

FARMA BLATNIČKA

Good Practice Collection



Introduction

Farma Blatnička is a visionary endeavor to embrace a holistic approach to agricultural management, spearheaded by Martin Smetana. This South Moravian farm combines several regenerative, sustainable or in other ways innovative practices, aiming at enhancing ecological resilience and biodiversity in the region while mitigating the adverse impacts of intensive agriculture and climate change.

The Farm

Martin Smetana established Farma Blatnička in 2010. His vision is to revolutionize conventional farming practices. The farm spans an area of 65 hectares, of which 11 hectares are owned directly by Martin Smetana. In addition to the modest size of the farm, it operates with a smaller workforce, usually by less than five workers, fluctuating up to ten occasionally depending on seasonal workloads. The farm engages primarily in crop cultivation. The climatic zone is warm and slightly humid, while the soil profile is fertile and very suitable for agricultural activities.

The Location

Farma Blatnička, named after the nearby village of Blatnička, which is located in Moravia, in the South Moravian region, specifically the Hodonín district. The location is very close to the borders with Slovakia and about 110 kilometers (or an hour and half by car) from the seat of Moravia, the city of Brno. In fact, the farm is located in the foothills of the White Carpathians, the mountain range located on the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

While the soil has always been very productive, the area has always suffered from severe water and wind erosion and drying winds, as well as intensive agriculture.

Agricultural regeneration objectives

In fact, these properties of the area have led Martin Smetana to the underlying ideas that started the project: intense agriculture present in the area has led to low diversity and ecological imbalance, which Martin Smetana wants to compensate for and offset. As a graduate of botany, zoology and ecology studies, he has seen the potential of the soil and its need to rebalance after years of heavy use.

The basic premise of the farm is to divide the land into small plots up to 10 hectares each, but usually smaller. Each plot cultivates a different crop, which tremendously increases the biodiversity. Key focal points include the implementation of infiltration strips, tree alleys, biodiversity promotion, erosion control measures, and microclimate management strategies.



Best Practice Focus

The plots alternate between arable land, undemanding landscaping orchards, pear tree avenues supplemented with dogwood, willow and thorn draws, grassy strips with various types of plants and fallow fields. The principle is simple: by relieving the burden of monocultures from the soil, it becomes richer in nutrients, attracts a wider range of animals and insects, improves the health and quality of the soil and improves the stability and biodiversity of the area. This also makes the soil less prone to erosion and makes it easier for it to adapt to climate changes, including sudden torrential rains and droughts.

The results of this approach today are very positive. The territory of Farma Blatnička has turned into an ecologically stable and biodiversity-rich landscape, resistant to climatic fluctuations.

Apart from that, since the adaptation of these measures, the farm has seen the returns of several animal species absent from the area for a long time, such as the red-footed falcon, the northern lapwing, various kinds of butterflies or even earthworms, which were surprisingly absent because of intensive agriculture as well. The farm also often initiates projects for the support and protection of these returning animals.





Financial aspects of regenerative measure implementation – challenges faced

The farm's current aspect would be difficult to imagine without the vision and expertise of Martin Smetana, who made use of his studies. Apart from that, such a heavy transformation of the profile of the area is naturally financially demanding. The implementation of the farm project was financed by a combination of own resources, donations, volunteer brigades and subsidies, mainly from the Program for the Restoration of Natural Landscape Functions of the Ministry of the Environment. In the management of the innovation, the involvement of the surrounding farmers and the use of agricultural subsidies for co-financing were key. The aim for the future is to continue maintaining and expanding an ecologically stable and biodiversity-rich landscape. The expansion of organic production orchards and grassy strips, further planting of avenues and shrubs, and the improvement of infrastructure to support organic farming are planned. An important intention is also to increase cooperation with the surrounding farmers and other interested parties.

Categorisation, keywords

This case study describes examples of biodiversity implementation and diversification of crops.

Biodiversity, diversification of crops, ecological stability, soil health, climate change resistance, microclimate management, polyculture, rebalance, infiltration strips, tree alleys



Advantages and disadvantages of biodiversity implementation and diversification of crops

Advantages	Increased ecological stability, high biodiversity
	High resistance to climate change and sudden weather events
	Good soil health and reduced erosion
Disadvantages	Requires more maintenance than conventional crop cultivation
	Dependence on co-operation of local farmers in surrounding areas
	Applicability fully dependent of specific regional conditions

Learning points

Knowledge	Requires deeper knowledge in botany and ecology.
	Requires knowledge on how to balance various kinds of plants and crops to achieve a positive balance between them.
	Requires a good knowledge of the specific area and soil properties, as the project requires a lot of landscaping.
Skills	Be able to cultivate a wide range of crops.
	Be able to effectively co-operate with neighboring farmers, whose co-operation defines the rate of success of the project.
	Recognize the kinds and protection statuses of various animals, who may relocate to a farm undergoing a vast biodiversity transformation.

References/Bibliography

- <https://www.farmablatnicka.eu/en/>
- <https://www.farmablatnicka.eu/cs/>
- <https://www.farmablatnicka.eu/cs/novinky/>
- https://www.facebook.com/FarmaBlatnicka/?locale=cs_CZ

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Regenerative Agricultural Practices for Environmental Rejuvenation and Sustainable Ecosystems on European Farms



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Project number: 2024-1-CZ01-KA220-VET-000254669

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



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