



**MILK-ED**

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

# CASE STUDY

## SI-02

*In love with  
milk industry!*



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## 0. Intro:

According to records from the land registers of the Freising bishops, the Pustotnik farm in Gorenja vas is more than a thousand years old, and its name dates back to the 13th or 14th century. Nikolaj Brance is a young farmer who inherited the farm from his father Milan Brance. Milan and his wife Žuža started dairy processing 30 years ago. They established the first private dairy processing facility in Slovenia. On the farm, they produce cow's milk. For their goat's and sheep's milk products they purchase milk from local farmers. They believe in using traditional recipes with modern equipment for producing their dairy products. In 2016 their cheese "Kozovč" won a silver medal at the world selection of the best cheeses in Basque Country.

## 1. Personal Data

- 1.1 Name: Nikolaj Brance
- 1.2 Birth Year: 1988
- 1.3 Professional background: full time farmer
- 1.4 Education: Bachelors's degree

## 2. Farm/Enterprise data

- 2.1 Address/coordinates: Poljanska cesta 19, 4224 Gorenja vas
- 2.2 Farm Area in ha: 25 ha
- 2.3 N° of workers on the farm/enterprise:

	Full time	Part-time/seasonal
Family members	5	
Other than family members	11	

- 2.4 Farm/Enterprise description:

One of the most important factors influencing the quality of home-made products and cheeses is quality of milk, because of that they pay a lot of attention to the care and wellbeing of their animals. The herd of about forty dairy cows is an entirely black-and-white breed. On 25 hectares of arable land, they grow grass hay for their nutrition, and for wholesome meals they add a mixture of cereals, vitamins and minerals. In addition to domestic cow's milk, the cheese factory also processes sheep and goat's milk, which is brought to them every morning by partner farms from the wider area of the Poljanska Valley. They process 14,581 l of milk per day. They are the first private cheese factory in Slovenia and one of the few in Central Europe that processes three different types of milk in one place. They offer a selection of more than seventy different dairy products and cheeses, which are made according to traditional recipes, without the use of artificial additives and preservatives. Their products include different kinds of yoghurts and milk drinks, cottage cheese cheeses from cows', sheep's and goats' milk, soft cheese, cream and different kinds of semi hard and hard cheeses from cows', sheeps' and goats' milk.

- 2.5 Website and social networks accounts:

- Webpage: <https://www.kmetijapustotnik.si/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KmetijaPustotnik/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/kmetijapustotnik/>

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

In an idyllic rural location in the heart of the Poljanska valley stands a house in which tradition and modernity interact. The cheese shop combines under one roof a dairy processing factory, cellars for cheese maturing, a shop with a varied selection of local products and tasting rooms for larger or smaller closed parties, which welcomes visitors with a pleasant homely ambience. In 2015 they opened a coffee shop at their farm where they also offer their dairy products. When making cheeses and dairy products at their cheese factory, they use only traditional procedures and recipes, as their purpose is to offer natural dairy products without artificial additives and preservatives. They process 1458 l of milk per day. Their dairy products are available at different markets across Slovenia in eco stores and food retail chains. They also have an online shop. Their cheese building combines production, sales and tourism.

#### 3.1 Advice/Recommendation:

Cheese-making is a strenuous activity, as cows need to be milked twice a day, regardless of weekends and holidays. Before you decide to take this step, think carefully if this is indeed your passion and the right path for you, as you have a lot of hard work and perseverance ahead of you if you want to succeed in this field. You need enough knowledge and help since mastering cheese production is a hard journey and can add pressure on the whole family.

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

#### 4.1 General considerations:

They are the first private cheese factory in Slovenia and one of the few in Central Europe that processes three different types of milk in one place. They offer customers a selection of more than seventy different dairy products and cheeses, which are made according to traditional recipes, without the use of artificial additives and preservatives.

Their main mission and purpose are to offer domestic dairy products and cheeses of the highest quality and with their work contribute to the general recognition of Slovenian cheeses and increase their culinary value. They learned the skills of cheese making in intensive learning course in Switzerland. They started their cheese-making business by selling their cheese at Ljubljana's market. After that, they started with goat's and sheep's cheese. When they started 30 years ago, the profession of cheese making did not exist in Slovenia, because of that they learned the skill abroad. They started with cheese-making due to low cost of milk at the time. There were no small, private cheese factories in Slovenia at that time, so it was difficult to get information and knowledge. Soon after the idea of cheese-making became a reality, Nikolaj's mother, decided to study in Switzerland. She returned with new knowledge and experience, the first loaves of cheese began to form in the home kitchen, in an improvised boiler above the gas burner. This was the start of their milk-processing factory.

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

They believe that a foundation of a successful milk processor should be the knowledge of cheese making and of milk processing technology. Very important is also the knowledge and understanding of basics of business such as knowledge of accounting, marketing and bookkeeping. Knowledge in managing dairy processing facility, work organization skills and team management competences are also basic for being successful.

They believe the academic sphere in Slovenia is too passive. They should be the ones to take care of progress and development, education of younger generations and innovation, but unfortunately this is not the case. "If we want to hire a cheesemaker, we have to raise them ourselves." There is no real mentoring, transfer of knowledge to young people with the support of the state. From a farm where

cheese-making was initially only a supplementary activity, they developed a company in twenty-five years, which today employs an excellent team of ten employees in addition to the family. They believe there should be a transfer of traditional skills and knowledge to younger generations.

**5. Photos**

