
Breed Ambassador

Andraž Podpečan, Galicia, Žalec, Slovenia



Milk from Brown Swiss cows provides the best yield in processing

The Podpečan family farm is a traditional cattle farm with a long tradition of cow breeding. Today, the farm is run by a young farmer Andraž, who inherited it from his father Andrej 5 years ago. When the farm was transferred to the young farmer Andraž, the Podpečans decided to thoroughly modernize the farm by building a modern barn with the latest technological standards, with a milking robot. In addition to cows they also breed offspring.

Like many other cattle farms in Slovenia, Andraž's ancestors recognized the good qualities of the brown swiss breed and brought the first animals to the farm. Andraž continues to breed the brown swiss breed on the farm - about 90% of animals is brown swiss cows and heifers. Most of the milk is processed into various types of products, mostly cheese, as much as 60% of the milk produced. Some of the milk that they fail to process is sold to the buyer on the market.

At the Podpečans, they carried out a practical test of milk processing between the milk of the Brown Swiss and the Holstein breeds. *"When processing 100l of milk of Brown Swiss and 100l of milk of Holstein for the production of grilled cheese, the difference is more than 20% in favor of Brown swiss"*, says Andraž's father Andrej, who also says that this difference is higher than what he has traced in professional journals.

All cows and heifers are artificially inseminated. They use about 30% sexed semen, 60% conventional and 10% beef breed semen.

All fodders are grown on the farm own and rented lands. They cultivate 44 ha of agricultural land, 16 ha of absolute meadows, 28 ha of arable land with 14 ha of maize for silage and grain, 7 ha of clover grass mixtures and 7 ha of grain (barley, wheat, and triticale). All areas after corn are sown with a mixture of peas and barley in the fall, and in the spring they are sown along with clover grass mixes and grass from perennial meadows.

In the feed ration they have about half of corn silage and half of grass silage, as well as 1 kg of barley straw. Depending on the dry matter of the meal, they add some water if necessary. Cows are given concentrate when milking on a robot, depending on the amount of milk from 1 kg to a maximum of 5 kg per day.

Dry cows and high-pregnant heifers, are fed with the same basic feed as dairy cows, except that 50 % of the dry matter is barley straw.



They breed calves in individual pens up to the age of 4 weeks. They are fed with milk. After this period, they go to group stalls at the milk vending machine for calves. On the vending machine they are fed with milk replacer, where they are until the age of 12 months.

After weaning, heifers are fed the same ration as cows, except that it includes about 25 % hay and barley straw.

Half of the bull calves are sold by 2 months old. The other half are fattened up to a weight of 600-650 kg, or at the age of 20-22 months.

20 years ago, Andraž's sister Martina started processing milk in her own cheese factory. She became fascinated with milk processing during her studies at the Biotechnical Faculty. Today, Martina runs milk processing and tourism activities on the farm.

They make different types of cheeses from soft to hard according to the classic method from whole milk. They try to produce as many flavors as possible, so they also make cheeses with additives – flavors, mostly on customers wishes. Martina points out that they need to offer at least one new processed milk product each year. They swear by the variety of items offered to provide customers with a choice. In addition to their own products, consumers can buy products produced by neighboring farms in family store at Podpečan farm.

The members of Podpečan Farm are known as progressive, hardworking and not satisfied with simple, easy challenges in life. They want something more, which is the biggest challenge for them for the future.



Farm profile

Farmhouse Podpečan,
Galicija 51, Žalec, Slovenia

Location: 331 meters above sea level

Farm size: 44ha agricultural land, of which
22 ha are owned
16 ha of natural grassland
28 ha of arable land, of which 14 ha of maize
for silage and grain
5 ha of clover grass mixtures, 2 ha of alfalfa
7 ha of grain (barley, wheat or triticale)

Livestock: : 70 cows, 75 young cattle (calves,
heifers and fattening bulls)

Insemination of cows and heifers: 100%
artificial insemination, 80% with Slovenian
bulls (50% are classically tested and 50%
genomically tested), 10% with bulls from
other countries (mostly from Germany) and
10% with beef bulls

Housing system: Dairy cows and heifers –
free-range with bunk boxes, calves Igloo,
deep litter pens,

Breeding bulls: pressed manure pens

Milking: robotic milking, Lely astronaut

Milk production: 420,000 kg – 90% of milk is
processed in their own cheese factory, the
rest is sold to the buyer on the market.

Performance data: 6877 kg milk, 4,40% fat,
3,89% protein, 225 somatic cell counts, 420
day period between calvings

Workforce: Full-time: Andraž and Martina,
help: father Andrej and mother Danica -
both retired,
additional employees: two employees,
additional hiring during peak season