

Vase Mojsovska

The woman who breaks all stereotypes about rural women



Although I am a woman living in a rural area, I was lucky enough to have been equally treated with the men in my family. I have land, property and farming machines in my own name. Unfortunately, I am only one of the 5% of women who own property and land. Together with my husband Goce, we live in the village of Timyanik, near Negotino.

I got married to Goce at the age of 19, when I was still studying. At 22, with two young children, in the middle of my studies, working in the field and with no property of my own, I convinced my father-in-law, my husband, my brother-in-law and my brother to pledge their property so that I can take a loan. In this way I took an earmarked loan and planted a larger area with vine and established a vineyard. Slowly, we began to enlarge the vineyards and we started to produce seedlings for vine and other fruits. Later we also established our family business, the company AGRO KALEM Timyanik, which I can proudly say is the biggest company for production of domestic vine and fruit seedlings in Macedonia. For each wedding anniversary, as I like to say, my husband gives me a vineyard. Namely, since we got married 23 years ago, every year my husband and I plant a new vineyard on our anniversary, which is the best time for planting new vineyards; so I often joke that for each anniversary we give each other a new vineyard.



Growing up our 70 hectares of vineyards we faced many problems, but in recent years, we and other **farmers** involved in food production **often face challenges caused by climate change**. Abundant rain, droughts, frequent hails, spring frosts cause huge problems in agriculture ... **In order to adapt to climate change** and protect our agricultural production, **we apply different protection methods**. We have planted climate resilient grape varieties, we have installed drop-by-drop irrigation systems for efficient water use, we have protective nets which protect the vineyards from hail and UV rays, and we also apply mulch. In addition, we protect the grapes with calcium carbonate, which creates a protective layer on the grape itself and protects it from burns and from the harmful UV rays of the sun. We introduced these measures in 2012, when as a single woman-farmer I was involved in a climate change adaptation project, and these measures were tested on my vineyards with Victoria grape variety. The results were excellent, so I continued to apply these measures to other grape varieties.

Because of climate change my office as a Chairman of the National Farmers Federation (NFF) is even more challenging. It takes a lot of work, experience, lobbying and a lot of nerves to solve all challenges and problems. Together with the entire NFF management team, with joint opinions and proposals we try as much as we can to contribute to finding solutions for these problems. I am particularly proud of the fact that as a NFF President I participated in a **public debate held in the Assembly** of the Republic of North Macedonia, titled: [Gender aspect of climate change](#), where 19 recommendations were adopted. One of the recommendations was that "New technologies and knowledge should be transferred to the farmers, accompanied with raising awareness about climate change adaptive measures, by active involvement of agricultural extension services. This should be part of their regular practice when providing advisory services in order to assist successful planning and implementation of agricultural production".



Additionally I want to underline the fact that due to traditional barriers there are not many women in the rural areas who own their own property. I can freely say that in most of the rural areas, we still have stereotypes and land is inherited mainly by male children. That is why, if it is difficult for a women to manage her own business in the urban environment, for rural women it is even 10 times harder to succeed as a leader. Even if she has an idea for a business of her own, she has limited possibilities because she is not creditworthy due to the lack of property. **Women in our country need to have greater self-confidence; first they have to believe in themselves and in what they want to do, to have greater courage when making decisions for starting a business of their own, and of course they need financial support from the banks.** It was not at all easy for me to study, work and care for two little children who grew up in the fields just like their mother and father, but if the will and the wish for success are greater than the troubles, then nothing is difficult. **My children are well familiar with the whole process of working in the field; they know that our only livelihood comes from agriculture, so their future life will also be connected to agriculture.** But I have advised them to study first, so my daughter is in her final year at the Faculty of Agriculture in Skopje, Department for Fruit Growing and Viticulture, and my son is in his second year at the same faculty. **I hope that besides education, I have successfully transferred my experience to them, especially regarding following and applying new technologies, as well as for applying climate change adaptation measures, so that they can have a bright future in agriculture.**

I hope that my example will motivate many women who live in the rural areas: **Believe in yourself, educate yourself and be tireless!**