



MILK-ED

MODERN AND INNOVATIVE ONLINE-BASED  
KNOW-HOW ON EUROPEAN DAIRY PROCESSING

# CASE STUDY

## HR-03

*In love with  
milk industry!*



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## 0. Intro:

Young farmers Jelena Grčević and her spouse Damir are taking care of about 50 goats and the same number of goatlings at their 10 ha family farm located in Gradec Pokupski on the banks of the beautiful Kupa River. Goat farm was founded back in 1986 by Damir's parents, Ivan and Sanja Grčević, when they decided to breed goats and produce cheese to feed their children in a healthy and high-quality way. Their goats are fed exclusively with feed produced on their farm, while the diet is supplemented by daily grazing and thus completes the cycle "from field to table". They also built the mini-dairy processing plant and started producing goat cheese. Today, they process about 100 litres of goat's milk into various sorts of goat cheese every day (semi-hard cheese, cheese with various additives, and smoked cheese), approximately 10 kg of cheese each day. Besides the goat milk and cheese, they also trade goatlings. In addition, they are located on the "Cheese Road of the Zagreb Region" and are awarded the "Milk of Croatian Farms" sign and cheeses are the recipients of many gold awards. They also won two Plaques from the Municipality of Pisarovina for their contribution to the development and improvement of the livestock production of the Pisarovina region through the level of goat and cheese production.

## 1. Personal Data

1.1 Name:

**Jelena Grčević**

1.2 Birth Year: 1991

1.3 Professional background:

**Full time farmer**

1.4 Education:

**Secondary**

## 2. Farm/Enterprise data

2.1 Address/coordinates:

<https://goo.gl/maps/BkAF6mQm1q7pvi3h7>

2.2 Farm Area in ha:

**10**

2.3 N<sup>o</sup> of workers on the farm/enterprise:

	Full time	Part-time/seasonal
Family members	4	
Other than family members	0	

2.4 Farm/Enterprise description:

The farm of about 50 milking goats and 50 goatlings is located at the estate of 10 ha in Gradec Pokupski, Pisarovina, on the banks of Kupa River. In the farm's immediate surroundings, the dairy processing plant is built with the approval of the Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Safety Administration, with daily processing of 100 litres of goat's milk. Goat's milk originating from goats fed exclusively with food produced on their farm and supplemented by daily grazing on their farm is processed into high quality cheese products. In their mini dairy processing plant, the Grčević family makes smoked and semi-hard goat cheeses, cheeses in olive oil, with various spices such as chives,

calendula, etc. All products bear the mark "Milk from Croatian farms". There are currently no employees on the farm and dairy processing unit other than family members. At the moment there are no multifunctional farming activities on the farm, but family Grčević plans to construct cheese tasting room, or visitor centre, so their customers may be acquainted with the technology of goat cheese production.

2.5 Website and social networks accounts:

[https://www.facebook.com/opggrcevic/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/opggrcevic/about/?ref=page_internal)

### **3. Multifunctional farming activities related to dairy processing / Innovation related to products and/or processing**

Family farm Grčević is currently the only goat farm in Zagreb region and Pisarovina surrounding which provide goat cheese products (the nearest goat farm is located about 150 km away in Čakovec, Međimurje County). Therefore, the owners decided to construct a visitor centre with goat cheese tasting room in order to increase the income through the provision of unique services in rural tourism. In that way potential tourists will be acquainted with goat breeding and cheese making and will be able to taste all cheese products made on the farm. In addition, customers' demands for novel goat milk products such as yogurt and kefir, motivated the owners to expand their product range, so further investment in equipment and education is crucial to keep up with market demands.

3.1 Advice/Recommendation:

"This job takes extraordinary effort and motivation of people to do it successfully! It takes a lot of sacrifices and good will to make a product that will serve the requests of customers and to meet today's production challenges and market. Besides that, one should do this job primarily for its personal pleasure and the well-being of his family."

### **4. Considerations, training/competences involved and queries/questions.**

4.1 General considerations:

To implement process innovation and multifunctional farming activities, they received counselling in terms of milk processing technology, goat breeding, milking practice, and animal health that was provided by university professors from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Also, they passed different trainings and seminars regarding milk processing technology, animal breeding and nutrition, HACCP implementation (focus on GHP), as well as, management and EU funds application training. They have the great support from the Advisory Service of the Ministry of Agriculture through seminars and trainings about goat and sheep breeding and health ("Ovko" seminar), and goat cheese production. The Advisory Service of the Ministry of Agriculture, also help them to improve their cheese production in order to overcome undesirable effects on final products. Currently they promote their products on markets, fairs, social networks (Facebook) and by the verbal recommendations between customers. At this moment, they distribute the products by direct distribution on their door step, or with own delivery vehicles, and also through online sales, as well as to few restaurants, and hotels on the coast. Also, they gave the customer possibility to choose the cheese supplement (chives, dill, hot pepper, pepper, sesame, etc) according to their wishes. Despite the good financing opportunities through EU funds and national grants, the main challenge is the lack of experience and knowledge in such applications, as well as finding an adequate partner. Idea to open a visitor centre and turn toward tourism was found to be a good way to increase the rating of their family farm and products, and thus the profit. In their opinion, it is crucial to focus their advertisement in pointing out the importance of traditional production and rural activities. They are a member of the Croatian small dairy association which annually organizes Croatian Cheese Days and professional excursions in order to promote and develop the production and consumption of autochthonous and

other cheeses and other dairy product. In addition, they are members of the SIREK Association and the Cheese Road of the Zagreb Region.

#### 4.2 Training/Competences (Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes) especially relevant for the process:

International seminars and trainings, together with experts' counselling concerning marketing, drop shipping and online sales were of the utmost importance, especially in parts where some of these concepts are in development. Small family farmers usually participate mainly in national seminar and trainings, rarely in international. Such seminars and trainings are mostly related to animal breeding and nutrition or milk processing technology, but their biggest limitation in education are trainings related to finance with an emphasis on the banking sector, business planning and management, as well as tourism management. Continuous work on oneself, along with the non-formal education in processing technology, law, finance, marketing are found to be unavoidable part of any farmer that wants to become successful.

## 5. Photos

