**F20 – Interview male farmer Santaella, Cordoba 18-11-2021**

**Could you introduce yourself to us?**

I am farmer and am from a village in Cordoba, that is called Santaella. I work as farmer, I have cereals and also olives. I cultivate olives in an intensive way. I don’t have cover crops yet, I move the ground, like they do here traditionally, but I will plant cover crops in the future.

**Ok, and how old are you?**

52

**And could you describe a day in your for us?**

I get up around 7 in the morning, I take a coffee and take my car and go to my field, which is about 3 kilometres from the village. The first thing I do is to make a round on my field, my field of cereals and my field of olives. And if I need to do something, I will do that later in the morning, after my breakfast. I don’t like to work in the field very early.

**So first you make a round and take a look at your fields, then you have your breakfast and then you start working in the field?**

Yes, first I take a look at all the fields I have, I make a round, but then if I need to do something, I will do that later. I don’t start very early. I just take a look everything, see if there is no problem, see how everything looks. And then I start with the tasks that need to be done. To do treatment, or cut something, or whatever needs to be done.

**And from what time on do you start working?**

It depends on the type of work. If I need to apply phytosanitary, in this time a year, there is a type of disease that you can only see when it’s dry, so you need to wait until it is dry to apply the treatment. Could be at 10.30. But when I apply herbicides, that also needs to be applied on dry plants. But when I need to do work with a tractor, that takes more time to do, I start earlier and I work all day, about 7 hours. Work with the treatment on the leaves, that will take about 3 hours per parcel. If it is herbicides on the soil, that takes more time.

**And at what time to you rest?**

It depends on the type of work, but usually around 14/14.30. But when I work with the tractor no, that takes longer, I stop later. In the countryside you don’t have a fixed schedule, it also depends on the weather. It changes a lot.

**And after work, what do you like to do?**

I am a fan of hunting, I like doing that. We have a bad reputation, the people condemn it a bit, but I think hunting is necessary, also for the agriculture, to prevent plagues for example of pigeons, there are a lot of them, and wild pigs. By hunting, we control the population.

**So that is what you like to do after your work in the field**

Yes, I take my dog and I go. I like to rural life, which is very different from the city, with all the traffic lights and claxons. I don’t like that.

**And what do you enjoy, from the activities that you do in your day?**

What I really enjoy is the work I do. For example the olives that I have, I don’t know if you have seen my older olive fields, but I put them there with my hands. And I really like to see the olives grow. That is where I live from, and I feel really satisfied when I see them, from the work I do. That is what I can say. Every time I go to my field and I see the result of my work there, I think, this is something I created.

**And you feel satisfied then**

Exactly

**And are there things you would like to change?**

In my life or in the agriculture?

**In your life?**

No, I wouldn’t change it for a thing. I have two brothers, they live in Madrid. They work for a company, in an office, and I always say, I will never trade with them, not even if I would earn double of what I earn now. I don’t want to change my life. That is a horror for me. I feel free in the life I have now.

**Ok, and where do you live?**

I live here in the village, in Santaella.

**With who do you live there?**

I live there with my wife.

**And how is the life in your village, do you feel safe?**

Yes, I feel safe, it is quiet here, we have 4000 inhabitants. We don’t have any large commercial centers or cinemas, but to life here, it is really good.

**And is there anything you would like to change in this aspect?**

No because I like this quiet life.

**Ok and what types of energy sourced to you use in your house?**

In my house I have electricity and gas, but more electricity than gas.

**Do you also sometimes use the wood from your fields for heating?**

Yes sometimes, but that is for the chimney. But that is changing now, people are using pellet stoves, based on biomass, which is cleaner, you don’t need to manage that much weigh and you don’t need to store that much wood.

**Do you also have that?**

No I don’t have that, but people here in the village they do. After the pruning, we ask to our neighbours, do you want to have the wood, or do you want to have it? So they use it in their chimneys. But that is changing, people do it less now because most of them chip the pruning rests and leave it on the field.

**Do you also chip the thicker pieces of wood?**

Yes, hombre, everything. We chip everything. Did you see the pile of pruning rests? Well, that is everything, and that will be chipped. You make a pile and then someone comes to chip it. That is to solve the problem of plagues, also to prevent plagues for your neighbours.

**Ok, and did anything change in your access to energy of water, for example, in the previous years?**

I don’t understand

**Did something change in your possibility to get energy of water in your house or in your field? Did the situation change?**

Oh yes, what I have now I always have, it is the same. What I said before people have pellet stoves and also some people have solar panels, also for electricity. Because the pellet stove is only for warm water, but the solar panels also for electricity. It is to become self-sufficient. I got received a proposition for that, but it is not viable for me and my wife. The investment is not viable for us.

**Ok, and how important is your natural environment for you?**

For me it is the most important, it is our health, to maintain our natural environment.

**And in what sense?**

What we eat, all come from our fields. And if we put poison in the field, we all eat poison. So we need to maintain the natural environment. We need to take care of our residues and bring it to the right place. We need to look after it.

**And is this something you think about or you try to incorporate in your life?**

Yes, I separate my waste very strictly for example.

**It is important for you**

Yes, it is important to me

**And is there anything you would like to change in this aspect?**

That there would be more green zones

**And what is a green zone?**

Here they started to plant trees, also for biomass. They did that here, but it wasn’t viable.

**But you would like it if there would be more green zones like that?**

Yes, also because I hunt. That is also good for the animals, that they can come and live there, that there is more fauna.

**Since when are you working as farmer?**

Exclusively, because before I also had other work, but since 2004 I am full time farmer.

**And before you were working as farmer and also had another job?**

Yes

**And what kind of job was that?**

I worked in construction, prefab houses.

**And you also worked as farmer on the side? Did you then also have both cereals and olives?**

Yes I had both, but I didn’t have time to do my work in the field, I had to hire people to do the work in the field because I didn’t have time for that.

**Why did you change your work, why did you decide to work fully as a farmer?**

So nobody could tell me what to do, to be my own boss. That is for me the most important thing.

**Ok, and how did you learn to be a farmer?**

From my family, my grandfather and father, they explained things to me and I asked a lot of things. And also I made a lot of mistakes. That is how you learn right.

**The land that you have, did you inherit that from your family?**

The land that you saw before, that is from the family.

**And apart from learning from your family, did you also do courses?**

Courses about farming and agriculture? No, I didn’t do that, I learned everything from my family.

**Is there anything you would like to change in your work?**

Well, it is changing, if I want it or not. Every time you need to mechanize more, because otherwise you don’t earn enough from your land. So you need to mechanize, to lower your costs and to have a profit. You need to modernize. But the difficulty is, because you don’t earn that much, it is also more difficult to make the investments to modernize. You need to do that in steps. Sometimes, some work you need to hire other people or a company to do it, because I cannot afford to but the machines.

**And what do you think about that, that you need to mechanize more?**

Hombre, mechanization is good, because the costs of production go down, you will earn more. For example, before the olives I would recollect with a group of people and that was profitable. But what happened, there are now machines that can harvest it, but I don’t want to but that because I will use that only 3 days a year. So it’s not worth it. So then, a company needs to come to do the work. They have the machine and do that in different fields. They dedicate their work to that work in the field, the harvest.

**So in your field, a company comes to do the harvest?**

Yes, they do the harvest, I only do the transport. I bring the olives to the cooperative with my truck.

**What do you like in your work?**

What I told you before, it is rewarding to see the fruits and see that I produced that. That is the fruit of the work of one year.

**Ok, and do you often go out to other places?**

Before I worked for a company, and we did the harvest in other fields. A service company.

**And in your free time, do you like to go to other places?**

I go hunting with my dogs, I go through all of Spain.

**Ok, so you like to go on holiday?**

No on holiday, that is with my wife. In my free time, that is time for me alone. For me holiday is something else (*joking a little bit*).

But for my holiday we go to the beach, or to other cities.

**Yes, and do you feel you have enough opportunities to go to all these places?**

Yes, but I like it best to stay in my village. I don’t like it to be taken out of my familiar circle. I like to be in the countryside, with my dogs, taking a walk.

**You belong to the cooperative we visited right? Are you also active in the cooperative, do you have a role there?**

No I am not on the board or anything, I don’t like to be in that role.

**No, why not?**

I don’t like it, I like to be more in the margin.

**Are you active in other organizations or in politics maybe?**

No, in politics no. I am in the board of the association of hunting here, in the municipality, but in other organizations not.

**And how is the relation with the politics, local politics here?**

With me?

**Yes with you, or with farmers in general?**

A friendly relationship, normal.

**Is there anything you would like to change, in the politics or in your community?**

That the farmers get a better reputation (somos mejor mirados), less discrimitated.

**And in what sense?**

We are the people that produce, here in Spain and Andalusia, which is my community, we are the shelf of spain (la despensa de Espana). We produce all the food here for the country. But we are badly looked at, with the prices we receive, we need to make large investments for the profitability that we have. We need to be looked at differently.

**And you refer that you need to be looked at differently from the perspective of the politicians or other people?**

The politics, they are the once that rule, they say what to do or not. They are the once that should decide.

**So you would like to have more support?**

Support for the farmers.

**What kind of support?**

For example in the topic of energy. What Ignacio showed in the cooperative, the bill for the light. That is an outrage, we are producing food and instead if you would need to pay 2000 euros for electricity instead of 20.000, the price of olive oil would be different. We could feed the people much cheaper, because the production process would be much cheaper.

For example wheat, we use irrigation and to do that we need energy, and where does it come from. We need to pay for it and that is included in the price. For our work in the field, we need diesel, and the price of that is really high. That is where they have to help us.

**In the costs**

Yes, the costs of production are not only in the people who do the work and the seeds, also the energy, that are huge costs.

**And do you think, with the income you receive from you work as farmer, that you could live well from that income?**

Yes, I am living fine, a type of live that you need to adapt to, because you can spend the amount you want to spend, you can always need more money. I am used to my quiet life, I can eat well, I have a good house, I don’t lack anything. I also don’t need a bank account with a lot of zero’s, I don’t need that. As long as I am not lacking anything, especially to eat. The freedom I have to live in a village like this, and to do something I really like to do, that is worth more than a lot of money.

**And are you able to save some money?**

Well at the moment not because I used all my savings to buy the land we just visited. It is an investment, to grow.

**And if you could earn more money with the production of olives or something else, how would you like to spend that?**

I would invest it, in more land.

**Why?**

Why? Because that is what I know, what I am familiar with and understand. Maybe someone else would buy an apartment at the beach, but what do I need to do with an apartment at the beach, I don’t know what to do with that. I understand the countryside, and you need to dedicate yourself to what you know to do, that is what I believe. Other people might think differently.

**Ok, and you have olives and also cereals right? From which production do you derive the majority of your income?**

It is around 50-50, because the olive field we visited this morning, I don’t have any benefits from it yet, because the trees are very young. What it’s producing, I can barely pay the costs.

**Ok, so now it is about 50-50 but in the future, that might change, when you produce more olives.**

In about 2 years, it will be 75-25

**Ok, and that is because you see more opportunities in olive production or you like it more?**

Hombre, the trees you plant for a long time, it is not like you need to sow every year a new product. You plant them for a longer period of time. And olive production has almost always been more profitable than the cereals.

**And does your wife also work in the fields?**

No not now, before she did, but now she stays home.

**Ok, and do you feel satisfied with your life?**

Yes a lot, I do what I really like to do.

**That is good to hear. Do you also have dreams, things you like to achieve?**

I would like to expand my exploitation, and that’s it, and live from that, try to expand my number of hectares, but that is a dream. Some dreams you put in practice. I already did that with the field we visited this morning. I was working at the field of the neighbour, and I said to him, he is much older, I said one day I will buy this from you. I now I did.

**And apart from work, do you have other dreams of things you like to achieve?**

Apart from that, to keep good health, not more.

**And does spirituality play a role in your life?**

Yes I am Christian, I an religious.

**Ok, and do you go to church?**

No I don’t practice it that way. I just believe.

**And is that something you would like to spend more time on?**

No, just more time to spend with my wife and time for myself.

**And you said that you learned how to work in the field from your father and grandfather. Are you still looking to learn new things?**

Unfortunately, my grandfather is not here anymore to ask him all these things. We have a good technical assistant, who did a lot of work in mechanizing the production here. Yes, it is good to keep learning new things, because the technology is going fast and it can help agriculture. You shouldn’t lag behind, you need to know how things are going, where things are going.

**And so you learned a lot from the technical assistant?**

Yes, Ignacio is a good technical assistant. Almost every week I am with him and he teaches me a lot of things.

**What are things you can do very well, what are your talents?**

In field, the olive tree breeding/cultivation. There are people that come to my field to see how I do it. What I like most is when older people come and want to learn from how I do it. That I show it to them, because I do it in a different way that my neighbors, but it is working so.

It doesn’t cost me anything, that they come and look at how I do it.

**How is your physical condition?**

I am a sportsman. Apart from the manual labour in the field, I also walk a lot, when I am hunting. I walk every day, with my dogs, to train them. I also go to contests with my dogs, at national level. I would also go this year but it was cancelled due to covid.

**But otherwise you would go to contests with you dogs?**

Yes, I go to contests, last year I con second place, in a world contest.

**Ok wauw, and what kind or dog?**

Springer spaniel (showing pictures)

**Ok, and is there anything you need in terms of your health or physical condition?**

I need to be active and do sports every day, good food.

**Do you feel happy?**

Yes, truly I am.

**And do you also have worries sometimes?**

Yes, everyone worries sometimes, especially in working as a farmer, about the climate, that affects us. For example in one field I don’t have possibilities to put irrigation, that is a problem, to need to know when to sow for example. Those are worries we have this year, because it didn’t rain yet here.

**Ok, and do you have people with whom you can share these worries?**

Yes, I talk to people about it, my cousin and uncle, we talk about the field, about the weather, when we should start sowing etc.

**And how is your relation with the community here?**

Good, we have a good relation

**And when you meet your family or friends, what do you normally do?**

With family, we eat together, and with friends, we drink a beer, like everyone does, or at least here in Andalusia. I also go hunting with friends, those are things that I do.

**And is there anything you would like to change, in your relations with others?**

No, here we have a special way of being, we are very close to our friends. There are also countries where people are colder, in terms of social relations, but here that is not the case. We are more warm, we like to share.

**And do you feel that you have the same opportunities than other people here in the community?**

I think so yes, at least in what I am doing with my agriculture, yes I think so.

***Explaining the cards now, categorizing them in most important, medium important, less important***

**the first is social support and social relations**

I put them in the middle (!!), it is not the most important, and also not the least. It is normal, I see it as something normal.

**And do you feel satisfied with that aspect?**

The relations I have with my community and friends, yes for me that is something normal. There are other things that are more important and things that are less important.

**And self-expression**

You can put that on top (!!!), one of the most important things. I like to say what I think, I don’t like to be held back.

**And do you feel freedom in expressing yourself?**

Yes, sometimes it is not good to say everything, that can also come across as wrong, but I always say what I think. You need to go straight through.

**And public participation**

This is would put here, in the middle (!!). I see that as I is I would, for example, participate in a board of something, like I do in my hunting association. Often the activities you do there, are not paid. These are things you do voluntary, and sometimes you get stabbed in the back. So I don’t see it as good or bad, I put it in the middle.

**And satisfactory work?**

I put this in top (!!!), very important. Like my wife says, when I am working, you cannot ask me anything else. When I am working, I am concentrating on it. For me, this is the most important.

**And you feel satisfied with your work now**

Yes, yes I do

**And security?**

I am not worried about this (!), I know how to defend myself. I was in the army, you know? So I don’t see a problem, I know how to defend myself and my near ones.

**And mental health?**

That is also very important, if you are not mentally healthy, you cannot function. And then you cannot work. The mother of my wife has Alzheimer for 20 years, I know what it is and how important it is to be mentally healthy. You see how she is getting worse, it is very sad to see. So yes, this is very important to me.

**And physical health?**

That is also very important (!!!) because if that is not right, you also cannot have satisfactory work. And you cannot also defend yourself.

**And care for the environment?**

That is also very important to me (!!!)

**And is that something you do anything with in your life?**

Yes I do, for example, here in the olive field we were, there is an empty field between my field and the cooperative. I don’t put herbicides or anything there, so there will grow a lot of spontaneous plants, which is good for all the animals.

**Ok, and for example, ecological production, is that something you are interested in?**

Yes, but until now, we don’t have good possibilities to do that. My field, that you have seen, is very close to the cooperative, which is very easy for me. But if I would do ecological production, I would have to take it to another cooperative, because this cooperative does not receive ecological olives. And for me that makes things more complicated and more costly. But if they would receive ecological olives at the cooperative, maybe I would be interested.

**And education and critical thinking?**

Also very important (!!!)

**And do you think you have sufficient opportunities to educate yourself?**

Well with my age, I should have already had education

**Yes, but maybe also now, to keep learning new things, or the things you want to learn?**

Yes, education you should have received earlier. But what is written here, to be capable to think and reason, yes that you can learn from other types of courses, to keep improving the management of the soil and of the plots.

**And that is important to you?**

Yes otherwise you lag behind, you need to keep improving. For example, my grand grandparents, they went with donkeys, they used their hands and sticks to harvest the olives. That is like an old movie. I like to move forward and keep improving, otherwise you lag behind.

**And free time?**

If there is no work, I would put it high, but if there is work, I put it in the middle. For me, work is most important, but if that wouldn’t be there, I would put it higher.

**Ok, so for you, work is more important than you free time?**

Yes, my work is more important. First work, than free time.

**And spirituality?**

I put it here, down (!), I am religious but I don’t lose my mind with it. I have things I find more important.

**And mobility?**

That is for me not that important, I will put it in the middle (!!), it is not that important to me. At this moment.

**And the last one is self-determination**

That is also most important (!!!) that no one tells you what to do, like a boss. This is very important. Because for example, maybe you are working on something and you have good ideas, and your boss will say, no this is not good and you can’t continue. With my job now, that doesn’t happen, nobody will tear up my plans. I am my own boss.

**And how was that in your previous job?**

I was working at a company with more than 70 workers, so it was a high production. But when someone would be sick, we had to work more, make more production. But I am not a magician, I can only do what I can. So this is very important, that nobody tells me what to do, that I am my own boss.

**So what I understood from what you have been telling that from all these topics, is that having a satisfactory job is for you most important, and that relates to other aspects like physical health, security, education.**

Yes, it is like that.

**Picture of the capabil****ity cards:**

**Ok thank you. And now, in the last part, we have some more specific questions for you about your work as farmer and what you do with your pruning rests. *Showing + explaining Biohub concept***

**You have a new field of 7 hectares?**

Yes, 7/8

**And the other fields?**

The other olive field I have is 5 hectares

**Ok, and you told us that you burn the pruning rests**

Yes

**Why?**

Because I only have a small plot, and for me it is not viable to buy the machine to chip it. I will die in about 20 something years, it is not economically viable to buy it.

So then I asked this company to some and get it, but when can they come and get it? When they have time, whenever they want. So I didn’t want that, it took too long. So then I burn it, it is the easiest option, the quickest and cheapest. Because for the other options you need to pay and also when it takes too long before they can come and get it, the plagues can already affect the wood and olive trees, and I don’t want that.

**So the problem is that the company cannot come in time, to pick up the pruning rests?**

Yes, they have too much work, they don’t have enough time to pick up all the pruning rests that are generated. So the pile of pruning rests you saw this morning, please take it. But no, you have to wait until June for them to come an pick it up. So I collect it and burn it.

**Ok, there are also people that chip it and leave it on the soil, why don’t you do that?**

Yes but that is the same machine, only it doesn’t collect it. But the investment is the same.

**Ok, so for you the investment is the problem**

Yes, I just have a small plot.

**But burning also has some risks right? Maybe for the olive trees to catch fire?**

No, I put it in one place, away from the trees to burn.

**And you bring everything and put it in one pile?**

Yes, I have a machine with kind of arms, and with that, I collect the pruning rests and make one pile for one big fire.

The other way will be better, but I don’t have enough money to buy the machine.

**And would you be willing to sell your pruning rests?**

Yes, if they can come and get it on time. But if I need to wait 3 months, then no. But if I can call and they can come and pick it up next week, then yes. Also because that won’t cost me anything. If a company can come and take it, and it wouldn’t cost me anything, and they would even pay me, that would be good.

**And if there would be a possibility, if instead of a company coming to you land to pick it up, but you would need to bring it to a place, for example the cooperative, would you be interested as well?**

No, because then I would have to buy the machine, I would have the same problem.

**Ok, so what I understood is that you would be willing to sell your biomass if a company would be able to pick it up, and to do that on time. But otherwise it will be more difficult for you.**

Yes, yes than I would have no problem. But to leave that in the field for so long, that is not good. For example the pile that you have seen, when you come back it will still be there. It will stay there for 2 months, and that cannot be.

**And you don’t use the pruning rests for other purposes?**

No, I destroy it

**And sometimes, when a lot of biomass is burned, that can generate a lot of smoke, which is bad for your health. Do you also notice that?**

No, people do it less and less, only a few people. I do it now, because the other things are too difficult for me. But if the company could come quicker, than I would be interested.

**And what do you think of new projects at the cooperative, because every member has a vote right?**

Yes, the cooperative does a lot of projects

**And do you go to these meetings where you can vote?**

No, I don’t go. I am not a person for meetings. I believe everything they do, I trust it is good. For me it is all good. I think, those that are there are also farmers, they have the same interests.

**Ok. And what do you think of this image/concept, do you think it can bring benefits to the farmers?**

Yes I think so, it can generate benefits. For example, if they can produce energy and we can use energy cheaper, that will benefit us. For example, the cooperative that has high costs of energy, that would be much less. Also water, if we can use water, that would also be beneficial.

**And is there anything else you would like to say or share with us?**

That you look after us, the farmers. That is the only thing I am asking. Are you from the city or from the countryside?

**From the city**

From the city right. The life here is completely different from life in a city, with all the claxons, all the people, police. Here, it is different, we have a high quality of living here, very high. Also, we work very hard. So, I want the people, like the politicians and also the people in the city, that they look at us differently. They have a very different life. Here, we don’t have Saturday, Sunday or holidays. No, when something needs to be done, it needs to be done. Or tomorrow we don’t work because it rains. We don’t have a fixed schedule, it is totally different. That’s what I am saying, that you look after the farmers because when we are not there, we don’t have anything to eat.

**Thank you very much**