

CZECH REPUBLIC

Agri-food chain integration & quality

Location

Písek

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P3 Food chain & risk management

Measure

M16 - Cooperation

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 1 819 256
EAFRD 450 266
National/Regional 459 362
Private 909 628

Project duration

2016 – 2018

Project promoter

MASO UZENINY PÍSEK, a.s.

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Investing in facilities that respect animal welfare enabled a meat processing company to improve its profitability while responding to society's ethical concerns.

Summary

The facilities of the meat processor 'Maso uzeniny Písek a.s.' were outdated and the animals were exposed to considerable stress before being slaughtered. Besides the ethical aspect, the stress caused to the animals also had a negative impact on the meat. It was of poor quality and could not be sold or used in the production of quality meat products.



In collaboration with the Faculty of Food and Biochemical Technology at University of Chemical Technology (UCT) in Prague, the meat processor introduced a number of changes to improve animal welfare. Holding pens were introduced to calm the animals as they arrived. The path pigs follow from the admission point, to the holding pens, to where they are slaughtered was straightened and shortened and the electric stunning method was replaced by a modern CO2 stunning technique.

Results

The investment in the new buildings and equipment enhanced the animal welfare and food safety standards and the use of CO2 stunning had a series of positive effects:

- It minimised the occurrence of PSE (Pale, Soft and Exudative) meat which is excluded from sales and the production of quality meat products;
- It increased labour productivity;
- It increased the profitability of the firm and enhanced its competitiveness; and
- It positively contributed to the ethical image of the firm.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The collaboration with the research organisation was critical for the success of the project. UCT's involvement from the beginning (i.e. at the project design stage) helped to select the optimal solution tailored to the firm's particular conditions. A positive interlink (synergy) between private (profit, competitiveness) and social (animal welfare, ethical slaughtering) objectives is possible

Context

The facilities of the meat processor 'Maso uzeniny Pisek a.s.' were out-dated for the slaughtering of pigs, exposing the animals to considerable stress from the moment they arrived at the facility to when they were being slaughtered. Previously the animals had been slaughtered by electric stunning. Besides the ethical aspect, the stress caused to the animals had a negative impact on the meat. The meat was of poor quality and could not be sold or used in the production of quality meat products.

To deal with those two issues the beneficiary decided to transform the admission of pigs for slaughtering, by introducing the most up to date methods that respect animal welfare principles and veterinary and hygienic standards.

This required a significant investment in pig housing and pre-slaughtering facilities, as well knowledge gained through research, which was provided by an external research institute. As a result of the changes, the occurrence of PSE meat dropped to almost zero and this had a positive impact on firm's profits.

Objectives

The objective of the project was to transform the admission and slaughtering process for pigs to improve animal welfare, reduce the stress for the animals and avoid the negative economic impacts of slaughtering.

The new process would improve the quality of the meat and meat products, which in turn would generate profits, while satisfying the ethical expectations of today's society.

Activities

The project was initiated by the meat processor who invited the Faculty of Food and Biochemical Technology from UCT to cooperate on the project. Jointly, they prepared a business plan and the application for the Rural Development Programme (RDP) Measure 16.2. Following the approval of the project proposal, the project partners refined the details and selected the provider of the investment and technologies. UCT supervised the project's delivery and provided advice and checked the required technological parameters.

In particular, the works carried out included:

- Introducing of holding pens for calming the animals as they electric stunning method by a modern CO2 stunninarrived;
- Straightening and shortening the path the pigs follow from the admission point to the holding pens and on to slaughter;
- Replacing the g technique; and
- Enhancing the veterinary and food safety standards applied in the facility

Main results

The RDP funding helped the facility to improve animal welfare, by optimising the organisation of the pig admission process. The investment in the new buildings and equipment improved the firm's veterinary and food safety standards.

Using CO2 stunning resulted in:

- Minimising the occurrence of PSE (Pale, Soft and Exudative) meat which is excluded from sales and the production of quality meat products;
- Increasing labour productivity;
- Enhancing the firm's competitive position as its profitability increased; and
- Positively contributing to the ethical image of the firm.

Key lessons

The collaboration with the research organisation at UCT was critical for the success of the project. Its involvement from the beginning (from the project design stage) helped to select an optimal solution which met the firm's specific circumstances.

A positive interlink (synergy) between private (profit, competitiveness) and social (animal welfare, ethical slaughtering) objectives is possible/achievable.

Additional sources of information

n/a