

Hemp: a sustainable alternative for a farm, Latvia

Andris Visnevskis, Obelisk Farm

- **Scale of activity:** local
- **Actor/s:** farmer
- **State of the activity:** started in 2017, ongoing
- **Keywords:** hemp; farm; building material; diversification of economic activities; trainings; workshops



Summary

How hemp cultivation and production can save the family farm: the Obelisk Farm case.

In Obelisk Farm besides growing hemp and transforming it into useful products (such as food) there are plenty of learning opportunities that include: hemp papermaking workshops and hemp as a building material courses.



Background

Obelisk Farm story began when a young family of four - Andris, Debora, Gabriela, and Fredis - moved in 2014 from London to the Latvian countryside searching for a more nature connected life. As they settled in a 2.5-hectare organic farm nestled in the eastern part of Latvia, Latgalē region – at Obeliškas village and with a flourishing grasp of farming, hemp growing became a priority here at the farm. Why hemp? Because they believe it can and will feed, clothe, shelter and heal the entire world.

Description of activities

As the cannabis plant still raises misunderstandings, they decided to open their farm doors for tours around the farm where visitors explore how the farm grows hemp and turn it into useful products.

In addition, they provide learning opportunities that are meant to raise awareness of the uses and benefits of the hemp plant. To this extent, the farm aims to break stereotypes regarding cannabis sativa as an agricultural crop while introducing visitors to the endless potential of the hemp plant.

They organise:

Walking tours :

- around the farm to explore how they grow hemp and turn it into useful products.

- to visit the hemp museum: it was created with the aim of promoting the hemp plant and its many uses - since hemp is part of the Latvian history and culture . The museum is divided into 4 different exhibits: folk songs, people and their stories, old-time machinery and modern uses of the hemp plant.

Workshops: they present thematic, exclusive and relaxed sessions, to those who love hemp or who decided to learn more about this plant, like **hemp paper & hemp as building material**.



Trainings at the hemp school: it was created with the aim of building a non-formal education space linked to hemp. Their desire is to share practical and innovative knowledge about industrial hemp. The pillars of the hemp school are based on sharing experiences and creating a network of students and trainers which together might stimulate other initiatives in diverse themes such as **natural construction, natural food, consumption, and collaborative production** among many others.



Tastings and demonstrations such as:

- hemp milk making demonstration and tasting,
- unlimited tasting of hemp peanut butter, hemp bars, hemp oil, hemp seeds, hemp protein powder, and hemp tea.

Hemp shop: seeds, food and other hemp products can be bought on the on-line (and on-farm) shop.

The hemp production is all used in the farm's own learning activities and in the online (on-site) shop.

Outlook - Prospect

Networking: Obelisk farm is an honorary member of the Latvian Industrial Hemp Association and a member of the Latvian Home Producer Association.

The farm also cooperates with other organizations such as Forum Synergies to provide learning opportunities to young people interested in learning more about the work done at the farm.

Source and contact

Information gathered at: the European Rural Parliament 2019 Market of initiatives (6 Nov. 2019); FS scholarships 2019

Contact: Andris Visnevskis

Organisation: Obelisk Farm

Website: <http://www.obeliskfarm.lv/>;

Available on Forum Synergies' website: http://www.forum-synergies.eu/bdf_fiche-experience-215_en.html

