

The innovator



Justė Jankauskienė

Region

· Ukmergė, Vilnius county (Lithuania)

Sector

· Beekeeping
· Mushroom growing



Features of my innovator journey

- > After spending ten years abroad, I decided it was time to come back home and reconnect with my roots. I had a bit of farmland waiting for me, so in the summer of 2021, I applied for an EU support project aimed at helping young farmers—and to my excitement, I was accepted. The financial boost gave me the chance to truly dive into farming.
- > By spring of 2022, I had started with 20 bee colonies and 300 shiitake logs, each one a small step toward building a life on the land. And just like that, my farming journey had begun.

Innovation from 3 perspectives



- 01 Economic**
 - Working closely with neighbouring farmers. When my bees visit nearby farms, they pollinate crops, leading to higher yields and better-quality produce for the farmers. In return, we get differently flavoured honey.
- 02 Environmental**
 - Bees need all the help they can get, and I feel proud to play a role in supporting them. By keeping bees, I directly help local pollinator populations. It feels good to know that my small efforts contribute to a bigger cause, helping create a future where bees and other pollinators can thrive.
- 03 Social**
 - Visiting children at school to give talks on bees, carrying out interactive activities, showcasing beekeeper costumes, and providing experience of tasting honey in a comb. Attending local events where people can sample honey and taste different flavours based on the flowers the bees pollinated.

Barriers

- > Usually people use honey when they are sick. Our challenge is to educate show them that consuming more honey can be beneficial for both individual health and the environment.
- > Hive inspections and honey harvesting are physically demanding, especially when lifting heavy honey frames, so I'm grateful for my husband's help.
- > Growing shiitake mushrooms on logs requires careful water management to maintain optimal humidity without over-saturating the logs. Working with trunks requires strength, especially during the fruiting season, so my husband's support is essential.



"Beekeeping has become a family adventure, filled with learning and discovery. It's something you share with your kids and it goes beyond a hobby; it's a source of connection, curiosity, and teamwork."