

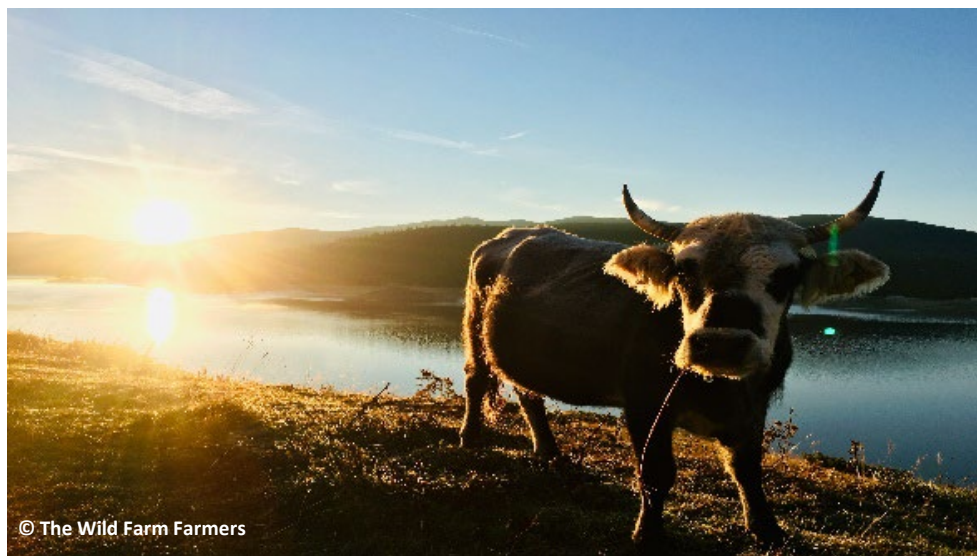
“The Wild Farm” organic farmers

A collective initiative of four farmers applies animal welfare standards, organic standards, agri-environmental measures for the production of beef. They cover the whole value chain from raising the animals, to the processing of the meat and marketing of the products in a small store in Sofia. They have a contract with a distributor for organic/natural foods processed in ecofriendly manner.



Summary

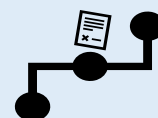
The contract solution includes a value-chain contract between the Wild Farm and a distributor – Bio Balev supermarkets. The farmers also have a contract with the government - the Ministry of agriculture and forests - for support on organically raised cattle. The farm is situated in the South Central region in Rhodope Mountains. The product is organically certified beef which is raised the whole year on natural meadows with high biodiversity features. The hay during the months with low food supplies comes from alpic mountain hay meadows, which are maintained in conservational manner by the farmers. Apart from having an important soil protection and water regulation role they are a valuable source of feed for the cattle. A number of higher plants with conservation status can be encountered on those meadows.



Problem description

The demand for Bulgarian meat with high quality increased during the last decade, as well as the need for organically clean products. The Wild farm concentrated its effort in producing meat and other supplementary products in a environmental-friendly way so that the demand for natural Bulgarian products can be met. At the moment those farms which are engaged in organic husbandry in Bulgaria mainly export their animals due to the lack of certified slaughterhouses for organic meat. The Wild Farm opened their own slaughterhouse at the end of 2018 which was the first one certified for organic meat in Bulgaria. Part of the animals in the farm includes local rare breeds which contribute to the conservation of local biodiversity. The farm is also situated in a high-nature value site with ornithological significant Egyptian vulture which is a globally endangered species. Therefore one of the mission of the farmers is to implement as many as possible conservation measures (including pesticide free agriculture, maintenance of their pastures consistent with the nesting regime of local bird species, etc.) in order to support the local biodiversity. The initiative was led by the Wild Farm.

VALUE CHAIN



Organic farmers – meat processing - distributor

PUBLIC GOODS



(Farmland) biodiversity,
Biodiversity of rare breeds
and ornithology species



Quality and security of
products



Farm animal health and
welfare

INDIRECT EFFECTS



Rural viability and vitality

Data and Facts – Contract

LOCATION

BULGARIA



Haskovo municipality in the Southcentral region of Bulgaria.

CONTRACT

A market sector-oriented contract type between farmers and distributor.

Contract conclusion:
Written agreement



Payment mechanism:
Collective payment without premium price levels



Funding/Payments:
From distributor to Wild Farm (collectively)



Start of the program:
2018

End: ongoing

Length of participation in contract solution:
2018 – open end

PRODUCT

The product is organic beef.

Participation: 4 farmers participate in this contract solution

Involved parties: The contracting parties are the Wild Farm founded in 1994 and the distributing company Bio Balev. The latter is a distributor of natural, high-quality products, with no artificial additives, sweeteners, colorants or preservatives, that have higher nutritional values. The company is a leading distributor of a large range of organic, vegan, vegetarian, healthy foods certified according to European and international standards for organic quality.

The benefits for the Wild Farm: To sell the production on the Bulgarian market. As an indirect effect of selling their products is the popularization of the Wild Farm as a destination for ecotourism. The Wild Farm has recently opened a guest house with many environmental activities for the guests.

The benefits for distributor: as a distributor they meet the raising demand of the Bulgarian market for products which are natural/organic and of local origin.

Management requirements for farmers: The farmers should cover the requirements for organic production husbandry.

Controls/monitoring: The monitoring is done by independent certification organization.

Conditions of participation: The main requirement is the beef to be organically certified.

The system of payments: The payment is for the Wild Farm (collectively) by the distributor. There are no premium price levels

Links to other contractual solutions: The farmers are applying for organic subsidies under the Rural Development Program for meeting organic standards

Objectives

1. Conservation of local biodiversity of rare breeds and ornithological species
2. Practicing animal welfare principles and whole year free grazing of the cattle (half of the year in high mountain pastures)
3. Popularization of Bulgarian organic beef meat



Framework conditions

Landscape and climate: The agricultural lands are located mainly on the high parts of the valley. The rich biodiversity includes turtles, falcon, wild cat, wolf, wild boar and more. 174 species of birds have been found on the territory, 40 of which are included in the Red Book of Bulgaria of endangered species and 78 are of European conservation interest. The globally endangered Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) and over 30% of the Griffon Vultures (*Gyps fulvus*) in Bulgaria nest here. Therefore the region is appropriate for conservational agricultural practices that will have high impact on the local biodiversity.

Farm structure: The targeted system is organic husbandry. The farm size is around 100 ha and the cattle is around 1200 oxen, cows and buffalos. The ownership structure is mostly rent land and farmers are on a full base contracts. The predominant part of the farm is organic.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

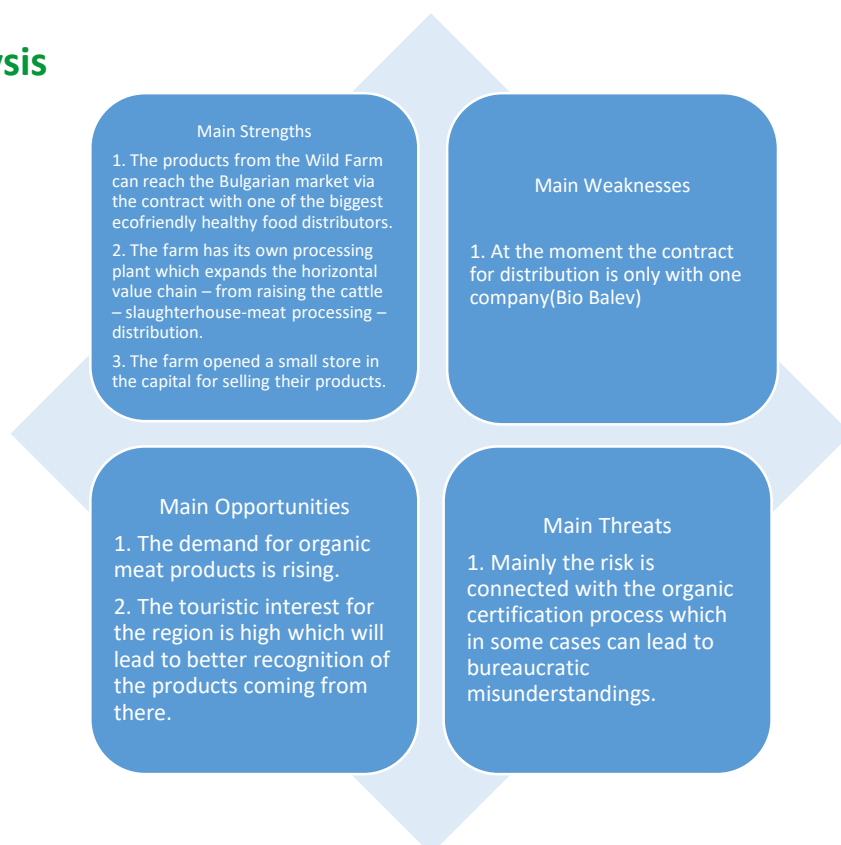


The “Wild Farm” initiative succeeded in not only raising local rare breeds of cattle in organic way but also suppling organic meat for the Bulgarian market. They have been in business for 20 years and although they haven’t been organically certified during the whole period, from year 1 they have been considering conservation measures on their farm. The cattle are raised by spending half of the year in the East Rhodopy Mountain above 1500 altitude, grazing on Alpic mountain hay meadows with specific type of plant species assessed as valuable source of nutrition for the cattle. The activities on the farm provide mainly public goods as biodiversity conservation and animal welfare and are targeted to reach the Bulgarian consumer so that the demand for organic food with high qualities can be met.

Reasons for success:

- One of the few organic husbandries in the country which has a contract for delivering their production to the Bulgarian market.
- The opening of the slaughterhouse secured that the production will not be entirely exported but will serve the Bulgarian market.
- The farm has a longstanding practice for environmental conservation and a high motivation to continue in this manner.

SWOT analysis



Main external factors influencing success

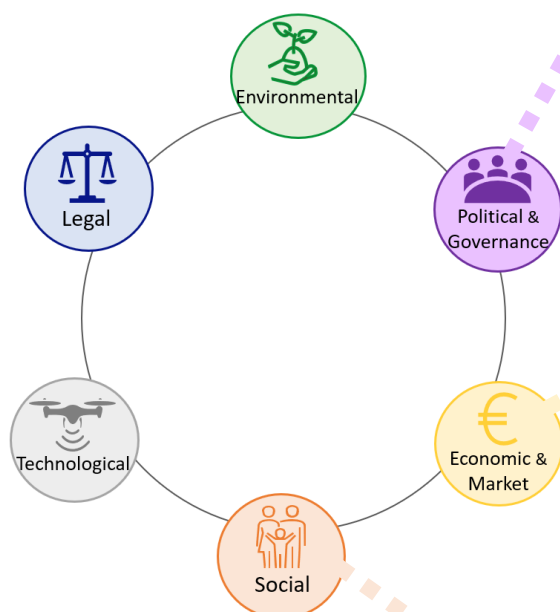
Political/governance, economic/market, social, technological, legal and environmental factors can all have a strong impact on the success of contract solutions. In this case study an in-depth analysis found that the following, selected factors were of specific importance.



Policy incentives fostering the contract solution:

One of the main policy incentives came with the development of the Rural Development Program after 2007.

- (1) Firstly, **organic farming** is strongly supported by the Bulgarian government and shows constant increase in the last years. Compared to crop production, organic husbandry is still lagging behind. One of the main reason for the that is the lack of processing plants (slaughterhouses, dairy farms, etc.). Therefore, being the first farm with its own slaughterhouse makes the Wild Farm a good example and a possible contractor in the value-chain of organic products.
- (2) Secondly, **conservation of meadows in high-nature value sites** was another aspect under the agricultural policy that triggered conservational behavior among farmers.



Twofold influence of organic farming:

- In general, the organic production in the country strongly depends on governmental support. The **market for organic products is still underdeveloped** due to high prices of the organic products and the limited purchasing power of the consumers.
- The good example of the Wild Farm shows how independent an organic farm can be by extending the value-chain.

Own "mission" to improve local biodiversity:

Environmental awareness: The four partaking farms are very aware of the high nature value of the area with the ornithologically important Egyptian vulture (an endangered species). Following environmentally friendly way of farming is their mission.

Going beyond existing concepts: The Wild farm concept is moreover driven by an own "mission" to implement as many conservational measures as possible (beyond organic, maintenance of pastures consistent with the nesting regime of local bird species, etc.) in order to support the local biodiversity.