

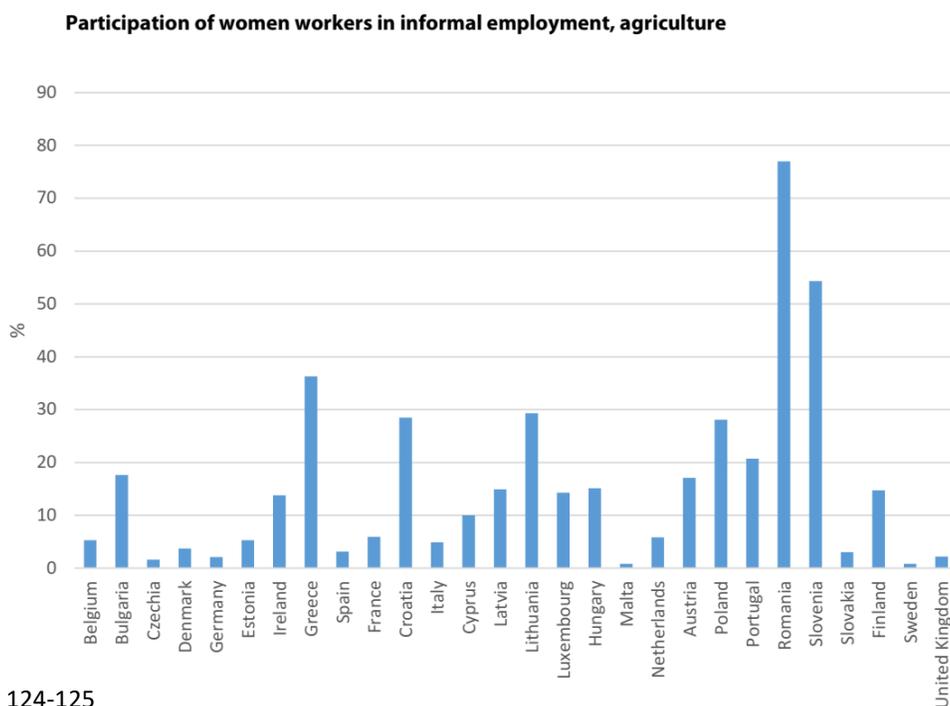
benefits). Women are particularly overrepresented in this second group, representing the majority of vulnerable home-based workers.

In light of the entrepreneurial nature of agricultural work, 43% of unpaid workers in agriculture are women, 26% of which are farm owners. According to a statement by the World Farmers' Organisation they may not necessarily be from the family and many only enter the agricultural profession upon marrying a farmer¹⁸.

The difference between men and women in the agricultural sector already exists from the beginning, to access to the legal ownership of family assets.

Where they have a recognised status, women farmers are able to invest and be granted a loan in the same way as the farmer owner.

Women's participation in informal employment in the prevailing rural sector, agriculture, higher participation can be observed in several Member States (Romania with 77.0%, Slovenia with 54.3%, Greece with 36.3%, and Lithuania and Croatia with about 30%). The lowest participation of women workers in informal employment is seen in Sweden, Malta, Czech Republic and Germany, probably because of a rather low share of agriculture in the overall economy and a mostly formally-organised agricultural sector in particular European regions.



Source: ILO, 2018: Table 8.7; pages 124-125

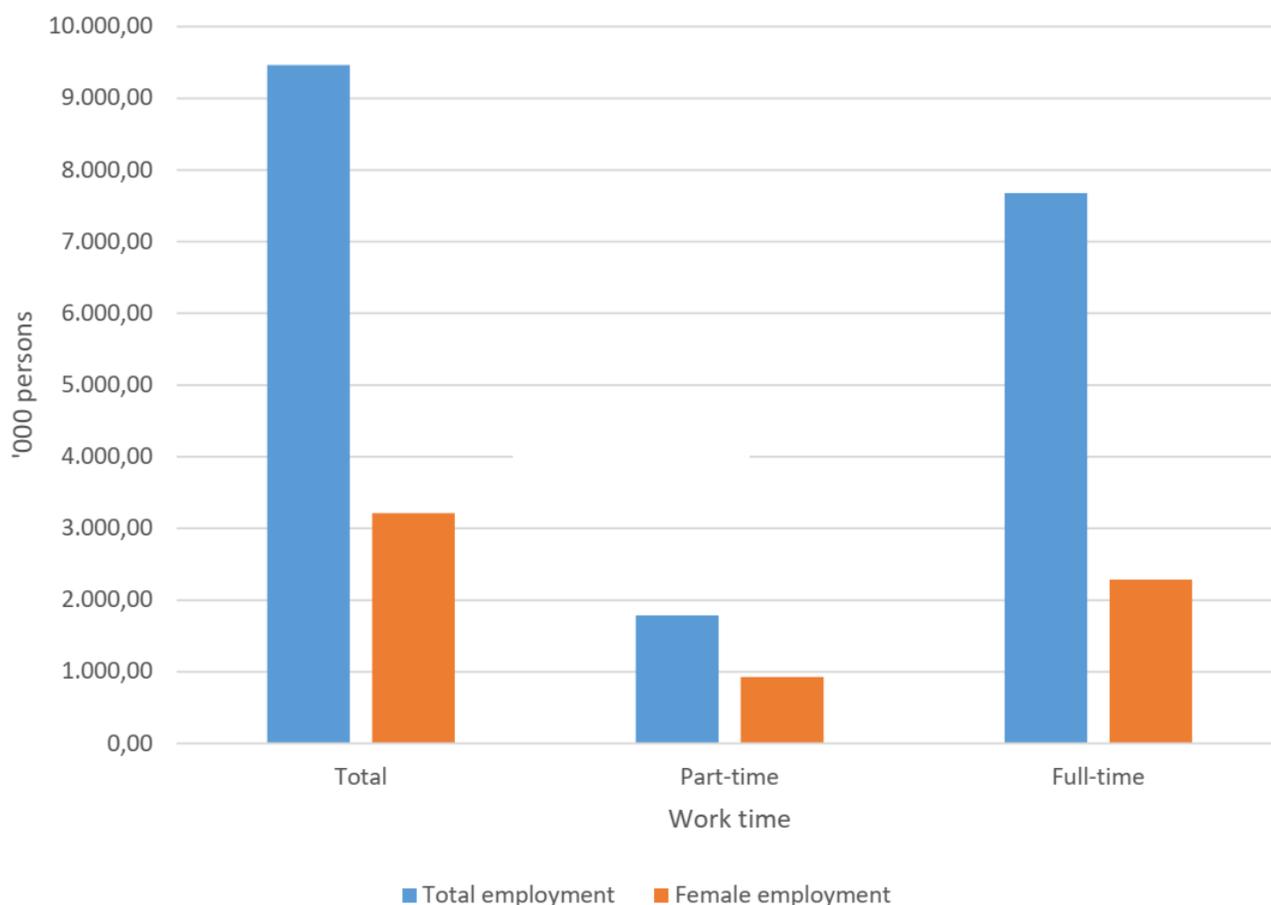
¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/gender/resources/infographics/the-female-face-of-farming/en/>



According to recent data the share of female employment in the sector of Agriculture, forestry and fishing in the EU is about 34%. However, there is a great difference between women's participation in full-time employment (less than 30%) in comparison to part-time jobs (around 52%).

There is a very strong connection between being a woman and the type of employment contract applied: about 80% of all part-time jobs in the EU are occupied by women.

Total and female employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing by working time, EU-28, 2018



Source: Eurostat

There are two different perspectives on the role of women's part-time work: one looks at it positively; another on the contrary in a negative way.

One perspective is that to look at it as an efficient solution which allows working women with children to better reconcile the often-contradictory demands of their careers and family responsibilities.

Two radically negative visions of women's part time work in the labour market:

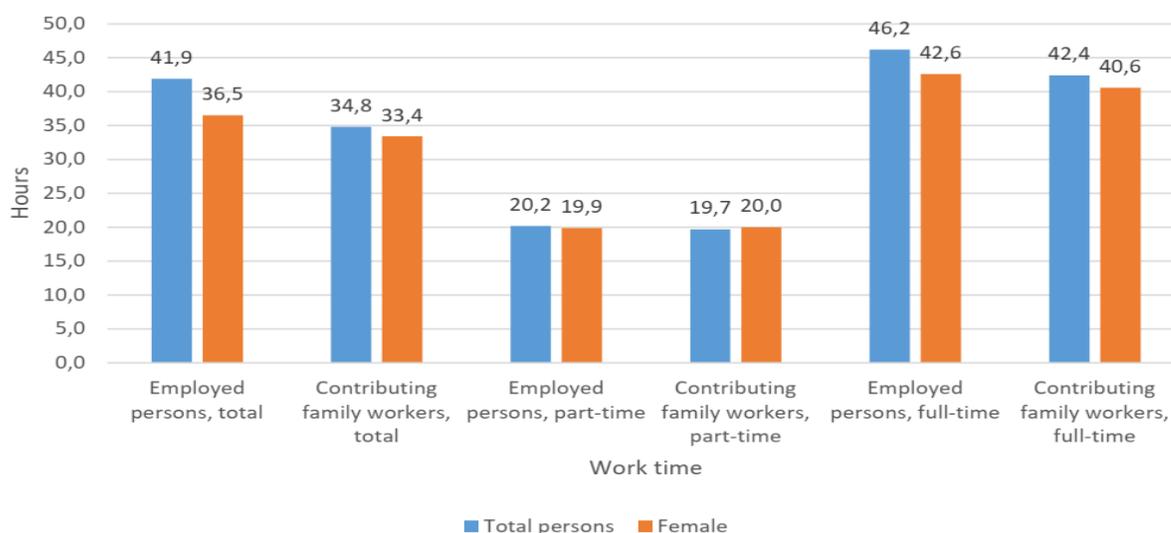
- In the first case, the argument for women's part-time employment questions the legitimacy of women's employment and calls for a partial return of women to their housewife role. This position presupposes the existence of a working spouse and places part-time work within the traditional gender division of paid and domestic work (not necessarily indicating a desire to "send women back to where they belong").
- On the other hand, part-time work offers an efficient means of enabling women to avoid a career break after having children and thereby overcoming difficulties encountered by many women returning to the workforce.

Generally, in rural areas, women are more frequently employed in part-time and temporary jobs than in urban areas.

Women are more frequently in lower paid roles, and they run a greater risk to live in poverty or social exclusion than men.

In rural areas of the EU the share of women in self-employment is about 38%, slightly higher than in total areas. The greatest number of self-employed people in rural areas is in France, Germany, and Italy.

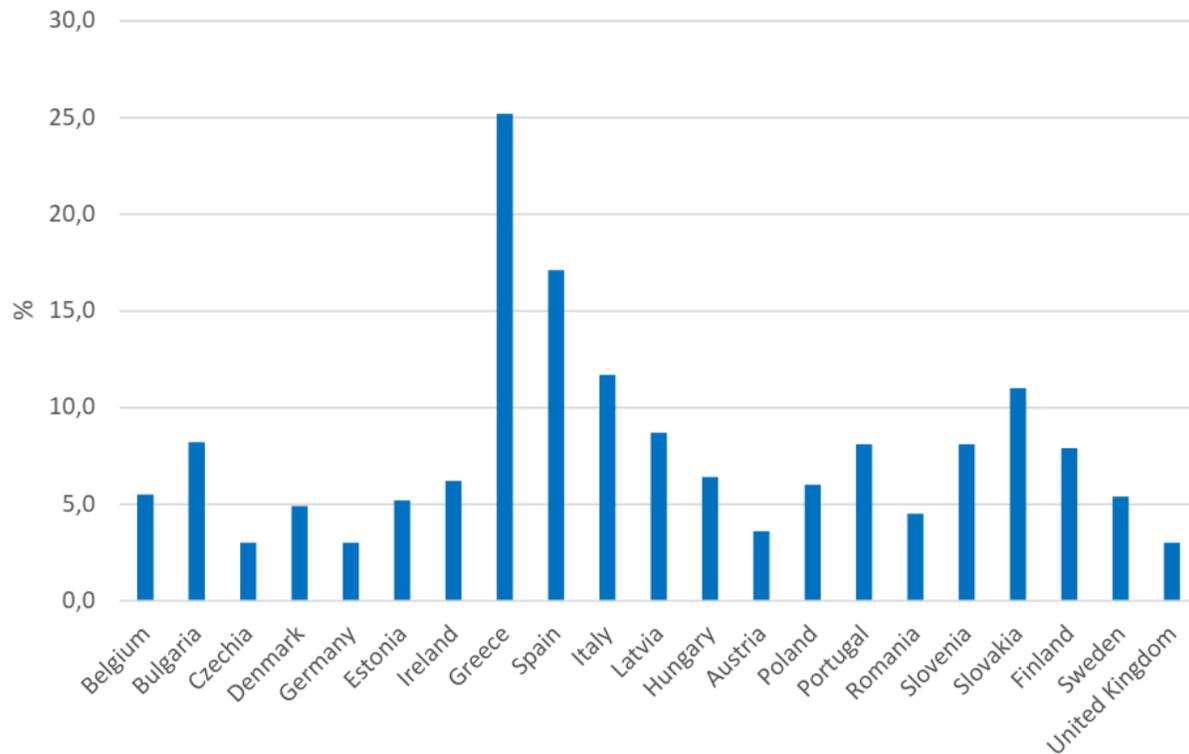
Average number of usual weekly hours in agriculture, forestry and fishing in the EU-28, 2018



Source: Eurostat

The EU-28 unemployment rates in rural areas have also been declining since 2013, reaching 7.9% in 2018. Historically, women have been more affected by unemployment than men. In 2000, the unemployment rate for women in the EU-28 was around 10%, while the rate for men was below 8%.

Share of women in unemployment in predominantly rural regions (age class: 20-64), EU-28, 2017



Note: Data for Croatia, Cyprus, France, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands is not available

Source: Eurostat

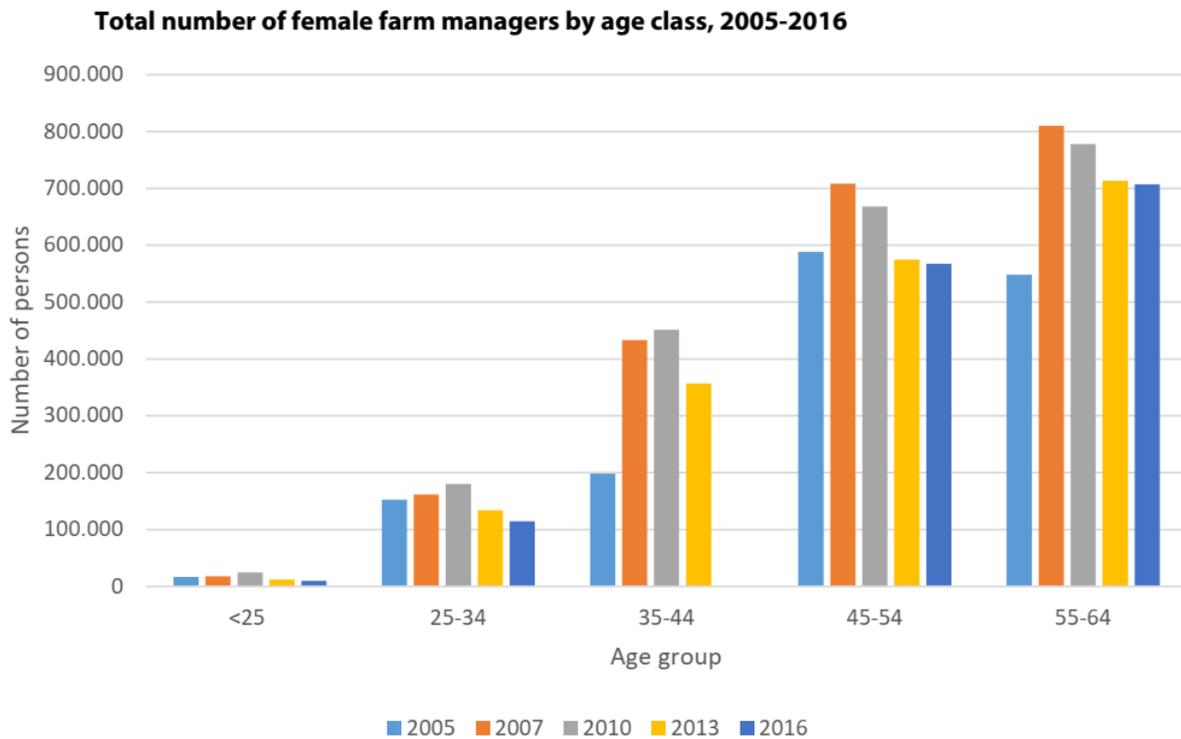
Agriculture and food related industries and services provide over 44 million jobs in the EU, including regular work for 20 million people within the agricultural sector itself¹⁹.

From a gender point of view, there are significant gaps between women and men in the sector of agriculture. Farming continues to be a predominantly rural profession and male domain. Women farmers have significantly less access to, control over, and ownership of land and other productive assets compared to their male counterparts. However, the number of farms run by women is continuously growing.

¹⁹ https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/agriculture_en

While an average of 30% of farms across the EU are managed by women. They tend to have smaller farms: on average 5.84 ha compared with 12.88 ha owned by male farm holders.

Women’s ideas for innovation are as marketable as men’s, but they are not recognised by predominantly male stakeholders and it’s more difficult for them to access loans (EC, 2017; COPA, 2017).



Note: Data for age class 35-44 in 2016 is not available.

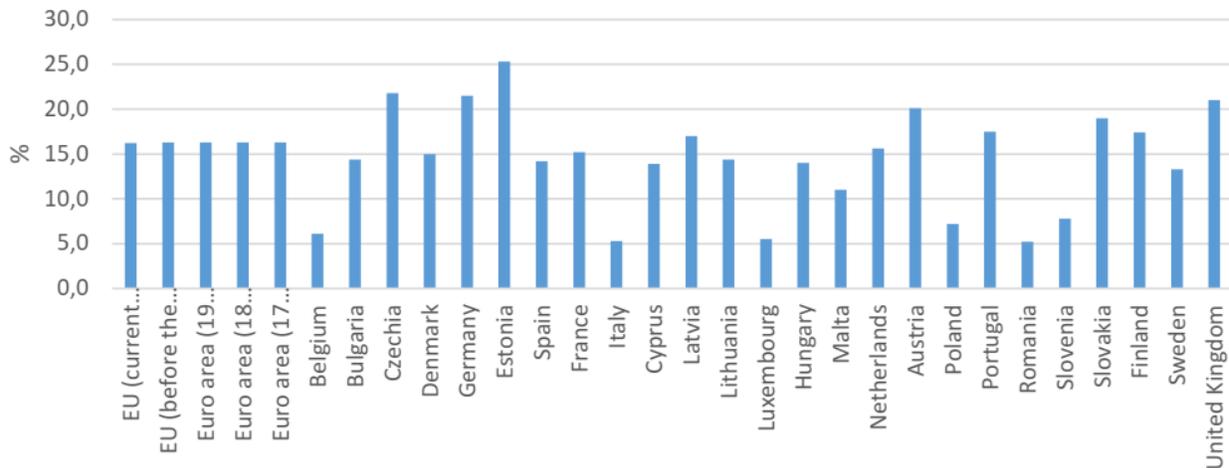
Source: Eurostat

An analysis of gender gaps in the domain of money shows that women are, with few exceptions, disadvantaged when compared to men.

Throughout the EU, women earn less than men, have lower disposable incomes, and progress in closing the gender gap is moving at an extremely slow rate.

For the economy as a whole, in 2016, women's gross hourly earnings were on average 16.2% below those of men in the European Union (EU-28) and 16.3% in the euro area (EA-19).

Across Member States, the gender pay gap varied by 20 percentage points, ranging from 5.2% in Romania to 25.3% in Estonia.

Gender pay gap in unadjusted form of industry, construction and services, 2016

Notes:

- 1) Structure of earnings survey methodology (public administration, defence and compulsory social security are not included)
- 2) Data for Croatia, Greece and Ireland is not available

Source: Eurostat

The gap between women's and men's pensions in the EU is more than twice the gap between their earnings. EU gender pension gap, measured by annual pension received and based on Eurostat data, was 40%, compared to a gender pay gap of 16%.

In 2015, the European Parliament confirmed this lack of progress, through the resolution on progress on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2013 (2014/221(INI)). EU Rural Development Policy 2014-2020 (Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013²⁰) goes beyond agriculture and forestry and targets wider rural economic development. The inclusion of the priority "promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas" as one of the six EU priorities for rural development, plays an important role in creating a wider variety of better-quality jobs and in improving local development overall²¹.

Rural Development Policy 2014-2020 is to achieve a balanced territorial development in rural areas, including creating and maintaining jobs.

The main issues relating to gender equality and the role of women in rural areas are as follows²²:

- Ageing and masculinisation of agriculture and rural areas.
- Invisibility of women's work in agriculture.
- Under-representation of women in farm ownership and agricultural decision-making.

²⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R1305>

²¹ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0099_EN.html

²² https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/key_policies/documents/soc_background_final_en.pdf



Research on the characteristics of women's work in rural activities and their role in rural environments confirms that there are many opportunities for gender equality in the field of work because:

- Women can be at the forefront of innovation and diversification in rural areas by developing new activities, products and services.
- Women often have the added advantage of an awareness and knowledge of local needs, and specific interpersonal and communication skills.

Over recent years, an additional factor in causing gender differences has arisen from the migration movements towards and within the EU: asylum seekers, refugees, and EU nationals. This has entailed the creation of new forms of vulnerability and exploitation in the agricultural sector. The requirements of cutting overall production costs and increasing profit margins result in a general compression of the workers' rights (European Parliament, 2018)

The EU still insufficiently implements its gender policies, and gender equality and gender mainstreaming are often no more than a rhetorical reference rather than an integral part of (national) programmes. Gender issues should be integrated into rural policies at various levels, and there is a need to intensify research on rural governance structures and processes from a gender equality perspective.

The integration of gender symmetry in rural areas is an obligation in the design and implementation of rural development strategies, programmes and projects.



3. Farm to Fork Strategy

– for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system

The Farm to Fork Strategy²³ is at the heart of the “European Green Deal²⁴” aiming to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly.

The Farm to Fork Strategy aims to accelerate EU transition to a sustainable food system that should:

- have a neutral or positive environmental impact
- help to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts
- reverse the loss of biodiversity
- ensure food security, nutrition and public health, making sure that everyone has access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, sustainable food
- preserve affordability of food while generating fairer economic returns, fostering competitiveness of the EU supply sector and promoting fair trade



Source: https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/safety/docs/food_farm2fork_ring.jpg

²³ https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en

²⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

This strategy is based on four pillars:

Sustainable food production: The strategy sets targets to significantly reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides, the use of fertilisers and sales of antimicrobials as well as increase agricultural land under organic farming. It will also seek to improve animal welfare, protect plant health and promote adoption of new green business models, circular bio-based economy and the shift to sustainable fish and seafood production.

Sustainable food processing, wholesale, retail, hospitality and food services: The Farm to Fork Strategy will mobilise the food industry to increase the availability and affordability of healthy, sustainable food options. The goal is to reduce the overall environmental footprint of the food system and make the adoption of healthy diets easier. The European Commission will take action to expand and promote sustainable production methods and circular business models in food processing and retail, including specifically for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

Sustainable food consumption: The Farm to Fork Strategy aims to improve the availability and price of sustainable food and to promote adoption of healthy and sustainable diets by consumers. Key elements include improving consumer information, strengthening sustainable food procurement and encouraging adoption of fiscal measures that support sustainable food consumption. It will encourage the use of nutritional values on labels, origin indication, support to organic and ethic products.

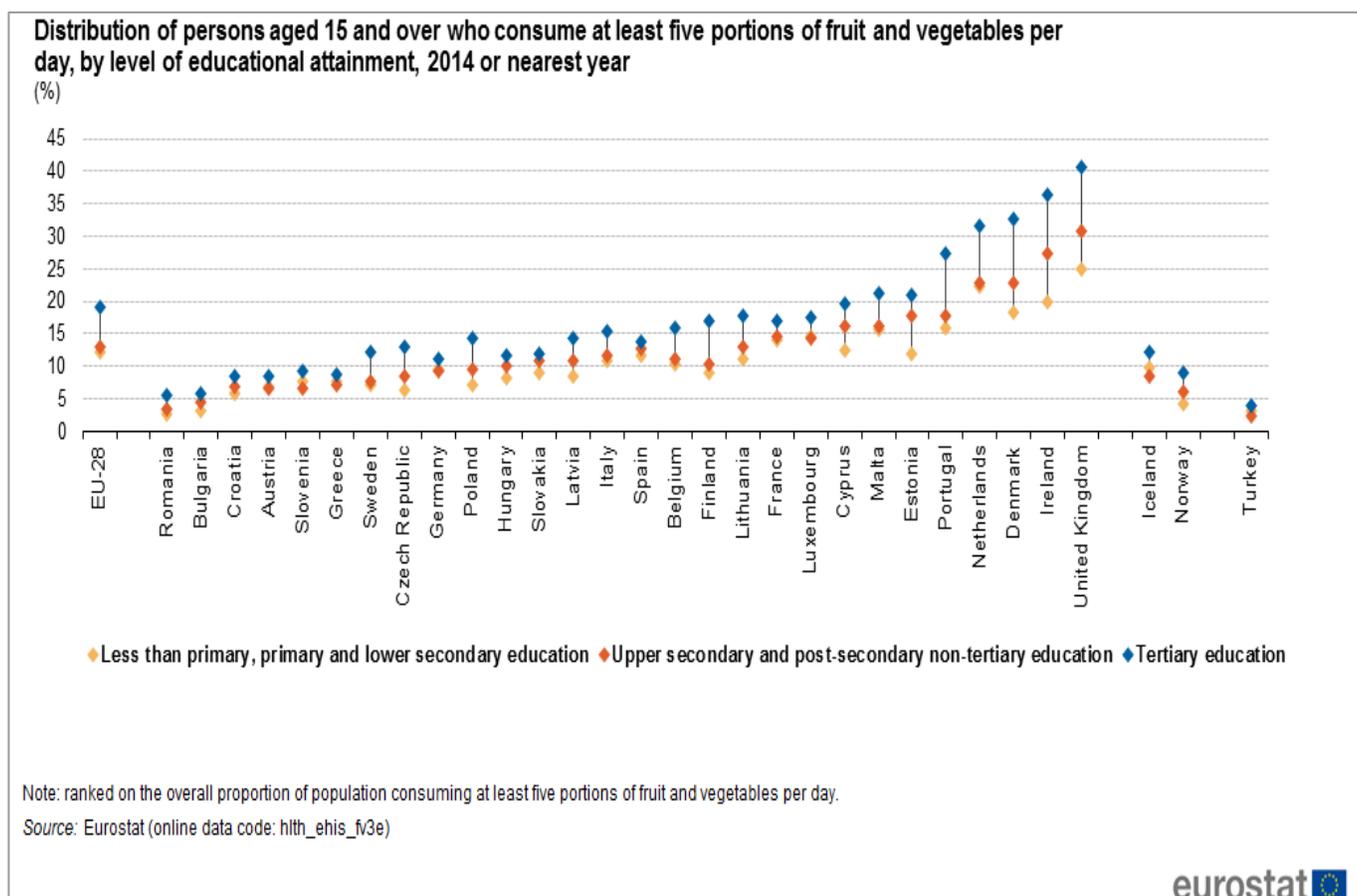
Food Loss and waste prevention: Reducing food waste has enormous potential for reducing the resources we use to produce the food we eat. Fighting food waste is a **triple win**: it saves food for human consumption; brings savings for primary producers, companies and consumers; and lowers the environmental and climate impact of food production and consumption.



4. Fresh Food Trends

There is not much public data on this issue. The data entered here comes from a Eurostat publication: [Fruit and vegetables consumption statistics](#) (March 2018).

In 2014, 65.7 % of the EU-28 population aged 15 and over reported eating at least one portion of fruit and vegetables on a daily basis. This percentage varied from less than 50 % in Bulgaria and Romania to more than 75 % in Italy, the United Kingdom, Portugal and Belgium.



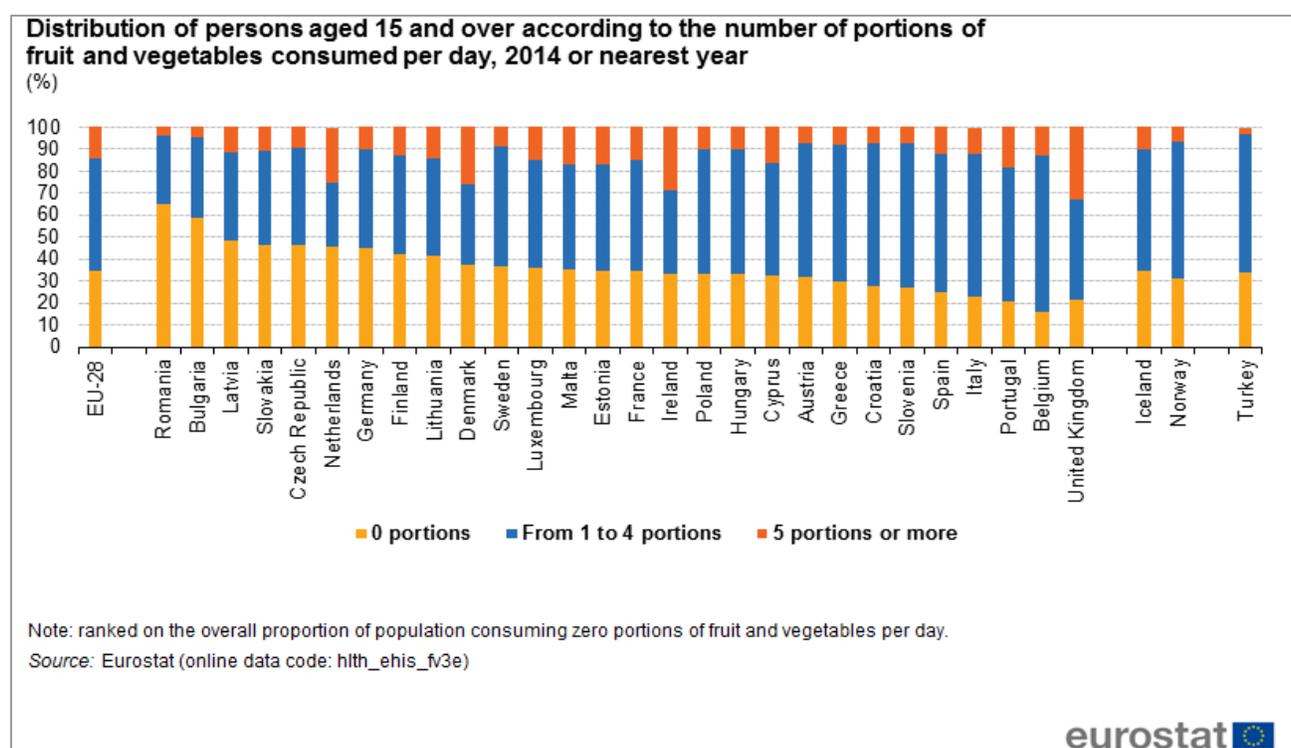
On average, more than half of the population in the EU-28 reported that they consume from one to four portions of fruit and vegetables per day, while about one in seven persons reported a daily consumption of least five fruits and vegetables.

Across the EU-28, the daily consumption of fruit and vegetables differed widely; one quarter of the population or more in the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom consumed at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day, compared to less than 8 % of the population in Greece, Slovenia,

Austria, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania. In contrast, more than half of the population in Bulgaria and Romania (58.6 % and 65.1 %, respectively) stated that fruit and vegetables are not included in their daily diet.

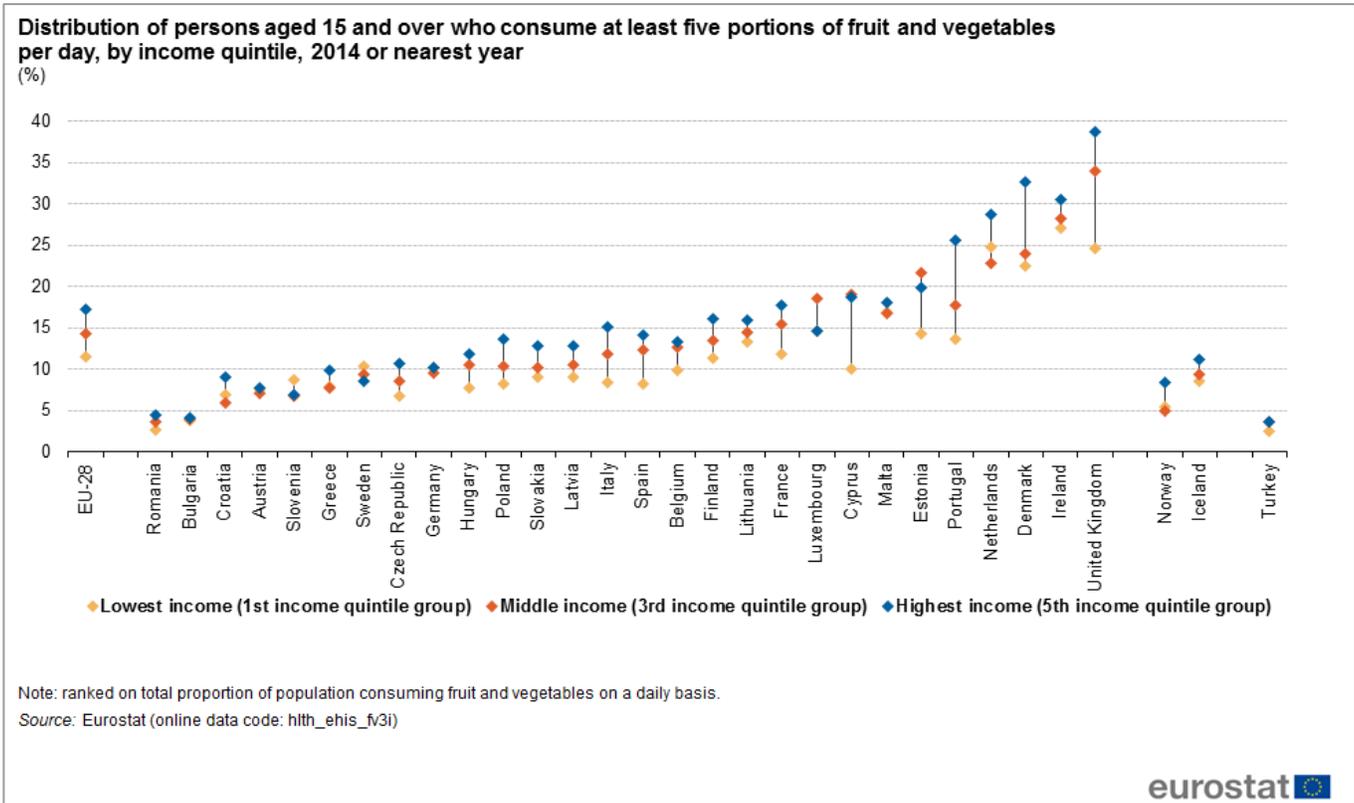
Persons with tertiary educational attainment were most likely to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables daily: 19.0 % of the EU-28 population with high level of educational attainment reported eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day in 2014, followed by those with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (12.9 %) and those having completed at most lower secondary education (12.1 %)

This general pattern of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption with increasing educational attainment was observed across all EU Member States, with the exception of Austria, Slovenia, Greece, Germany, Luxembourg, as well as Iceland, where the share of persons with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education was lower than that for people with a low educational level.



With reference to the consumption of fruit and vegetables and its relation to level of income, it is observed that, on average, the frequency of a daily intake of at least five portions of fruit and vegetables increased with increasing income. In 2014, 11.6 % of the EU-28 population in the first income quintile group (the 20 % of the population with the lowest income) reported a consumption of at least five portions of fruit

and vegetables as part of the daily diet, compared to 14.3 % in the third income quintile group and 17.3 % in the fifth income quintile group (the 20 % of the population with the highest income).



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