



MILK-ED

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

CASE STUDY HR-06

*In love with
milk industry!*



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
This document reflects the view only of the author and the Commission cannot be held
responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

0. Intro:

Igor Tomaić is a young rural entrepreneur who runs a family company, Tomaić Commerce Ltd, and family farm together with his father Vladimir. Their family company have several years experience in cheese production in their Dairy "Runolist", which consist of two production facilities located in Krasno and Otočac in Lika region, near the wonderful Plitvice Lakes National Park. Their main activity is milk buyoff, milk processing, production of cheese and other dairy products, but on their 2 ha family farm located in Krasno, they also take care of 7 Bush cows and 4 calves. Together with 5 employees they process about 1,600 litres of milk procured from subcontracted producers from the Velebit region into various cheese products. With the purpose of rural tourism and promotion of traditional Lika cheese, they have built a cheese tasting room and the educational hall within the Dairy "Runolist". Additionally, they are planning to include autochthonous "Lička basa" in their assortment, and have started developing the novel functional cheese product with bee pollen.

1. Personal Data

1.1 Name:

Igor Tomaić

1.2 Birth Year: 1982

1.3 Professional background:

Rural entrepreneur/processor

1.4 Education:

Bachelor's and Master's

2. Farm/Enterprise data

2.1 Address/coordinates:

<https://goo.gl/maps/BnxxUz5GM2qpGJYBA>

2.2 Farm Area in ha:

Farm area 2ha; Dairy plant area 0,6ha

2.3 N° of workers on the farm/enterprise:

	Full time	Part-time/seasonal
Family members	3	0
Other than family members	5	0

2.4 Farm/Enterprise description:

Family farm is located in Lika region, near the Plitvice Lakes National Park. First dairy facility (The Dairy "Runolist") was opened on their family farm in Krasno in 2003, while second (co-financed by the funds of the Ministry of Agriculture and the SAPARD Pre-Accession Fund and the Ministry of Regional Development) was opened in 2009 in Otočac. The dairy may process up to 5,000 litres of milk daily, the HACCP system has been introduced, and the regular controls of the competent authorities are carried through. They base the production of cheese on traditional recipes and domestic raw-materials provided in cooperation with the milk producers from the Velebit region. Currently, farm and dairy processing unit together have 8 full-time employees, including 3 family members which process about 1,600 litres of milk daily (about 93% is cows', 2% of goats' and 5% of sheep's' milk) into several cheese products including Krasnarski cheese, Runolist cheese, Škripavac, Velebitski cheese, fresh

cow cheese, cow milk skuta and sheep milk skuta, and Tartufo - Runolist cheese with truffles. The products are based on tradition, health safety, high level of quality and excellent taste and since 2000 they have won many gold and silver medals in various competitions and trade shows in Croatia.

2.5 Website and social networks accounts:

<http://www.sirana-runolist.com.hr/eng/aboutUs.html>

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

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

State of the market in Croatia motivated them to turn to rural tourism and sell their Dairy “Runolist” products directly to customers. The idea was to promote the values of traditional production of cheese in Lika region and to establish a better customer-manufacturer bond. To present their products as good as possible, they decided to build a cheese tasting room and an educative hallway for visitors within the Dairy “Runolist”, where customers can see all phases of cheese production and taste cheese together with high quality wine. In that manner customers get all the answers on the spot, while the Dairy “Runolist” can collect comments and suggestions on which it can further improve quality of their products. In the near future, they are planning to expand tourist activities and accommodation capacities on their farm, so visitors may enjoy the beauties of Lika as well. They believe their activities could be sustainable in long run, but also should be further developed in this regard. Enlargement of assortment has also been planned with introduction of several new products, which for sure include “Lička basa”, an autochthonous product produced today in a small number of households in the region of Lika.

3.1 Advice/Recommendation:

“My family runs this dairy since 1992 and it took us a lot of time, finances and patience to create what we have today. To be successful in this job, one need to put a lot of effort into his education, should keep up with latest trends and demands of market, and innovations in production technology as well. There are often ups and downs in this business, but you need to be persistent and not give up on your goals. Based on our many years of experience and due to the market problems that have arisen with Croatia's access to the EU, I would recommend everyone who wants to do this business to start smaller production and sell their products directly to customers. Additionally, it will also be smart to turn to rural tourism and other agriculture activities to expand the range of activities of the family farm and thus ensure your business. That is our future plan as well.”

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

4.1 General considerations:

To implement process innovation, they received counselling in terms of milk processing technology and development of novel functional cheese product that was provided by university professors from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Agriculture. Since the HACCP system has been introduced, all employees passed basic trainings and seminars regarding HACCP implementation, while executive managers and owners passed advanced education as well. As part of the Croatian small dairy association they also participated in several international professional fairs and expert visits to other dairies where have had opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge regarding cheese technology and improvement of their processes. Regarding the business management and marketing they attended seminars organized by Lider Media Ltd. Despite the trainings and seminars, the main challenge still was a price competitiveness related to Croatia becoming the 28th Member State of the European Union. Large investments were needed to keep up with the European market, while different types of non-tax fees imposed by the state also increased. Because of that they decided to decrease their production and sell their products directly to customers. That was also the main reason to start with the rural tourism on their family farm, and as well to develop some new products to be

more attractive to customers and to promote values of the Lika region. Together with Association of beekeepers "Maslačak" Otočac and the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Agriculture they are in process of development of a novel functional cheese enriched with bee pollen. They have applied for EU funding to research the nutritional value of bee pollen in cheese, but unfortunately did not receive the funding. Withdrawal of such funds remains one of the biggest problems for their day-to-day progress.

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

Perseverance and continuous work on oneself found to be unavoidable part of any farmer that wants to become successful in this job. To extend its knowledge and skills one should participate in international seminar and trainings, liaise with the relevant advisory services and get involved in the work of associations in this sector to more easily solve their problems, get appropriate advice or even an idea to improve their business. Experts' counselling and training concerning the development of novel cheese products by implementing various additives, such as bee pollen, is essential for implementing the required technologies at the enterprise. The big limitations in education are trainings related to tourism management which would be of great importance for the involvement in rural tourism. Given the problems they have encountered in the market because of the high government levies and costs, there is also a need of education and trainings related to business management and finance with an emphasis on the banking sector and application for EU funds and state aids.

5. Photos

