**15-11-21 – Interview transcript farmer #18 (in depth) – male – Jaen – 36-year-old**

**Perhaps, to begin with, you can introduce yourself.**

Good morning, I'm [name], I'm a farmer, I'm 36 years old. I have been a farmer since I was 26, I have been a farmer for 10 years. I belong to the agrarian organization of [NAME]. I am a member. I have been president of the youth sector for a few years, I have belonged to the European Council of Young Farmers, I continue to belong voluntarily, optionally, well, depending on the needs of the organization, they call us to represent them at an institutional level to talk about olive groves, oil of olive, or any need of the young farmers. And well, I am currently a farmer, I have an agricultural exploitation of olive groves and cereal too, which I am covering; I sow wheat, barley, all kinds of cereals, legumes as well; we have broad beans, chickpeas, although well, we rotate the crops, but they are few hectares, and they don't require a big... Let's say the strongest, the most important thing is the olive grove. It is currently more profitable, although this year the price of cereal is rising a little in the market. But it is also rising as a result of the price increase of other products necessary for cultivation such as fertilizers, diesel, electricity... Everything is going up, and everything is getting more expensive in the end. Everything is pushing the price of cereal to go up. In addition, of the people in the world, there are more and more, and we consume more. There are already many studies that report that in 2050, there will be a lack of food in the world because there will be many people, and much more must be produced with less. And I've been saying it for a long time, but this year is the first year that cereal prices have risen, I always... It's a crop that I really like, although my main agricultural exploitation is the olive grove, which I love, but I love cereal too, and I think that in the future it will be an important crop.

**Do you live in Jaen?**

I live in Jaén capital.

**And where is your farm?**

My farm is in the Jaén region, I also have a part in Javalquinto and Mengíbar. They are approximately 20-30 km away from here; they are relatively close; I go back and forth almost daily.

**Can you describe a normal day? What are you doing?**

I don't have normal days, that's how I describe it to you. Every day is different. It's one of the lucky things... You have to know how to approach your work, your life and everything, and our parents approached us in a different way, it was to work, work; they didn't have the tools that we have today. My father and grandfather tell me that they used to travel by horse to come from Jaén to the fields, by donkey, by horse. They had to live there to be able to... Today, thank God, we have vehicles, and we go back and forth, you can organize yourself, you have tools. You have tools that enable you to develop much more work, and you can allow yourself to have working days to go to the field and be all day, morning and night if I want, and rest another day, although then you always have to adjust yourself to the crop, depending on what... When November, December arrive, you have to collect olives, because it has to be that date, you cannot wait until March to collect olives, it has to be now due to circumstances of the crop. But you do have a margin of organization that, depending on the extension of your agricultural exploitation, you can organize yourself. This, a few years ago, did not look like this. Before it was every day, every day, every day. Even today it brings a lot of bureaucratic management, a lot, more than ever in the history of farmers, and we must dedicate a lot of time to bureaucratic management, paperwork, processing CAP aids... The processing is simple, but then there are many small incidents, a lot of small text, where you have to adjust a boundary; if you have an ecological crop, cross the lines very well with the next plot, which is not ecological, and you have to be very careful; phytosanitary products for the treatment of diseases; we have the weather forecast, which will be adjusted if it is going to rain or not, you have to do the work.

Right now, I have just finished planting the cereal because you have a forecast of 50 liters of rain, and the day before the rain they stayed at 50, then they stayed at 8 – 9 liters. It didn’t rain. The cereal has hardly sprouted, and I'm scared because the grain has germinated a little bit, but it hasn't sprouted, and if it doesn't rain in a month or so, the wheat could be lost, and I'll have to plant again. So, well... This happens with the cereal, it is due a little to the climatic conditions, to the weather. Here in Andalucía, in Jaén, it rains very little, it rains very little. Every year it rains less, and we are noticing it a lot. We depend a lot on water; water is very very important. Me, whenever we have several interviews with other media and they ask me, "What is the most important thing for you as a farmer?" Water. My agricultural exploitation was all dry-land and I had no chance, and I had no chance, I only had the chance to put irrigation on two plots, and the first thing I did was make the irrigation investment. Because you are paying for the investment for a few years, but in the end the production will compensate for it. When I retire, I will pay the investment, and it will be a slightly more profitable operation, for whoever gets it. And water is the most important thing, water management in Andalucía... If I give you a somewhat personal opinion, which I don't know if it will be... But I think that each area, depending on the resources it has, should... Here, with the little water we have, I think there are crops that need a lot of water and we should adapt, because the olive grove is a crop that needs little water, but it does need water. It does not need much, but not too little, and there are super-efficient irrigation systems that with very little water manage to have a large production of harvested olives. However, we have crops like... I'm not going to say which ones, because... That everyone knows about, that they are here in Andalucía, that require a lot of water, flood irrigation, that is to irrigate with water above the earth. Well, of course, they need a lot of water, and they have small productions, not very large, because they are not important crops in our territory, in our area, so I think water management in our area, in Andalusia, and in Jaén in particular, because there is a lot of irrigation, but we should not consider an area without irrigation, because those who have irrigation make their exploitation profitable, much more prosperous, and I think I have strayed from the subject a bit. .. What did you ask me?

**To describe a day**

Describing a day? There are no normal days, because of course, I start on this date. I'm going to start the harvest this week, probably Wednesday more or less. We reap the harvest. I'm starting at the end, to start from scratch. We collect the harvest of olives and the next step, pruning. We do a foliar treatment to the leaves and branches that are curative for the damages that are done during the harvest. Then the pruning takes place. March, February, March, April, in those three months, depending on the agricultural exploitation, the pruning is done so that the tree doesn’t have excess wood, excess branches that take away strength and sap from the fruit. We want it to have enough branches to have a maximum harvest, so that later the fruit fattens as much as possible with the water it has. So, the pruning is done between February, March, it's usually around that date... It can take longer or start later, it depends... Each year the time comes in a different way, but we try to either when the water is... Before the heat, when the winter passes and it starts to get hot, the water moves, let's say, the sap of the tree begins to move. So, when we make the cuts, if it's hot and the sap is moving, it hurts the tree. But if the sap is stopped, you cut the branch and the tree, and it doesn't suffer. It's like the blood doesn't circulate, you cut yourself and no blood comes out, because the sap is stuck. That happens with the olive grove. Logical for those who understand maybe a little bit of pruning, of agronomy, but well. And we do the pruning, then we do the foliar treatment, and we fertilize. Solid fertilizers and then there are people who, if they have irrigation, they fertilize in the water, with irrigation, but it is not so common, but it is also done. And of course, it is already in April, May, when fertilization is done. Waiting for the heat, to rain in spring and the tree to develop and grow. If there are new branches, those new branches are the ones that are going to give the most fruit; the new branches are usually the ones that produce the most fruit. They bloom, the flower comes out, they bloom, the olives come out, and they spend the summer as they can dealing with the drought and until the harvest. Well, I've been going too fast. Let's stop at the pruning.

In pruning, the rests of pruning, two things are generally done. The large pieces of wood, the trunks, many are used in the villages to keep warm, ever. But if it is true that there are already many left over. There are logistics centers that use them for biofuels. I do not know very well how far this management goes. There are not many plants, but I have heard that the main problem is usually the transport of this waste, this wood to the management center because there are kilometers and then the final product is very cheap, and it is sold cheap... So, it is not worth it. If they pick it up and take it away, yes, but they have to make an effort to pick it up and send it to... The same thing happens with the leaves, they usually stay, they are usually crushed, and they usually stay on the same property as plant cover. I imagine they have explained it to you. It is crushed and stays on the ground, and you make a layer that decomposes and makes the soil a little more fertile over the years, making fewer torrents with the waters and well, with the rest of the pruning that is usually done.

**What do you do with the pruning rests?**

What do I do? I crush them. I’ve been crushing them for many years and leaving them on the soil, but there are companies that, as I told you, take them. They do not take the wood, but in the field, with the machine, they crush it, make it into splinters, they do it in packages and they take them away in trailers. They are taken to these centers that use them to make energy. And I have been, and my family, before I crushed it and left it on the soil of the olive grove, but for approximately 3 or 4 years, this company comes, crushes it and takes it away to make biofuels, or bioenergy... I don't know what they do, but they do it for me for free. So, for me it is already a saving as a farmer, because if this company does not come, I have to collect it, I have to remove it, I have to treat it... and it is an expense for me. The only thing I do is cordon it off, and this company takes it away and so, it means savings, it's good, but it costs me diesel, it costs me time, it costs me with my tractor, wear and tear. Then you have a lot of splinters, which are dangerous because the wheels of the tractor can be damaged, and breakdowns may happen. It is something laborious that I’ve done for many years, but in recent years, as it means savings for me that this company comes and removes it from me, it removes it from the field. I have a decent soil cover. If one day I have little, I will say, "Don't take it, I want it for myself, so that it stays here." And well, another part, which I have not said, I keep it to warm up for my field. I have a country house where my grandparents lived many years ago and I have my well-cut wood there to make my fire and heat the house. But it is a small part.

**You're going to start the harvest next week. What is a day like during the harvest season?**

Well, you get up early, you go first to the agricultural exploitation, to the garage, to the warehouse where you have the tractors, you take them all out. You take the clothes, the rods, you prepare everything. The rest of the day laborers arrive, the small groups, and we move towards the plots, the properties where they are going to pick the olives. I unfold the clothes, they are placed, I don't know if you have seen how a group works with the olives...

**Yes**

Well, I unfold the clothes that are like skirts that are placed under the olive trees. I am talking about traditional olive trees. And with a vibrator attached to a tractor, with tweezers, scissors that squeeze the trunk; they move it, vibrate it, and the olive falls to the ground helped by blows with sticks. It is very manual; it is very laborious. This vibrator, which is attached to the tractor, usually does a lot of damage to the olive tree, because it moves it from the roots of the soil. So, in a year like this that hasn't rained at all, it suffers a lot because the roots are dry in the soil. So, this year, the dry-land olive trees without having rained, the harvest is very bad, but we always do it that way. Normally, it has always rained a little, so when there is moisture in the soil, the roots are more attached or stronger in it, and when the olives are vibrated and fall to collect them, not so much damage is done. But in dry years, they are not beneficial. And well, the olives are collected, the skirts are changed from one olive tree to another, people pulling the weight, manually, with their hands, and it is emptied into skirts that are like these, square, and with a blanket, with rings at the ends; they are picked up with a crane and unloaded onto the trailer. And at the end of the day, around 4, depending on the group; some get up earlier and go home at three o'clock to eat. Most of them eat in the fields and go home at 4 or 5, and then they all leave, and I stay with my tractor and my trailer, I go to the factory, leave my olives, and they give me my ticket with the kilos that I have delivered and then I store the tractors in my property or wherever and I go home.

**What do you like about work? What do you enjoy?**

What I like is that you are outdoors, that you are in the field, you are not enclosed in four walls in an office. I have days of paperwork that I have to be at home, in a small desk, office, with my papers and bureaucratic procedures, because that's how it is, but what I enjoy the most is being in the field, outdoors. And well, what I like the most is also when I have interaction with other farmers like me, young people. Because normally we are always thinking of innovating, of new machinery, of something that is useful to us on the exploitation. Thanks to social media we have a union through WhatsApp, through Facebook, we are in contact, and we share videos, and say, “Look, a new machinery has come out that does this”, but well, in the olive grove there is very little innovation. The olive grove, the machinery that exists in the olive grove, has existed for many years, and it is simply being perfected, but there are no new and innovative tools. I am talking about the traditional olive grove, which is the centenary tree with many years, which is the one that has existed in this area for many years. If it is true for the olive grove... There are other types of olive groves that have been innovated, but not in our tree. They have innovated in new plantations, in cultivating them in a different way, but in a tree that we have had for many years, they propose that we uproot it and plant others. So, it's a drastic change. Uprooting a tree... I don't know, we are seeing a world where we don't want to cut down trees and now, they are telling us to uproot so that we can plant others. Yes, others that are the same, but we are sad because our relatives, our grandparents, our great-grandparents have planted them, and now I come and cut them down to plant others... Well, as long as the tree lives and is healthy, why should I have to cut it?

The problem is the workforce, it is very expensive, the harvesting of that olive, so they innovate it. The only innovation that exists in an olive grove is to uproot, and plant new intensive, super intensive plantations, but we go back to the same thing, the intensive olive grove and the super intensive olive grove require a lot of water, they require a lot of water, of course. They need more water than the traditional olive grove, in general, they need more. In super intensive, all the super intensive plantations that we see, the companies that are dedicated to making these plantations, recommend that they have irrigation. Without watering too. But without irrigation, production decreases a lot. There is no such difference as in an olive grove... So, the production per hectare is higher, but also because they have a lot of water. And well, oh yes, the main advantage is the workforce, which barely has a workforce because with a machine you collect the harvest in a matter of hours, and you don't need people to pick olives in a super intensive olive grove. It seems perfect to me, I love it, it's great, but it's not a solution, it's not an easy solution for a farmer who has had olive trees from his family for many years. In addition, the great investment that would be uprooting some olive trees and planting others. You would need to uproot the olive trees, cut them, lift that soil, so that the roots are from many years ago, so that the soil regenerates a little, and uproot the roots, buy all the new little trees, the super intensive olive trees, a different variety. It is not the same tree, it is a different variety that produces a different olive, and it is olive oil, but from a different variety, it is not the same. And it means a great investment that, for the traditional farmer, for the farmer from generation to generation that we have inherited from our families, means a very great investment, that either you have a very large exploitation... Basically, it is impossible for a normal farmer like I to uproot all the olive trees. I have to spend several years without producing anything, with a very large loan at the bank and when I begin to collect those olives from that new investment, I would begin to pay off the loan, but I would have to be on loan until I retired to be able to amortize that investment of that reconversion of exploitation, reason why generally it does not interest. If you are very young, you may be interested in making this investment years from now, but a farmer who, on average in Spain, in Andalucía, in Jaén, is 55-60 years old, does not have enough time in their work activity because with 65, 67 or 70 will retire, and then they can't make such a long-term investment. Well, they prefer to keep what they have and that their children, their descendants decide what to do with that exploitation.

**Is that something you are interested in doing?**

I don't know what to do, because I want to convert part of it, but I can't do it all, I would have to do it gradually, and it requires a very large investment, and it scares me because we don't have any security in a few years. There is a lot of uncertainty in the world; a long-term investment is something with so much uncertainty in every way... This year, for example, the price of diesel has gone up, it has risen a lot, fertilizers have become more expensive... The pandemic, that no one imagined that something like this could happen... Now they talk about a blackout due to lack of energy, that suddenly we are going to run out of energy, without gas, I don't know. There is so much uncertainty that making an investment over so many years... If it were an investment over 4 – 5 years, you say, well, I manage it, I can manage to get it out in one way or another, or it is little money, it is an investment of little money... But an investment of these characteristics, you can go bankrupt and if you have two years that you don't produce or there is a breakdown in the markets that means you don't sell your production for whatever reason, or you have very low prices for two or three years... Well, it may happen that you won't be able to pay those loans. In addition to that, we have life, that we are not just dedicated to paying off loans. As farmers, what we earn, we reinvest in olive groves, and you can hardly afford it.... You have to build a house, buy a vehicle to get around, or have vacations. Having vacations is a luxury, and I am privileged because I am a farmer, but a rancher, who has animals, you talk to him about vacations and he laughs because he hardly has vacations, no, the animals eat every day. And if you go on vacation, in addition to spending the money to go on vacation for a few days, you have to spend the money to hire a person there, who is responsible, who is capable of managing a farm and feeding the animals, collecting milk... Anyway, with my crops I can afford to miss some days and organize myself, so, I think and as a young man, as I consider myself still so as I’m 36 years old, I try to organize myself in the best possible way to... For example, today we are doing the interview, now later I’m going to the field, but I am not there from sunrise to sunset. I try to organize myself. This morning I got up, I had an early coffee, I started to manage some bureaucratic paperwork, internet banking, and when I finish, I'll go to the field and stay until night. Another day I'll stay, and I'll go buy some pants and a shirt because I need it, and well I organize myself. It is the advantage, or the benefit, or the positive part of the farmer, that you organize yourself. It depends on how responsible you are, you will have a better or worse crop, also depending on the rain, which in the end is... Rain, water is our main uncertainty. So, this year a medium-good production was expected, and due to the lack of water, the production of olive oil from this harvest is going to be greatly reduced. At least 10 – 20% of the capacity that there was at the beginning. What was expected to be harvested in Jaén is going to drop quite a bit because it didn't rain in September, October, November... without rain.

**How important is your natural environment to you? Environment?**

The natural environment? For me it is very important, for me it is the most important thing. Perhaps you experience it more because you are in a more natural environment, you are in nature, although it rains less and less, and this looks more like a... If we were to remove the olive trees, we would look like Almería, the desert, because everything is dry, except for the areas in the mountains, where there are lakes with more trees and bushes, and a little more forest. What is the countryside, which is the most arid area, if it doesn't rain, everything stays dry, there is no diversity of flowers, shrubs, herbs, pastures for animals... And man, I really like being in the middle of nature, the countryside, but as my exploitation is in a countryside area, a meadow, and the rivers are getting less and less water, there are fewer animals, there is less vegetation, in general.

**Are you working on taking care of the environment?**

It is true that, for example, in the olive grove, before, work was done on the land continuously so that there were no weeds, and now we leave the cover under the tree. It is the main one... it is what I can highlight the most about the olive grove. Before, phytosanitary products did not exist, then products began to come out to fight against pests and diseases, and these products have been greatly improved. The legislation of the European Union has been gradually improving the list of products that are used, the amounts, the doses, lowering them, so that it affects the environment less. Still, more can always be done. But of course, being continuously in the field, wanting your tree to be the best compared to the rest of the herbs, because it always makes you want to avoid herbs, weeds. Well, none of them are bad, but maybe competition for the water. In the end, there is less competition for your tree so that it has more water when it rains and other herbs that do not bear fruit, that do not give you productivity, do not take water away.

**So, is water the biggest challenge?**

Water is the biggest challenge. We will talk about a thousand things, and they will talk to you about a thousand things, but water is the most important thing. If there is water, I don't care if there are more plants, if there are more herbs, we will remove it, but if there is water, everything will be fine. Because there are going to be more ants, more worms in the soil, there is going to be more life. Water is life. And the problem is that we have so little water that the cultivation is mainly dry-land, and what little irrigation there is, we try to ensure that this water is only for the olive tree, and we always try to remove the weeds that can be competitors. So, in the end, nature needs a diversity, a diversity of species so that everything can live. And having so little water is making us want to eliminate the rest of the species so that the olive tree survives, so that it does not have competition in the water, and for me that is the main problem, the most important.

Then, there are crops that need a lot of water, that give small productions, that are not essential or main crops in our region, that there are areas where there is much more water in the world, or in our areas in the north of Spain, for example, there is also a lot more water and perhaps those crops grow better over there than over here, but subtract water from some crops to give it to others in an area where we have very few water resources… The reservoirs are at 20-30% water and using the little water that we have in crops that are very demanding of water, and on the contrary, leaving 80% of the crop, which is ours, without water, so that other crops that are residual can develop, greatly harms the crop of the olive tree. This is what I have been observing in recent years, they should... The governments and others should support the crops... Let's see, all the crops have an area where they grow better, and here in Jaén, always, since the world is the world, since the Romans, since the Phoenicians, there have been olive trees here, in this area, because of the climate, the altitude, the cold, the heat, the rain... There have always been olive trees here in this area of ​​Jaén and I think we should help maintain our heritage, because it is history, it is nature. And if it is true that it is a crop that we like and we want to produce more, then if we need to plant more olive trees, let us plant them with the greatest technology, the greatest resources, which is a super intensive olive grove, which is the technological advance that there is regarding my cultivation. But the traditional olive tree from many years ago, I think we should also maintain it, and not uproot it and plant the others because it requires an economic, sentimental, natural effort, because you are cutting down a centennial tree... It is dramatic on all sides.

**You said that you live here, in Jaén**

I live in Jaen.

**And do you have a house in the countryside?**

Yes.

**What is it like to live here in Jaén? Who do you live with?**

I currently live, on average, with my mother. I live at my parents' house; my father passed away, my brother got married and went somewhere else, and I've gone and come back... My mother is alone, and I don't want to leave her alone, so I stay in the countryside a lot to sleep when I'm on the property, other times I stay here with my mother and I'm a little... Because I'm close. But mainly because my mother is old, and because in that way she is not alone. Being with her, taking care of her. We both keep company, she to me and I to her.

**Do you always feel safe where you live?**

Security in what sense? Jaén is a very safe city.

**Also, in terms of robberies?**

Yes, there are robberies and there is some insecurity, everywhere, but there is no fear, you do not walk down the street in fear. Like everything, if you get into a neighborhood with a little more complicated people, maybe. But in general, Jaén is a quiet city and there is usually no fear. It's a safe city. And in the countryside, there are robberies, there are robberies by organized mafias, who steal machinery, especially small machinery, because they steal it and sell it in the market I don't know where... And the blowers, the vibrators... small gasoline machinery that is expensive for us, but it's not... I'm talking about machinery that costs €500, blowers of €500, €300, small machinery.

**And that has happened to you?**

Yes. Even diesel. The diesel that we use for the tractors, they open our garages and take the diesel to use it. People who don't have resources... who are bad people, and are not able to find another option, because they do that, they steal. Me, 8 years ago or so, I was robbed, but not in recent years. But it is not usually something normal, it is usually something very exceptional, but it happens from time to time.

**What energy sources do you use in your home? And in the field?**

In the countryside, light, but electric light. I want to install solar panels, but I've been doing the calculations, and it's still not very profitable for me to make the investment, because I don't stay there long enough to... I don't consume a lot of electricity to... Because also, as I back and forth... If I lived, yes. If I were living in the countryside all year, yes, but since I come to Jaén and I go, and I'm alone, I don't have a family yet, I don't have children, I don't have a high enough consumption to think about installing solar panels, for example. And there I use, mainly, firewood, in the field, firewood. And here, electricity and natural gas, is what we have.

**Do you also use the firewood from the olive trees to heat the house?**

Yes, yes, in the field yes. But here in the city, no. It is something that I have done several training courses, it is something that I am trying... Because depending on the houses, depending on the design, the structure of each house, an installation could be made with olive pits, or pellets... The main problem is usually the displacement of the combustion, of the wood, or of the olive pit, from the field to here. Diesel is more comfortable. Most houses use diesel, or electric, or natural gas, because it's a tube and you don't have to constantly refill it. It is the main problem, comfort. Those who have money prefer the other because it is more convenient, and they pay for it, and the other is cheaper but it takes more work to have to replace it yourself, because it is something you have to do, it is not something automatic that is recharged the firewood; you have to put it in the house, if not, it doesn't heat.

**Has anything changed in your access to energy or water in recent years?**

Well, they put in natural gas, it's the only thing. Before there was no natural gas, there were cylinders. I got to know the butane cylinders, we heated with butane gas and a few years ago natural gas arrived and the butane gas began to replace the cylinders, which in the end is the same; you have to transport the cylinders, which finish, change them, and the other is more convenient. That is what I have observed in recent years.

**Has it improved?**

Yes, the comfort. Simply, the convenience, which is something easier, simpler.

**Do you go out a lot to other places?**

Yes. Well, do you mean traveling leisurely?

**Yes.**

I try to move, I really like to move, travel, get to know other places and see lifestyles different from ours.

**Do you feel free to do it?**

Organizing myself, yes, well, always with organization. My crop requires attention that at certain times of the year you must be there, you cannot leave at any time. But always with organization. Now, if I have to do a specific job, I know I can't leave, I can't go anywhere. But when I finish this work… There are times of the year in which the crop needs less attention, if I can afford to travel, or move to other cities, wherever I want.

**Do you have free time? Holidays?**

Yes. In general, yes you can. An olive grove farmer normally, if he organizes himself, he can.

**You said that you started this job when you were 26 years old.**

Well, I have always been helping the family, in my field, with my father, I have learned it since I was little. But already, I took charge of the operation, together with my brother when I was 26. Let's say that I am the person in charge, which is my main work activity.

**How did you learn to work?**

I have seen it since I was little, because my father took me to the fields, I saw the olive trees, I saw the tractor, I was on top of his legs or on the tractor, and you see it from a young age. As the years passed, well, I got my driver's license, and I began to learn how to manage everything. I saw it, and my father explained it to me. In the end, it is a profession that is learned by generation. It is complicated that, if in your family, if it does not come from tradition, it is difficult for you to look for that work activity of being a farmer. You have to look for exploitation, you need machinery, certain work tools. But well, after all, it's like any other, because if you want to have a factory to make screws, well, you'll have to buy a plot of land, buy the iron, buy the machinery. In the end it's like any other business, you have to find the land, you have to find a profitable crop, and the other tools, like any other. If you want to set up a restaurant, you have to find a place, buy coffee machines, chairs, tables, make a large investment and start providing service. And know what people want to eat and drink in your bar. If you plant a crop of olive trees, you have to know that there is a demand for oil, and for your crop. I don't plant olive trees if I know I'm not going to sell the product.

**Why did you start this job?**

Why? I always liked it, and it was also a bit because it was a business that needed continuity in my family, and let's say it was already set up, I didn't have to make the investment of buying land, of buying... Well, yes, I had to buy machinery, because the machinery that was there was very old. The first thing I did was buy new machinery; a tractor, mainly, which is what I work on the most. You make the irrigation investment, and well, with a long-term view, I will pay for those investments, and it is currently profitable for me. It is always profitable to complement them with aid from the CAP, from the European Union, because we want the products to be cheap for the consumer and for them to be cheap, they have to give us aid so that our income is enough to live on. Then, depending on the volume, when you have more hectares, then you manage to be more efficient with the machinery you have; you need to make an investment. As every X hectares you need a tractor, if you increase the number of hectares, you may need to have other machinery, another tractor, more people... It's like any business, you have to adapt it to the size of the property. I always give the same example because people don't understand it. If I give the example of a bar, if you want to open five restaurants, if you have two people in each restaurant, then you have to have twice as many people hired, you have to grow, you have to buy twice as many chairs, twice as many coffee machines and double everything. Well, in the olive grove it is the same. The higher the volume, well, normally, you tend to have a greater benefit, or you tend to be more efficient. But it is also true that the machinery wears out, breaks down, production costs are very varied, and the sale of the final product is also very varied.

The main problem with the olive grove is the instability of prices, because the largest production in the world is very localized, here in Jaén, in Andalucía, and depending on the climatic conditions, there are years when there are large productions because it rains a lot and there are good conditions. I have explained myself badly. I'm going to correct myself. You have recorded it, but normally, there is a year that it does not rain, and when there is a year that it rains very little, the olive tree does not bear fruit, so let's say that year it rests. The fruit does not require so many resources... I do not remember the word right now so that you understand me. But well, the resources that an olive tree needs to produce a kilo of olives, if it doesn't rain one year, it doesn't use those resources, because the tree stores them. And the following year, like the previous year it had no production, well let's say that it has a few more resources for the following year to be more fruitful and produce more. So, it depends, one year more kilos of olives are produced because you have more resources, and another year it doesn't rain, or the land is exhausted, and the tree doesn't have the necessary resources and produces less. So, there are years of high production, and other years of low, or very low production. So, there is a very varied offer; there are years when there is a large supply of olive oil, and other years there is a very low supply. So, the market, consumers do not understand this variation in supply, so one year, when there is a lot of supply, you find olive oil that is cheap because there is a lot of supply, and on the contrary, the following year there is a very low supply because there has been a low harvest, there is little supply of olive oil, and the price is very high. So, it is difficult for us to build an olive oil consumer loyalty because the prices are very varied. The consumer does not understand why one year a liter costs 4-5€ and another year it costs 2.5€, apparently being the same product, although it is not the same, because they are different harvests. So then... I've already strayed from your question again.

**No worries. Can you live well with the income you receive from olive cultivation?**

Well, it depends on the size of your property. If you have a small property, you can't, they usually complement it with other jobs. If there are 100 olive trees, 200 olive trees, traditional, 5 hectares, small properties, people normally have to combine it with other work; plumber, electrician, or I don't know, any profession… mechanic. You dedicate yourself to something else and you have inherited a small part of your family's olive trees and it is something complementary, which is not your main activity. So, they can't live on it. But it does generate some income for them, but up to a certain point. Sometimes it happens that these small olive trees need attention that this person finds it difficult to give to because his main activity is something else and on Saturday and Sunday, which is his time off, he has to dedicate it to taking care of those olive trees. And if he doesn't take care of them, he has to hire someone to take care of them, and the few benefits that it could give him, the workers take them away to take care of him. Then, it is not worth it.

From a minimum size of the olive crop, depending on the management of each farmer and the resources. But there the farmer usually does everything in his power, and 80-90% of the production or the success of the harvest that year depends on what it rains, on the water. Then, there is the pruning, how you cut the tree, if you fertilize, the soil, the soil that is richer in nutrients, is more productive, others are less. There are soils that retain water better and are cooler, others that are drier, dry and the earth cracks, air and the olive tree suffer more because it lacks water. The olive trees dry up. And where there is irrigation, well, it is possible to have more stable average crop production.

**Do you depend 100% on the field?**

Yes, I am someone weird, someone exceptional. Young people and in the countryside... Because everyone has it as a complement, because the plots have been divided so much that most people have olive trees, but they have few and cannot live on them. I will be the last generation to live on this.

**How is it for you? Can you live well?**

It's complicated. Right now, I'm single and I don't have a family, I don't have children, and right now, I live well. Not very well, but I live well. I can pay my bills; I can afford to have a normal life. But when I have a family, I will need my partner… If I have children, I will need an increase in income. If not, well... We'll buy cheaper things and that's it. But I think it's always better to buy better quality things, which are more expensive. Because, in the end, cheap is expensive.

**Can you save money?**

No. Do not feel bad about it, with total confidence.

**If you could have more income, how would you spend it?**

If I had more income? Right now, I have many debts in investments, especially in my irrigation, in the investment I made two or three years ago. And I would try to pay the debts as soon as possible. Basically, because the little savings that I generate, I invest them in paying a part of these loans, so that I can have more benefits as soon as possible, and be able to remove the debt as soon as possible. It is something rare, but the savings are destined to the bank, to pay the debts to finish paying them as soon as possible. I have a loan that I will pay off when I am in my mid-fifties. I want to try to pay it off before 50.

**You have said that you are active in associations**

Yes, I am a secretary in my cooperative, I am on the board of directors of my cooperative. I am quite active in the cooperative; I do many things.

**And why are you active?**

Because well, I have the need and the vocation that I like, and I like to think how to always try to improve or prosper in the area where I work. If I take the olives to a cooperative, where we transform them into oil, and we sell that oil. And if I improve that cooperative and can sell those olives better, in the end it will benefit me, and everyone else. Well, I've always liked to help as much as I could, because the application is voluntary, I don't have any remuneration, or anything, not even in the cooperative. To be a member, I pay my fee, and I have a series of advantages for being a member, but I have no income for being a member of the cooperative, or of the organizations, or others. It is simply voluntary. It's a way... The tasks I do are because I like them and to do a service to improve for everyone. Not everyone likes it, nor is he willing to do it. There are people who prefer to do other things, but well, I like to get involved in what my activity is, and try to improve, and improve the whole area of ​​my world where I move, my work activity, and my cultivation.

**And then, in [NAME], the group of farmers...**

Not anymore... I was there for two years, I was responsible for young people, and now there is another person, now there are other people.

**How is it? You said there aren't many young people.**

No, since the last few years we have been promoting it. We have been asking for a lot of aid too, for the young people who join. There is aid from the European Union for young people who join; aid to buy machinery, aid for the first sales, which always when you start, are usually more complicated because you have more investments, and there are different types of aid that, with a lot of bureaucracy and a lot of patience, are achieved. In recent years, there have been some youth initiatives, some young people who are trying to incorporate. But, even so, they are very few, and usually they are due to deaths, because the father dies, or the grandfather dies, or... It is almost always due to circumstances, due to necessity. But well, now the field is somewhat more attractive because there is a lot of unemployment, it's another work environment. There is very little work. As there is very little work, the field is beginning to be seen as an option to work.

**Is there more interest in the field?**

Yes, in recent years there is more interest in the field. It is not easy, nor is it the best job in the world, but there is more interest because there is little work in other sectors.

**Do you see differences between the different generations?**

Yes, because, well, younger people have traveled more, we have more information. We are already more interconnected with the whole world through social media, through the internet, and then as we know more, we are more curious, and you always try to improve. Not before. Past generations did not have that advantage, they did not know what was beyond the mountains, because they had nothing, nor could they move like now with the means of communication that we have, both to move and to inform us. And it is very easy for us to move to any part of the world and inform ourselves of what is happening in any part of the world. You can see needs and opportunities anywhere, which you couldn't before.

**So, are you active in these organizations? Are you also active in politics, local politics? Do they have any connection?**

I’m really interested in it, because in the end it influences me, but I don't participate in political parties or anything. I vote for the one I like the most and that's it, but I haven't got involved. Political parties have asked me for interviews, and they have asked me to go give talks and explain to the candidates, to talk to them about agriculture, and on some occasions I have gone to parties to talk to them about my personal experience, but I have not been a candidate, or nothing. I have had no further connection.

**Do you have time?**

Yes.

**Are you satisfied with your current life?**

Yes. I have hesitated. Yes. It has been a long journey in my life, my exploitation, as I told you at the beginning, comes from my family, from a grandfather, from an uncle, from a father, from a mother. So, in the end, you gather a lot of family. I don't know if tomorrow it will be for me or for someone else because there are more heirs in the family, and today I am happy with my work, but I have the uncertainty of when I will have a family and have children. I have a business that surely, 100%, I will not be able to give that business to my children. It is not a personal factory, owned; it is something right now that belongs to several people, that I am developing and exploiting it economically, that I am paying long-term investments, and when I finish paying it and everything, and my grandparents are not here, my uncles are not here, and my mother is not… Well, I have brothers and I don't know. My children will have a small part, but it won't be profitable for them to dedicate themselves only to that.

**Are there things you want to achieve? Are there dreams you want to achieve?**

Well, yes. I would like to... I have always dedicated myself to agriculture and thanks to [NAME] in the politics of the European Union, I have learned that things can be done, it is possible to make people's lives easier, legislation can be achieved. I like politics a lot, but there is none that you say... There is a lot of diversity and no... I like to get involved in agriculture, in legislation. As I have told you, I have spoken in various political parties about my experience in agriculture so that these parties make the right decisions regarding agriculture. And I know that things can be done, and in that aspect, I like it. And I also like the business sector. I have studied, and although I do not have the training, I have done some management training for agri-food companies, and I have learned a lot. I would like to develop and make olive oil more popular, although there are already many companies that sell olive oil all over the world. But being a farmer and producer from the area of ​​origin makes me see it, on the contrary, and I want to transmit it in a more... That it transmits a more real knowledge, that it transmits a real experience of what it is like to produce a product that is as emblematic as olive oil, which is one of the oldest in the world.

**Do you want to learn more things, take more courses?**

I already have a lot of training on the subject of olive groves, of by-products. I know a lot about a lot, but I am not an expert in anything, I am an expert in producing in my fruits, in my olive trees, and in that I am indeed more expert. But then, I know all the areas of sales, distribution... But until now I have only been involved in production as a farmer, and my dream would be to get more involved in the distribution chain, move a little further. But it is very complicated, there is a lot of competition, there is a lot of instability, especially for prices, and it is very risky. Sooner or later, I will do something, because I really want to, and I will surely get involved.

I am trying with my cooperative, a manufacturer is... My cooperative sells oil in bulk and packaged by it, and I want to try to do something through the cooperative, because together, the more people, always together we achieve more things. Because I can sell to you, but if we are a cooperative I can sell to a city, I can reach more people, and go further; achieve more important sales operations. Because in the end, the personal direct route is always the most interesting, because that is how I really tell it to you. Telling everyone in a broader way is not the same as telling you in detail, as a cooperative, or showing you a video. When you go to a store to buy a product, you read the prices on the label, and you don't know anything else. But going to the places, going to a school to tell how the olives are harvested, explaining the product to the children, how to do a tasting… Of course, that helps to promote consumption, to get them to know it, to let them know about its health benefits, namely the implication with the environment, that we take care of the land, we take care of the birds. I find partridge nests, swallows make nests in my garage. We are always careful to maintain the environment; whenever we find a puppy of something, we always take care of it, we take it out, and in the end it is beautiful. Pigeons also make nests in the olive trees, and it is also nice to see nature. It's what I like the most, being in the field. In summer we have a lagoon. When it rains in spring, ducks breed there. Now it's dry, it's a shame, now the lagoon is dry, but when there's water and the olive groves shine. Water is life. And it is the main problem we have here in Andalucía, and here in Jaén above all.

**How is your physical condition?**

It is bad. I have a problem. I've had a back injury, I have two herniated discs, L4, L5, from carrying weight on the field, and well, 5 years ago, 4-5 years ago I had the injury. And now I can't load weight and I have to be very careful. Sitting on the tractor for many hours makes it very easy for your back to suffer. I've been injured and now I'm undergoing rehabilitation and... But well, in the end it's about taking care of myself. There are people who are stronger who don't get injured and carry more weight than me, but I... Anyway.

**So, does it affect your work?**

Sure. Me, my back injury has made me a little more efficient when it comes to organizing myself, managing my day-to-day on the field. I used to work more manually and looked for less support from workers, and now I organize myself and it doesn't give me so much money anymore because I have to hire more people, but I earn on my back, because my back can't handle more. If I always carry all the weight, carry bags, the fertilizer, load them on me, my back suffers a lot, it needs help. There are times when I have to go change the oil, clean the filters, do some preparation, maybe I can go to a person I have hired and say, “Go and take out the tractor, and check the pressure of the wheels, and see that it has diesel for tomorrow when we go, start and spend the whole day working”. I can afford not to have to go there, because in the end I spend the diesel, it costs me time to go and come back, and I can be managing other things here, and this worker who lives in a nearby town, comes over in a moment and I don't know… A bit of organization. Then, I have to move, for example, the parcels; I have one in Javalquinto, one in Mengíbar, one in Jaén, which are... I have to move the tractor from one place to another and it may take me two hours to move it to the place where I have to do the work. Well, this man also helps me in these efforts, and well, I have several people who have other jobs and when they can they complement and help me.

**We have understood that sometimes the pruning remains burn and produce smoke. Does that affect your health too?**

Health... What is burned is usually pruning rests.

-------------------------------------------------------- Audio 2 ----------------------------------------------------------

**Mental health, do you feel happy? Do you have any concerns?**

The uncertainty of the rain, of market prices is very stressful, very worrying... Mentally, at least, personally, I suffer a lot. It's hard for me to fall asleep because when you know you owe money, and you have to make the business work. You have to be very optimistic. And for me, because of my age, I have to push and be positive, and give people a pretty face so that this goes well, but when you get home and see the bills. You earn some money and then another day you have to pay; this bill, for the breakdown, one for the loan, and you go to bed at home... You look at the weather page and you see that it won't rain for another two weeks, and you'll see the olives that become too small, they wrinkle, and there will be less production. It’s very stressful. My father had a bad time, and the same thing happens to me, I have a very bad time. Then, you go out, you make your life, you try to distract yourself and you forget, but I have a very bad time.

**Is it more the uncertainty?**

Yes, the uncertainty of not knowing, of not having security in the medium/long term. I want to think that in the end everything works out and everything is overcome, but you are always afraid. This past year there was a fair harvest, but this year there is going to be a very small harvest. But the banks and the loans, and the machinery and everything have to be paid for. And now I, with my back problem, which I need help yes or yes, and I need to hire a person. Because if not, throughout the year, I could practically do the job myself, but with my back problem I need more help. And then, in the collection I also need more people; you need 5 or 10 people who are in a group, explaining what each person has to do and that, let's say that it is the most complicated management of the year because you have to manage many people who don't... That it is a temporary job, it is not like a work for the entire year, like the harvest, which is a month or a few days, and manage these people who normally come from abroad, or some are from here, because it is very complicated to manage that harvest. It is very expensive and laborious, and it is mentally exhausting. And then you have to pay them, and see the harvest, because you don't have safe money. And if one year you have a slightly larger crop, you know you have to save it because the next year you don't know what's going to happen. And then you always hold on, hold on. Savings, let's say, you don't have any. The savings are for the following year that you know you may have a bad harvest and you must save something to be able to continue paying the bills. What are long-term savings to say, “I'm going to buy a flat”, money saved, no, never in life. The day I save the money to buy a flat, I'll be old enough to retire if I don't ask for a loan. I couldn't save up to buy a house.

**Do you have people with whom you can share your concerns?**

I talk about it with young people. Luckily, since I got involved with messages, I got involved with the cooperative, I interact with many people. And well, it's my way of relieving myself, of sharing problems, of trying to find solutions among friends.

**What do you do to rest?**

To rest? A beer. Hanging out with friends. I have friends from Jaén, also from other places... Well, going out, leisurely, talking about everything a bit...

**Is there something you would like to change in your social relationships?**

Change... No, I'm happy. I have doctor friends, I have electrician friends, I have friends from all sectors, and luckily, I have farmer friends in Spain and in Europe, everywhere; in Italy, in Belgium... In all places I have friends, people I know, and I am happy in that aspect. But in the end, your closest circle is the people from here, from your province, from Jaén. So, well, you can tell them your problems, and they tell you theirs...

**We have talked about many topics, and we want to understand what things are important in your life and to live well. We have three categories here: most important, unimportant, and least important. And here we have different topics, and we want to ask you how you would classify them. First, the issue of public participation. What does it mean to you? How important is that?**

Well, for me it is very important, of the most important, because of my way of being and my way of seeing things, I always get involved in participation and do what I can to improve, especially in the aspect of agriculture, which is what I know best.

**And the security issue?**

Security... I would put it as less important because I don't perceive it to have many security problems, at least here. There are problems, but I would not put it as the main problem of my life.

**And education and critical thinking?**

The first, more than public participation, because education and training is the most important thing in life, more than a job, more than everything else. Knowing, having training, for me is the most important thing in life. A bullfighter said, I don't know if you know what bullfighting is, that it is something that is done here in Spain… He said that the most important thing for a son is not to leave him a company or a business; the most important thing is to leave him educated and trained, because with training and education any person can seek life and develop personally. But without education or training, you can't do anything, you don't get anything.

**Are you satisfied with the opportunities you have for education and training?**

I am.

**Support and social relationships.**

I would put it in the middle, it seems very important to me too.

**Mental health.**

I would put it in the middle too. I think it's important mentally to be well. It is true that in recent years, as we have a quality of life that we live longer, let's say that we have more time to experience very good and very bad circumstances; we have time to experience many things. I think it's very important, but I don't think it's the most important thing.

**Physical health.**

Also very important, I would put it in the middle too.

**Mobility. Move freely.**

Let's see, I would put almost everything above. But hey, I'd put this one down here. Mobility is important here, but I don't think it's the most important thing.

**Self-determination. Being able to decide for yourself what to do.**

I see it as very important. I'd say it's very important, let's say it's having the freedom to do whatever you want in life; I'd put it as the most important thing.

**Do you feel like you have freedom?**

I have freedom, but to a certain extent, because, in the end, my exploitation is here. I can't unroot them and move. In the end, freedom, and mobility... You won’t always be traveling and moving. In the end, people want to live in one place, and have the freedom to move and do what you want. With organization I can move, and I am free to move and do whatever I want. I have total freedom, but it is important to have it; not everyone in the world has it. I think it's very important.

**Take care of the environment.**

Take care of the environment? I'm here. I am going to put it here in the middle, because I think we take care of it, and it is not one of the things that worries me the most, at least in my area where I am. If it's true that there are areas that should... It's very important, but well, it's not what worries me the most nowadays.

**Satisfactory work.**

I would also put it here.

**Do you think you have a satisfying job?**

I do. In the end, thanks to this, education, training, and my opportunities I have a satisfying job.

**Do you have satisfaction at the end of the day?**

Yes. Mainly, because I like it. It is a job that I like. I enjoy my work. And despite the difficulties, the effort and getting through a campaign. Every year you have a different campaign, it's like starting over every year, you have a harvest and try to do things. You play with some cards, there are others that come blank because they are the rain that you do not know, the instability of rain, climate. In the end, you have some cards that you move, and my job gives me the opportunity to try to do things better than the previous year.

**Leisure and free time.**

Leisure seems very important to me, but, in the end, it's something... It's not the most important thing in life. You can have leisure in many ways; playing cards at home with your friends you can have leisure. It seems very important to me, but not the most important. Many people could put it here, above, but being objective, I think it is not the most important thing. It is important, but... Our grandparents played with stones, and it was leisure for them.

**Do you think you have enough free time to rest?**

Yes, because you have to have responsibilities at work, but then come home and have leisure.

**Express yourself freely.**

Whether I am satisfied or not?

**Yes, or how important is that in your life?**

For me it is very important. I would put that here, higher up.

**Do you feel free to express yourself?**

Yes. There is some social pressure, due to customs, but I feel free in that aspect. I do and say what I want. Nothing happens.

**In the end, spirituality. Does it have any role in your life?**

Yes. I would put it here or here. It's very important. Here, along with mental health.

**Is it related to mental health?**

Yes.

**If you see these things, is there anything you would like to change or improve?**

What needs to change the most is public participation, critical thinking... It's what you need the most. Self-determination. These four points are what I see most of change, of involvement of society. Although there is a society... There is, let's say, a structure of public participation, but today there is no real involvement or participation. I think it is important for society to get involved, but of course, without this, we have nothing. If you don't have an education and critical training, you can't contribute anything. Mental health. If you don't have mental health, you can't have education. It's all related.

**In the end we have this concept that we work on, which is called *biohub*. The idea is that there are various local communities here that can provide biomass. It can be pruning waste, olive oil... It can be done here in a biorefinery, where various products can be obtained, such as marine fuels, but also biocarbon, biochart, which can be used here. As a farmer, would you be interested in collecting and selling pruning rests in a system here?**

If this would be possible? Yes, it is done, currently it is done. But of course, the main problem that I have seen is the displacement... the extraction of biomass from the farm to the factory, because, for example, transportation is still diesel vehicles; If diesel is very expensive, moving these by-products from the farm to the factory is very expensive. So, in the end, a biomass or a biofuel, it is important that it be cheap. Because in the end, if you get an expensive biofuel, people go to the cheapest one. We know. We are looking to make a product to sell, but we want it to be cheap. And if we use diesel to get around, which is expensive, I don't know... Maybe, if we had our own biofuel, maybe it would be easier because it wouldn't cost us money, or it would cost us something minimally cheap.

**Now an external company comes and collects the remains of pruning. Do you know the name of the company?**

Right now, I don't remember.

**But he comes and picks it up...**

From the field

**And do they pay?**

No.

**It's a service...**

They pick it up and take it away. What they pay you, in theory, is what I could do and sell it to them. But then my expenses of crushing that wood and packing it, I would sell it to him and in the end, what it costs me to do that, he does it and it costs me nothing. In the end it's a saving for me, because if I have to do the work, and since I don't do it, he does it for me, that's the benefit I have. I save a direct sale.

**But if there is a way that you can earn more money for these pruning remains, would that be interesting?**

Of course. It would be interesting if they removed it from us... It would be a not very important saving, but a considerable saving.

**Do you see other benefits that can be generated?**

The main benefit would be the nearby population, let's say, creating an ecosystem, a circle of services around where it is produced, because the main problem is usually the displacement of this fuel, or biofuel, these by-products, these pruning remains. Treating them, moving them, and giving them the treatment to serve as biofuel is the main expense.

**Do you prefer that a company come to pick it up in your field or do you prefer to do it yourself?**

Whatever is cheaper for me. I do it... But for me it is a cost that, if I pick it up and sell it to another third-party company, at least they pay me for my work, the hours of my tractor and my diesel.

**You have said that part of the pruning remains remain on the ground. Do you know how much?**

All. If there is a year that I do not give it to this company, all the pruning is crushed and all of it remains as sawdust on the ground, and with the rain, the humidity, and the rest of the soil, it decomposes and becomes organic matter.

**So, if you can’t collect everything, you have to have an alternative on the ground.**

Of course. It is not the best resource for soil, but it is an option.

**What role would you like to play in such a system?**

What role would you like to have? I don't understand you at all.

**Provide biomass, or have influence in the organization...**

I would like to be able to organize it, for it to be useful to me, for it to be profitable, for it to help me make some profit. If I could have a boiler in my house in which I could use this fuel of mine, it would not cost me money, but that is where the most complicated part is.

**Thank you very much for all the answers.**

No problem.