



Niche Market Farming

Best Practices of Niche Market Farmers

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AGRICOLTORI ITALIANI
UMBRIA



MADREVITE



ARID



HOF UND
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projects

Dapont

1. Introduction / Summary

1.1 Essence of the Best Practice

The biohof Hausberg is following a holistic concept of agriculture-nature-animal-human-culture, in which customers and partners are included. The farm succeeds in creating successful regional networks and its creation of added value is based on organic production of rare animal breeds.

1.2 What? / How? / Who? / Where?

Anton Dapont founded his farm in 2009 and focused on preserving the old and creating the new.

In addition to the entrepreneurial approach of the farmer, the cornerstones of the farm's success are its cooperative way of working and the clear focus on organic production and on rare animal breeds.

The farm is a 350-year-old, listed four-sided farm of the Rottal-region. The farmstead itself probably dates to Roman times.

The farm was acquired by Anton Dapont in 2004. In the following years, he first renovated the residential house, then the storage rooms and the barn using old, natural building materials.

2. Given Situation before Startup foundation / Change of operation

2.1 Existing business, startup or sideline

Anton Dapont has a sideline in agriculture.

As a career changer in agriculture, entrepreneur Anton Dapont took a fresh look at farming. He thought about how he could earn a living with just a few hectares of land.

He thought about contrasting the focus on "bigger and better" with a focus on direct market access and value creation.

In 2004, he bought the old farm.

3. Decisions made at the beginning

3.1 Selection of Seeds/ Breeds/ Location for Production

The farmer aimed at high-quality niche production, processing and direct selling from the beginning in order to keep most of the added value of his products within the company and cooperating partners.

Therefor he made the decision for special breeds of animals which today is:

- cattle: Aubrac
- pig: Berkshire & Turopolje
- sheep: Alpines Steinschaf (up to 2024)
- poultry: Sulmtaler and Bayerische Landgans

3.2 Decision for the production system (Intensive, extensive, organic, biodynamic)

In line with his decision for old rare high-quality breeds of animals was the decision of organic production from the beginning. It enabled a wholistic appearance and label of "Biohof Hausberg".

The production and processing can be considered extensive on a low scale with maximum depth of creation of added value for the farm itself as well as the cooperating businesses.

3.3 Decision about Processing stage and Market depth

Biohof Hausberg offers today:

- Animal leasing (cattle, pigs, sheep, geese) including advice to customers from rearing to fattening and slaughter.
- agricultural tourism with farm holidays
- snack station with own products such as ham, salami, and meat as well as regional organic beer, organic wine
- Sale of air-dried bacon

Aim is full processing stage and direct market access to final costumer.

3.4 Decision for the Market to be delivered: B2B and/or B2C

The individual parts of the business described above form a wholistic overall concept to enter fully no B2C-level.

4. Measures taken to establish the business

4.1 Network, Exchange, Training, Consulting

Anton Dapont had a clear picture of the great challenge of gradually building up a business in a niche market. Also, of what it means to produce high quality, to communicate it and to involve customers as well as business partners. The overall goal and success factor is to build trust with customers and bring them closer to organic farming. This goes hand in hand with an open culture and communication (analog and digital). As a career changer in agriculture, he was not "pre-programmed" regarding setting up the farm. He was open about how to plan and what he could expect from his farm. Anton Dapont is very well educated - off-farm. Besides that, his learning was based on learning by doing and above all on observing animals and nature on the farm. As the farmer is very strong in customer communication it was quite easy for him to generate interest for his innovative ideas not only on a regional level. He offers openness and transparency in all his operational processes.

4.2 Single Farm / Cooperation / Cooperative

Anton Dapont is operating basically as a single farm, but very open to and building on cooperation on farmers level as well as along processing and value chain.

- The cooperation with the butcher goes as far as agreeing and selecting an individual cutting plan for the meat
- Cooperation with other organic farms in the region in an animal leasing network.

5. Next steps to move on

5.1 Steps in production/ processing/ selling

- rearing sheep will be stopped as there is no market access for the farmer for the sheepskin anymore.
- some construction work will be done to make the keeping of cattle and pig easier and more efficient
- thoughts about production of regional hemp

5.2 Steps ahead in relevant Markets

- positioning as a seller of Berkshire-pork

6. Quote and Recommendation of the Promoter

6.1 Is it worth it?

“Definitely!”

6.2 What is the biggest revenue, what is the biggest challenge?

“Besides the pure economics it is great to lift the potential of old breeds even within a maybe old-fashioned extensive farming style. Here you can see a 19-year-old cow giving birth to twins.

The advantages have as other side of the medal disadvantages. The longer duration of the “production cycle” means more or longer input. Therefor the higher price at the end is really necessary.”

6.3 What do you recommend to other farmers?

“Take another perspective. Imagine you do a side entry to farming. Take a different perspective.

The phase of the last years influenced demand in high quality organic food. This should make yourself aware of the steady need for the search of added value, further options and to be more creative in what you do.

A successful farmer today should have very good knowledge and skills both agriculturally and commercially. These are fundamental for success.”

The farmer sees the following success factors:

- high standards and ambition
- Curiosity and creativity
- patience and perseverance
- Target orientation
- Communication and transparency

Post

1. Introduction / Summary

1.1 Essence of the Best Practice

The Adlegg foundation offers an innovative concept for landscape conservation and preservation of a unique cultural landscape. The introduction and use of goats for landscape conservation and the processing of milk, cheese, and goat meat from the region for the region with strong community involvement and direct customer contact are the basis for a success that is based on a common interest and commitment of all partners in the concept.

1.2 What? / How? / Who? / Where?

The farm is based on approx. 115ha of grassland, of which approx. 40 % are classified as biotope. It is a marginal land, which was mostly abandoned before the initiative was started by Mr. Oliver Post started since 1995.

A dairy goat husbandry has been established (60 dairy goats + offspring) in addition to the pension cattle husbandry (130 cattle per year aged 1-2 years).

The cheese dairy processes 30.000 liter of milk per year. Based on a wholistic marketing approach in B2C dairy products as well as goat meat is sold.

2. Given Situation before Startup foundation / Change of operation

2.1 Existing business, startup or sideline

Oliver Post took a side-entry to farming business. After the farmer had acquired a farmstead with 5 ha close by, he realized that many farmers in the region were ceasing their activities because profitability was no longer a given and thus the arduous cultivation of marginal land was no longer attractive.

3. Decisions made at the beginning

3.1 Selection of Seeds/ Breeds/ Location for Production

Oliver Post was clear about the fact, purely from an economic perspective, other locations for goat farming are more effective.

But at the same time, he was very sure that an important regional added value of this livestock farming could also arise from the non-profit interest of landscape conservation and preservation, which could ultimately bring an important advantage and uniqueness in terms of value creation.

Within the framework of a foundation supported by regional stakeholders, the basis was created and in the meantime a goat pen has been realised.

The foundation aimed at high-quality niche production, processing and direct selling from the beginning.

Therefor they made the decision for special breeds of animals which today is:

- goat: Bunte Deutsche Edelziege together with Waldziege

3.2 Decision for the production system (Intensive, extensive, organic, biodynamic)

In line with his decision for the breeds of animals was the decision of organic production from the beginning. It enabled a wholistic appearance and regional market entry for the produce.

The grazing was accompanied by a biologist since 2014 in order to document the effects on the cultural landscape.

The breeding is aiming now on more milk performance based on grazing on meagre meadows.

3.3 Decision about Processing stage and Market depth

Today the farm offers 4 kinds of cheese based on raw goat milk as well as goat meat.

There is cooperation with other farmers in selling/ marketing and as well about using existing capacities of the dairy.

3.4 Decision for the Market to be delivered: B2B and/or B2C

The individual parts of the business described above form a wholistic overall concept to enter fully no B2C-level.

4. Measures taken to establish the business

4.1 Network, Exchange, Training, Consulting

Advice was provided at the beginning and on an ongoing basis by the Office of Agriculture and the Bioland Association (farm development plan). In addition, there was intensive cooperation with ProRegio - Society for Landscape Development and the PLENUM project in Baden Württemberg. As a career changer in agriculture, Oliver Post was open about how to plan and what he could expect from his farm.

Oliver Post as well as the foundation work based on good communication and a high transparency level.

4.2 Single Farm / Cooperation / Cooperative

Cooperation on horizontal as well as on vertical level along added value chain is practiced since always in the foundation, which furthermore is trying to make the costumers and people of the region stakeholders and therefor including them to the project and reach commitment as well as enthusiasm. The farmer managed to find broad support among the regional population for the grazing project and the foundation. The foundation was established by 46 founding donors, including 16 farmers and landowners.

5. Next steps to move on

5.1 Steps in production/ processing/ selling

- improve results of dairy farming from goats
- use existing capacities in processing

5.2 Steps ahead in relevant Markets

- deeper cooperation with other farmers

6. Quote and Recommendation of the Promoter

6.1 Is it worth it?

"Definitely, but there is a need for strong young leaders."

6.2 What is the biggest revenue, what is the biggest challenge?

"Linking agriculture, region and landscape is key.

Without a great passion for agriculture and nature conservation, such a project would not have come into being, neither on a small nor on a large scale."

The farmer had great stamina, and stuck to the path, even if it was by no means always easy.

6.3 What do you recommend to other farmers?

"Think carefully about what makes your location different from others. Both positive and negative. Then work out the positive features and strengthen them!

It is important to think ideas further and to the end:

- what is the consequence of an action in one area for the other area?
- What happens when we act in a certain way?
- Where do we want to go?"

His basic idea is this:

"Agriculture is loyal to its location".

Hofgut Kapellenhof

1. Introduction / Summary

1.1 Essence of the Best Practice

Hofgut Kapellenhof is specialized in sheep farming and produces products of organic sheep milk and meat. The farm has the claim as the only organic sheep milk cheese dairy in the Rhine-Main area to produce high-quality and exclusive cheese creations. Also, it succeeds in creating successful direct customer contact in different ways.

1.2 What? / How? / Who? / Where?

Hofgut Kapellenhof is a certified organic farm, and the manager is Mr. Kütke. It is in Germany, in the state of Hesse, in Hammersbach.

The farm manages about 75 hectares of arable land and grassland: cultivation of wheat, barley, spelt and field beans. These are used as feed grain or also as food grain.

A main income brings the breeding of sheep (Lacaune sheep flock), for milk and lamb meat sales. He owns a sheep dairy and makes his own products (sheep cheese, yogurt, fresh cheese, ice cream, sausage, etc.).

Hofgut Kapellenhof has developed various ways to sell its products e.g., a farm-gate sales with self-service store and the products are also marketed through different partners (supermarkets etc.) in the region.

2 Given Situation before Startup foundation / Change of operation

2.1 Existing business, startup or sideline

The impulse for the reestablishment of the farm was the memory that the Kapellenhof had been run as an agricultural business since time immemorial. It was only in the 1970s that the farm had ceased to operate. We wanted to continue the tradition and practice agriculture again. In 1998, the farm entered organic farming with only two hectares of arable land.

Today it cultivates about 75 hectares of arable land and grassland in Hammersbach and the surrounding area. Since July 2018, the company produces organic sheep cheese.

3 Decisions made at the beginning

3.1 Selection of Seeds/ Breeds/ Location for Production

The first breeding animals of the Lacaune sheep flock come from a breeders' cooperative from Auvergne in France. The decision much decided on the robust Lacaune sheep because they are optimally adapted to climatic conditions and have a good milk yield.

3.2 Decision for the production system (Intensive, extensive, organic, biodynamic)

In 1998, the farm entered organic farming with only two hectares of arable land. The farm produces ecologically, because animal welfare and nature and environmental protection is very important to him and is close to the company's heart. Also, the farm attaches importance to a very good and continuous quality of the products. In addition, the protection of species and biodiversity is far in the front of the farm. Thus, the decision was made to create a 6-hectare wetland where nature can find a retreat that is not intensively farmed. The impulse for the establishment of the sheep herd and the sheep dairy was the consideration that animal manure for their own fields is needed to maintain and improve soil fertility in the long term. Only in this way can ensure the basic ideas of organic farming with a circular economy.

3.3 Decision about Processing stage and Market depth

Hofgut Kapellenhof offers a farm-gate sales. It is a self-service store where you can buy the products of the farm (sheep cheese, yogurt, fresh cheese, ice cream, sausage, etc. and products from other regional farms for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The products are also marketed through different partners in the region (e.g., supermarkets). In addition, the farm offers farm tours, cheese, and wine evenings -> knowledge transfer: the consumer gets an exclusive look behind the scenes, gets to know farm processes and learns interesting facts about organic farming.

3.4 Decision for the Market to be delivered: B2B and/or B2C

The farm takes advantage of the opportunities and benefits of both approaches.

4 Measures taken to establish the business

4.1 Network, Exchange, Training, Consulting

The farm manager, Mr. Kütke is studied Dipl. Ing. Agrar. and thus, he brings expertise and knowledge. It employs four full-time employees and 12 temporary workers. The company does not employ family labor, it is 100% out-side labor.

4.2 Single Farm / Cooperation / Cooperative

Hofgut Kapellenhof is operating basically as a single farm, but very open to and building on cooperation on the different levels along processing and value chain. The farm work based on good and open communication and a high transparency level. He offers openness and transparency in all his operational processes (e.g. insights through farm tours; information on homepage). The intention is to produce high quality, to communicate it and to involve customers as well as business partners.

5 Next steps to move on

5.1 Steps in production/ processing/ selling

In the future, the creation of a farm restaurant has a high priority as an additional marketing channel. The farm manager assumes that it will become more and more important to create reasonable alternatives. Customers must be convinced of the quality in order to pay a justifiably high price.

5.2 Steps ahead in relevant Markets

Positioning as a seller of organic sheep milk products -> Participation with own products in various competitions.

6 Quote and Recommendation of the Promoter

6.1 Is it worth it?

"Yes. On the farm, the expansion of direct marketing and the creation of a farm restaurant has absolute priority in the future. The farm manager assumes that it will become more and more important to create reasonable alternatives. Customers must be convinced of the quality in order to pay a justifiably high price."

6.2 What is the biggest revenue, what is the biggest challenge?

The farm manager thinks that, in retrospect, he should have focused on direct marketing from the beginning. However, it is difficult to judge what would have happened without Covid. That's why it's hard to judge. A certain flexibility to adapt to changing conditions is essential in today's world, he thinks. See Corona and the Ukraine crisis.

6.3 What do you recommend to other farmers?

The farm manager says: "My experience is that we have to be mega flexible. Just because I have set my mind on a certain product and am convinced of it, doesn't mean that the customers will also like it. Especially in the beginning, you have to constantly readjust and be ready to change. That helped me a lot. Above all, you have to find your own way, stand out, find a gap, but not be too specific."

In any case, you have to have a great desire for it and be prepared to have to fight against a lot of resistance. There are a lot of things that come your way that you didn't expect beforehand. Absolute focus must be on product quality and reliability. Large fluctuations in both topics are absolute no go's. You have to be the type for that. As nice as the whole thing is, you must approach it realistically and critically.

Deckers Biohof

1. Introduction / Summary

1.1 Essence of the Best Practice

The organic farm has existed for about 30 years and has experience in the areas of store, weekly market, nursery, delivery service and administration. The combination of office management, customer service in the farm stores as well as customer service in the online store and directly at the source in the nursery, creates a holistic added value of know-how in their family business.

1.2 What? / How? / Who? / Where?

Biohof Decker is an organic farm located in Bühl (Baden-Württemberg) and belongs to the Black Forest National Park Region. The farm is managed by Christoph Decker, 38 years old. The number of employees is almost 100 people, of which four are family members. Today, the farm has about 20 hectares of arable land. On it he grows mainly vegetables and lettuce. He also owns two hectares of orchards, where he grows old varieties of apples. The products are marketed in different ways: through the farm store directly on the farm, which has existed since 2007. Also, Deckers Biohof owns and runs its own managed organic markets in the region (Baden-Baden and Sinzheim) with homegrown and manufactured produce and additional products. Likewise, he sells his products through market stalls. Also exists an online shop with delivery service and very large focus on the organic boxes.

2. Given Situation before Startup foundation / Change of operation

2.1 Existing business, startup or sideline

Fruit, lettuce and vegetables have been grown on the land in Bühl since the early 1970s. Deckers Biohof has been managing the farm since 2004.

3. Decisions made at the beginning

3.1 Selection of Seeds/ Breeds/ Location for Production

The apple trees with the old varieties were already present in the fields of the farm. However, these scattered fruit trees had not been cared for before. More apple trees of old varieties are planted regularly. The farm gets the seeds from a regional apple grower who specializes in this.

3.2 Decision for the production system (Intensive, extensive, organic, biodynamic)

The land had already been farmed according to Demeter principles and Decker's Biohof has also been producing its products according to Demeter principles and values since the takeover. The farm wants to contribute to the protection of the environment and nature and to preserve and promote the cultural landscape with its ecological cultivation and the care of orchards.

3.3 Decision about Processing stage and Market depth

The 20 hectares of arable land is divided as follows: ten hectares of open land, two hectares of orchards, and half a hectare of greenhouse facility. The remaining area is used for shrubs, hedges and habitat for insects, birds, etc.

The farm grows the following products itself: e.g., potatoes, various types of cabbage, onion plants, beets and cut lettuces. It buys other products from other regional organic partners and farms.

In addition to its own orchard meadows with old apple varieties, the farm takes care of other meadows and leases other orchard areas from the city in the area.

3.4 Decision for the Market to be delivered: B2B and/or B2C

The farm takes advantage of the opportunities and benefits of both approaches.

4 Measures taken to establish the business

4.1 Network, Exchange, Training, Consulting

Christoph Decker, 38 years old, is a master gardener and manager of the organic farm.

The farm is an important part of the organic model region Mittelbaden+, which is a project of the state of Baden-Württemberg. Deckers Biohof is strongly committed to strengthening and expanding organic farming in the region and advises other farmers on several levels.

4.2 Single Farm / Cooperation / Cooperative

Deckers Biohof does not see itself as an independent organism, but as an important marketing partner in the region. Overall, a strong networking with many different actors in the region, but also beyond, is pursued. They also pursue to enter dialogue with consumers and customers through the diverse direct marketing.

5 Next steps to move on

5.1 Steps in production/ processing/ selling

- Expansion of e-mobility in our fleet for the delivery service because of the rising energy costs for combustion engines
- The farm is planning a new building with photovoltaic system and water storage function of rainwater --> Independence from external influences in the energy sector and aiming to cover its own energy consumption up to 70 percent.

5.2 Steps ahead in relevant Markets

In planning are "products from organic sample region Mittelbaden+", e.g., products which will then be marked with a logo that they come from the region (-> buy local principle).

6 Quote and Recommendation of the Promoter

6.1 Is it worth it?

Regarding the old apple varieties: the cultivation and processing of old varieties is very worthwhile. The juice is very well received and there is a great demand for it.

6.2 What is the biggest revenue, what is the biggest challenge?

Delivery service/direct marketing:

- No changes need to be made in the delivery service; satisfied. E-mobility:
- extremely high personnel costs (e.g., finding employees)

E-mobility:

- higher acquisition costs, shorter delivery range
- start focusing on e-mobility earlier, start expanding self-produced electricity earlier.

6.3 What do you recommend to other farmers?

- Create marketing concept and search/find reliable buyers
- Adjust annually
- Seek advice in cultivation and areas that cannot be covered by oneself (e.g., Agricultural offices; organic farming associations; local advisory services)
- Choose the most sustainable form of cultivation (organic cultivation)
- Marketing (security of acceptance or sales) must be in place from the beginning before investing.
- Calculate prices of products well and communicate composition well, especially for consumers.

Flavio Orsini

1. Introduction / Summary

1.1 Essence of the Best Practice

The best practice is related to a kind legume similar to a small bean, *Vigna unguiculata* L. Walp., between 3 and 7 mm long, with origins in Northern Africa and traditionally cultivated in the Lake Trasimeno area in Umbria since ancient times. Such a legume, called cowpea, was found inside pots unearthed during the excavations of Pompei and collected with other plant residues (Archeobotanica: Reperti vegetali da Pompei e dal territorio vesuviano, Borgongino M., 2006). This ancient legume was endangered and at risk to be completely lost because of its substitution with more productive crops around the Lake Trasimeno in the years '60s and '70s. Only four old farmers continued this cultivation. One of them was Flavio Orsini's father, Italo, who encouraged his son to continue this tradition.

1.2 What? / How? / Who? / Where?

In 1996, Flavio Orsini started his farm, after having been helping since he was very young his father, owner of an 8 ha farm. Following his father Italo's traditional heritage, Flavio rented and then bought 40 ha. land and started to manage his own farm, also continuing to reproduce and cultivate that special legume called "Fagiolina del Trasimeno". The Fagiolina, which taxonomic name is *Vigna unguiculata* L. Walp., and commonly called in English cowpea, can be sown in April/May and harvested in summer, also selecting the seeds from the best plants at the beginning of harvesting in July/August to sow the year after. Following the tradition Flavio decided to maintain the manual works, including multiple harvesting, the only way to get all the seeds with all their colors, depending on different time of maturation lasting up to 3 months in summer and engaging therefore farmers severely. Flavio who is going to be retired is taking the decision to collect all the family companies under one collective name, FASA (Flavio, Alessandra, Sara and Alice, himself, his wife and two daughters). The perseverance of the Orsini family and other few seed savers convinced the local institutions to recover this biodiversity and stimulate other farmers to be engaged in the seed saving and cultivation. Projects financed by the Rural Development Plan of Umbria since the end of the years 90's gave the

opportunity to study and characterize the existing field populations, their phenotype peculiarities, the germplasm saved at the Gene Bank of the University of Perugia, the complete genetic analysis. A Presidium Slow Food was acknowledged in 2000 and a farmers' consortium titled "Fagiolina del Trasimeno" was constituted in 2002 collecting all farmers. All this work generated interest at national level, particularly from Slow Food that declared officially in 2006 at the International Exhibition in Turin "fagiolina" as an agricultural biodiversity of primary world importance. The name "Fagiolina del Trasimeno" was registered as an intellectual property of the Consortium with the objective to identify, develop and protect this production as limited and reserved to the area surrounding the lake Trasimeno. It is registered since 2013 as agricultural biodiversity in the regional register of Umbria <https://biodiversita.umbria.parco3a.org/risorsa/fagiolina-del-trasimeno/>.

2. Given Situation before Startup foundation / Change of operation

2.1 Existing business, startup or sideline

The Orsini family farm was one of the very few resisting with the legume production, following the ancient tradition of the "Fagiolina" in the area of the lake Trasimeno. The perseverance of the Orsini family and other few seed savers convinced the local institutions to recover this biodiversity and stimulate other farmers to be engaged in the seed saving. Projects financed by the Rural Development Plan of Umbria since the end of the years 90's gave the opportunity to study and characterize the existing field populations, their phenotype peculiarities, the germplasm saved at the Gene Bank of the University of Perugia, the complete genetic analysis. A Presidium Slow Food was acknowledged in 2000 and a farmers' consortium titled "Fagiolina del Trasimeno" was constituted in 2002 collecting all farmers. All this work generated interest at national level, particularly from Slow Food that declared officially in 2006 at the International Exhibition in Turin "fagiolina" as an agricultural biodiversity of primary world importance. The name "Fagiolina del Trasimeno" was registered as an intellectual property of the Consortium with the objective to identify, develop and protect this production as reserved to the area surrounding the lake Trasimeno. It is registered since 2013 as agricultural biodiversity in the regional register of the Region Umbria <https://biodiversita.umbria.parco3a.org/risorsa/fagiolina-del-trasimeno/>.

Flavio currently continues the family farm tradition, together with his wife Alessandra, and their two daughters, Sara and Alice. The 40-ha farm, including 1 ha reserved to the cultivation of Fagiolina, is extensively cultivated with cereals, emmer and corn, other legumes, i.e. black chickpea,

vineyard and olive trees, producing his own wine and extra-virgin olive oil. There are pastures with cattle and sheep contributing to provide with natural compost and meat for guests of the didactic farm.

3. Decisions made at the beginning

3.1 Selection of Seeds/ Breeds/ Location for Production

The Fagiolina (cowpea) seeds are reproduced by the farmer himself for the seasonal crop cultivation maintaining the multicolor characteristics by scalar hand harvesting. The selection is based on natural pollination and intraspecies crossing. The reproduction and cultivation of the Fagiolina is therefore obtained at farm, located on a hill with a view to lake Trasimeno, on 1 ha out of 40 ha total area.

3.2 Decision for the production system (Intensive, extensive, organic, biodynamic)

The cultivation of the Fagiolina is specialized, but not intensive, according to the Slow Food process rules and certification. Some farmers have selected the white color for mechanical harvesting to avoid the costs of the manual work, but this technique can reduce the multicolor biodiversity that is so important for this species, with more than twenty different colors found. The manual operations are convenient however because of the difference with the mechanical harvesting producing just 350 kg/ha instead of the 1,000 kg of the manual harvesting. All farmers participating to the Consortium have adopted the organic process rules but not all have also adopted the organic certification, such as in the case of the Orsini family.

3.3 Decision about Processing stage and Market depth

The Fagiolina is cleaned, dried and selected for the under vacuum packaging, necessary to avoid the dangerous parasite weevil (*Acanthoscelides obtectus*). As an alternative, during the first stage of the summer the cowpea pod can be harvested for consumption as fresh and used to make sauces for pasta or in a slice of grilled bread with extra-virgin olive oil. The skin, very thin and imperceptible to the taste, remains firmly attached to the seed after cooking.

3.4 Decision for the Market to be delivered: B2B and/or B2C

The Fagiolina produced by the Orsini family is cultivated without synthetic chemicals, according to the principles of organic farming, but not certificated

as organic. The Slow Food certification is a guarantee for the consumers of the traditional process reproducing the multicolor variability of the seeds and complete hand scalar harvesting. The Fagiolina produced currently by around 40 farmers mostly goes directly from the farmer to the consumer, at farm or in farmers' markets, then as second option to niche market dealers, and just with limited quantities to some supermarkets.

4. Measures taken to establish the business

4.1 Network, Exchange, Training, Consulting

The farm owner and his family manage all the cultivation, packaging, and marketing phases. They are a didactic farm authorized by the Region Umbria and organize visits to the farm with explanation of their traditional farming with specific reference to Fagiolina, from its historical references to the methodology needed for the cultivation and harvesting up to the tasting based on traditional recipes, such as the classic soup of Fagiolina, or innovative processing, such as the homemade noodles with Fagiolina filling.

4.2 Single Farm / Cooperation / Cooperative

Single farm producing cereals, wine, extra virgin olive oil and Fagiolina, all managed at farm by the Orsini family and mostly consumed or bought by the people hosted at the didactic farm but associated to the Consortium "Fagiolina del Trasimeno".

5. Next steps to move on

5.1 Steps in production/ processing/ selling

The next step that is running through the Consortium, the Municipality of Castiglione del Lago, and the support of the Technological Park of Umbria-3A is the presentation of the dossier for the acknowledgement of the "Fagiolina del Trasimeno" as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) and by the European Union.

5.2 Steps ahead in relevant Markets

The quantity of Fagiolina produced by about 40 farmers is currently too low to get to new markets. It is mostly all sold within the regional market and to some niche market dealers of Northern Italian big cities and chefs. The

success of Fagiolina and the future acknowledgement as PDO can open new opportunities with enlargement of the Consortium and increase of the production. The didactic farm is successful and attended by groups of guests who appreciate a lot the visit and the story telling and tasting experience. This is also a way to let know better the importance of this agricultural biodiversity and spread this knowledge in Italy and abroad. The visits are also included in the opportunities offered by local tourism offices and tour operators.

6. Quote and Recommendation of the Promoter

6.1 Is it worth it?

The Fagiolina itself is a low water-need crop, useful for the soil nitrogen fixing action and it is very requested in the market for its herbaceous flavor and special taste, very different of all other legumes and highly appreciated by famous chefs.

6.2 What is the biggest revenue, what is the biggest challenge?

The biggest revenue is already reached as the Fagiolina was saved from loss and the price on the market, comprised between 18 and 24€ per kilo can be satisfactory for the producers. The biggest challenge is to involve a new generation of farmers to keep alive this tradition and enlarge the fame of "Fagiolina del Trasimeno" through the acknowledgement of the PDO.

6.3 What do you recommend to other farmers?

The Fagiolina, as it is an ancient local biodiversity geographically located around the lake Trasimeno, is a niche market dedicated genetic resource that can be developed according to the geographical and community limits. The convenience for the farmers come from its general appreciation and worldwide acknowledgement that can be strengthened by the PDO certification. It is also convenient for farmers and all the communities around the lake Trasimeno to be included as visits within tour operators' and tourism offices' offers to visitors, with further incomes and practical experience on traditional recipes based on Fagiolina.



Maldrevite

1. Introduction / Summary

Madrevite is basically a farm with specialization on wine, in an area under the designation of origin Colli del Trasimeno, recognized since 1972, also including a very special kind of vine called Gamay del Trasimeno, cultivated in the surrounding of the lake since old times. The University of Perugia demonstrated recently by genetic analysis that the vine is not Gamay from the region of Beaujolais in France but belonging to the grape variety Grenache. So, the name Gamay was acquired by mistake but continues to identify this vine grown on the hills surrounding the lake Trasimeno. The red grape most spread in the area is Sangiovese and Gamay del Trasimeno, as it is officially known and registered, was always considered a secondary vine that could be added to Sangiovese. Nicola Chiucchiurlotto, the owner following his father, is also President of the "Consorzio Colli del Trasimeno", collecting all producers of the Controlled Designation of Origin (DOC in Italian) existing since 1972.

2. Given Situation before Startup foundation / Change of operation

2.1 Existing business, startup or sideline

Nicola's grandfather started the farm, as sharecropper ("mezzadro"), then as a farmer owner of his land. His father took over the farm in the years '90s, then Nicola started to work in 2004, and in 2017 he became the owner. The wine production started in the years '60s but the farm was mostly zootechnic, breeding swine and the bovine traditional race of the territory called "Chianina". The farm was producing straw and fodder and cereals for animal breeding.

3. Decisions made at the beginning

The change for Nicola was the participation to a measure of the Tuscany Rural Development Plan in 2001-2004 including an 8-day secondment in France in summer 2003. Emiliano Falsini. This field training was fundamental to push Nicola to increase the farm land going towards a wine specialization passing from 15 to 65 ha totally, with vineyards from 2 ha to 15 ha.

The choice of enhancing the local varieties pushed Nicola to embrace the choice, besides the traditional Sangiovese, of the Gamay del Trasimeno with the precise idea to characterize it as a biodiversity and a specialty of the territory surrounding the lake Trasimeno.

Also, an olive grove with 1.200 olives was included in the farm choosing the certification as organic extra-virgin olive oil. In 2004, following the efforts of some local farmers to recover a cowpea old variety called "Fagiolina del Trasimeno", Nicola also started 2 ha of this crop, as white for the first two years and then multicolour, with four harvesting phases.

At this point the choice was clear: high quality local wine combined with a mix of organic extra-virgin-olive oil and Fagiolina del Trasimeno.

The following step was to let know the farm and products at national and international level also with tasting at farm for the visitors. For the wine quality is essential 2 ha scaled-up harvesting.

4. Measures taken to establish the business

The Consorzio Colli del Trasimeno is the common way of representing the image and quality of the wines, but as the wine is self-made at farm as a special firm with support of an oenologist in the cellar and presented with specific personal characteristics and references. This position makes it necessary to participate to wine exhibitions in Italy and abroad for direct contact with the buyers.

5. Next steps to move on

The strategic choice of high-quality products representing the territory leaded Nicola to increase the intense hand work needed for this purpose.

For pruning, also that called green in spring/summer, was necessary to find specialized workers, in the last years migrants, coming from Tuscany.

Also, for the grape selection and hand harvesting with choice of the best grapes, as well as for the four harvesting phases of Fagiolina workers in outsourcing with previous experience are needed.

6. Quote and Recommendation of the Promoter

A traditional food product is not just something to eat or drink but it is representing the territory, the landscape, and the culture of the population. This is an added value that can be attractive for the customer and be integral part of the local heritage that the visitor carries with him in his own imagination. Investing in culture and communication is part of an agriculture capable of representing the territorial tradition.

Pictures of the vineyards, tasting and landscape by the owner of Madrevite and of the author of the case study.



Ronci

1. Introduction / Summary

The Ronci oil farm is an ancient family of farmers who have lived in this land and worked for generations among the olive trees that are an integral part of this extraordinary territory.

In the 1950s Nello Ronci bought a small property on the hills of Bevagna in Umbria where he established his family and where he started a small production of extra virgin olive oil.

An important role on the farm development was due to the will and tenacity of Nello's son Marcello, who having a passion for the extra virgin olive oil and for his land, bought new properties, planted, over the years, new olive groves, today 23 ha out of 26 ha land, and built in 1981 a new modern last generation oil mill.

All the family was involved and together with Marcello and his wife Annarita, also their daughters Simona, with a degree in Agriculture, and Roberta, who had decided to follow the family passion, started to work in the oil mill.

Ronci Organic EVO Oil is "Passion", the result of a deep knowledge of the territory, of the wise and precious tradition combined with modern cultivation and processing techniques, based on the principles of organic agriculture.

Today their daughters Simona, with an agricultural degree, and Roberta, who have decided to follow the family passion, work together with Marcello and his wife Annarita.

Ronci Oil is "Passion", fruit of a profound knowledge of the territory, of wise and valuable tradition united with modern techniques of cultivation and processing, based on the precepts of organic agriculture.

The family olive oil mill is situated in the middle of the olive groves in a characteristic old barn recently expanded to create spaces for oil storage.

<https://www.olioronci.it/en/>

2. Given Situation before Startup foundation / Change of operation

2.1 Existing business, startup or sideline

The initial land partly planted with olive trees was enlarged buying more properties and planting new olive trees, always continuing with the traditional varieties of the area, "Leccino", "Frantoio" and mostly "Moraiole". The new last generation olive mill was the result of the attention to valorize the high quality of the olives strengthening the experience of their predecessors, improving quality from the field to the packaging, always

using more advanced techniques to make the Umbrian a symbol itself of the territory.

All operations from the field to the mill are personally managed by the family members: i) rigorously organic fertilization, to protect the health of plants, the environment and humans; ii) pruning and maintenance of plant health according to the best practices from the most recent agronomic studies and technological innovations aimed at obtaining always healthy fruits that will give better quality olives and therefore a better extra virgin olive oil.

A special attention is paid to the protection of the landscape, through the care of olive groves, at risk of abandonment all around, fully involved in the living ecosystem.

Harvesting: takes place in a very limited period between the end of October and the beginning of November in order to collect all the production at the right degree of ripeness also according to the characteristics of the individual olive varieties. The technique used to harvest the olives for oil is called "brucatura", i.e. it is done entirely by hand in order to preserve the integrity of the drupes.

In manual harvesting, the workers climb the tree with ladders and using their fingers or special combs, detach the olives from the fruit-bearing branches which fall to the ground on a net placed under the tree. Once the olives for oil have been detached from the tree they are collected and placed in crates after which they reach the oil mill where the processing begins to obtain cold-pressed organic extra virgin olive oil.

A special care is paid by Simona Ronci, who is agronomist, to the plant health by monitoring and prevention of plant diseases, also in collaboration with the University of Perugia.

Manual harvesting is the system that guarantees the best quality of the olives because it does not damage the drupes and the plants and therefore the quality of the extra virgin olive oil.

3. Decisions made at the beginning

Since the very beginning, more than 20 years ago, the decision was taken to produce according to the rules of the organic farming as a natural way to take care of the land, of the plants and of the final product.

The image of the Ronci family firm is therefore strictly linked to a unique ecosystem, natural soil maintenance and best practices of olive and extra virgin olive oil production.

The olive mill has been updated and improved with a new decanter and centrifuge separator working 1200 kilos olives per hour.

The extra virgin olive oil is available at the farm as well as to the dealers and consumers through careful and dedicated relationships with the consumers.

4. Measures taken to establish the business

The Ronci family olive mill is very famous in the area for the quality of its extra virgin olive oil and well-known also at national and international level, with 30% exported abroad (Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and USA), for its respect of all traditional best practices of production and organic farming and food EVOO supply chain.

An additional value is also given by the popular tasting sessions organized at farm for the visitors, customers, and dealers.

In the same way the olive residues and olive stones are used to produce energy from biomass in a powered wastewater plant just 5 km from the farm, aiming thus at realizing a kind of circular economy with the practical effect of reducing GHG emissions.

5. Next steps to move on

The next step will be to launch use of byproducts from the olives to produce cosmetics based on the natural co cosmetics already on sale online from compounds of the olive plants to complete the line of products.
<https://www.olioronci.it/en/cosmetics/>

Also artistic ceramic small bottles (cruet) can be bought online.
<https://www.olioronci.it/en/cruet/>

Millefiori honey from Ronci farm beekeeping harvested on the hills surrounding Bevagna is available. <https://www.olioronci.it/en/honey/>

Also important is to improve the website for the e-commerce.
<https://www.olioronci.it/shop-online/>

6. Quote and Recommendation of the Promoter

Start from your passion, then find your own ways and means to implement your business. This is the way to provide your farm with an added value that all people can appreciate, not just the customers but all people visiting the territory or living in there.





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