**Interview farmer #14 – male – Villacarrillo – 54**

**You are from Villacarrillo?**

Yes

**And how old are you?**

54

**How long are you already working in the olive sector?**

All my life, a lot of time.

**Ok, since you were little. Were your parents also working in the sector?**

Yes, olive cultivation here is traditional. Maybe people don’t have it as their primary income source, but here it is really difficult to find someone that don’t have an olive plot.

**And do you dedicate 100% to the olive cultivation?**

Yes, I worked in another thing before, but now I work 100% in agriculture.

**What is your education level?**

Secondary school

**Do other family members help you out in the field?**

Yes my wife. We have a small plot of land, it is from the family. Only me, my wife and sometimes my daughter as well. She is studying, but when she has some free time, she comes and helps me out.

**How many hectares do you have?**

About 10 hectares

**And it is traditional cultivation?**

Yes

**What is your cultivation method?**

Here, the majority, it is manual. We small farmers, we are mechanized but basic. We have tractors and use hand vibrators that run on gasoline. We don’t have big exploitations that have big machines that shake the whole tree.

**Ok, and how do you do the pruning?**

The pruning, I do with chainsaw.

**How many employees do you have? During the harvest for example?**

We do it with family members, I don’t have employees

**With how many people do you do that?**

About 5 people. My wife and daughter also help.

*[name]: that is also what [name] explained, when we have smaller plots, we work there with our family.*

We are doing that like that always, it is going from father to son. Maybe if you have a larger plot, you need to hire more people or you need to mechanize more.

**Do you belong to a cooperative here?**

Yes, here almost everyone here is connected to a cooperative. It is really difficult to sell your products yourself or go to a factory. Here, almost everyone is associated with a cooperative.

**Do you do the pruning yourself?**

Yes, I do it myself and my brother in law, I am teaching him.

**Ok, yes because it is more complicated work right?**

Yes

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

Previously I burned them in the field. Now, the majority of the people chip it. The bigger wood not, because for example, I have calefaction based on wood. So I use it. But the smaller branches I chip it, with a tractor and chipper and leave it as vegetation cover, as compost for the soil.

**Why do you do it like that?**

Because there are no other ways to do it basically. Before, we burned the branches. But now it is easier to put it in a line and a tractor comes to chip it. There are studies with another type of machine, that is chipping it and immediately collecting it, taking it out of the field. But you don’t see that here that much. Because we have small plots, it is not profitable for a company to go to all these small plots. It is not profitable.

**What do you see as main challenges here?**

I see the sector as very bad, especially because the prices of the olives are very uncertain, it changes a lot. It was the case for a lot of years that the price of olives was below the costs. So now I think it has to change or it will get less, because it is more and more difficult to live from the field. If you are working with your family and you don’t have that much costs, than it is possible, but otherwise I am not optimistic. What is happening a lot is that they are replacing traditional olive trees with internsive and superintensive. That doesn’t generate a lot of employment, it will all mechanize. That will be worse for the environment. The traditional olive trees generate much more employment and richness to an area in comparison to intensive and superintensive, that uses much more water and you don’t need that much employees.

**Is there a lot of intensive cultivation in this area?**

They are starting with it, they are removing traditional olive trees and planting intensive.

*[name]: when we are returning to Jaen, I will show you where they are doing that*.

They remove 10.000 olive trees and they plant superintensive, very close to each other that they can harvest with a machine. A traditional olive tree in some places is over 300 years old, they start producing with a young age, but they cannot produce that long, these intensive trees. Maybe 25 years, then you need to replace them again. They are very close to each other. There is no space. That is a problem here as well.

**Ok, you said that the price is unstable**

Yes it varies a lot, this year it is a bit better, it increased a bit and we can cover the costs. The past 7 or 8 years, and especially in traditional cultivation that has more costs, the price was very low, very bad.

**How does that affect you?**

That affects me that you cannot advance. I can only cover the costs, not more. It is something that is from your grandparents and parents, you try to conserve it. For me, others not, others search something else, they abandon the plots because they cannot live from it.

**And you, can you live well from the olive cultivation?**

What happens here, there is a big difference apart from if you have traditional olive trees or not, if you have dry cultivation or irrigation. I have almost everything in dry cultivation and we had some very dry years. Those that have irrigation, they have more costs, but they also have better production. But irrigation is very costly. Now they are using the river, but before that they made wells, but now they use the river. But that is also costly, to change that from the well to the river. That is also a big cost.

**Is that the reason why you don’t have irrigation?**

In some places it is also not possible, you should be lucky that you have access to irrigation, that the water source is nearby. If it’s not close by, it is not possible, even if you are able to pay for it.

**Are there things you would like to change or improve?**

Fair prices for the product, that would be my improvement. There is a lot of speculation, and it is not controlled by the farmer or cooperative. There are a lot of intermediates that also earn from it, they take the benefit. We produce something of high quality, they take it and pay a very low price, the consumer pays a high price and the one that benefits is the intermediate. It happens with olive cultivation, but also with cattle and basically all the primary sector.

**Would you be interested to collect and sell your pruning rests?**

There are a lot of people that don’t know what to do with the wood and pruning rests. They have calefaction based on orujillo and the wood, some leave it in the field, or they give it away for free.

*[name]: there are a lot of people that have a lot of wood, and they give it to people who don’t have olive fields. They don’t know what to do with it.*

Or they bring the wood to the cooperative where it is piled up. A truck comes and pick it up to sell it as wood or as biomass, like pellets. If you can get a minimum benefit, I think the majority will be interested.

**And you?**

I will be interested as well, of course. If there will be an extra income, even if it is not that high, it will be good.

**What benefits could that bring to you?**

Apart from, well if there are people that collect the wood and pruning rests and take it, and you don’t need to worry about it, it is one job less that you need to do. It will benefit in two parts, those that will take it from the field, and I don’t need to worry about it.

**So you now chip the pruning rests and leave it on the soil, but that also has a benefit for the soil right?**

Yes for the soil.

**But would you be open to also sell those pruning rests that you now leave on the soil?**

Yes of course, why not?

**We would also like to know a bit more about the level of wellbeing of the olive farmer here, and if there are things that could be improved. If you could earn more income from olive cultivation, how would you spend that?**

Here the majority of the people invest in their own plots, to make improvements. In the machinery, or to improve working tools. The majority of the people here improve what they have. Apart from what you need to live.

**And you would do the same?**

Yes, I would invest it as well.

**Ok, and are these your children that are sitting there?**

No, my nephews.

*[name]: his children are of my age, we are neighbours*

**Would you like it if your daughters would work in the olive sector as well?**

That is more difficult, they are studying something else, they have different aspirations.

**But if they would be interested, would you support that?**

Yes, why not? If they like it, why not.

**Do you have sufficient free time?**

Yes, because the work in the olive sector is temporal. There are moments where you need to work hard, but after that, there are always things to do, but you can be more relaxed. Now we will start with the harvest, so then during the campaign that lasts until February-march, you don’t stop. After that there is the pruning, you need to treat the trees with phytosanitary products, or herbicides. You need to do things, but there are always periods where you have less work.

**Ok, but during the harvest, you don’t have much free time?**

No, during the harvest not. For example during Christmas, you only take off during Christmas eve and new year. For the rest, you don’t stop working, also not during the weekend. You only stop when it rains.

**How does that affect you?**

I am used to it, I know I have to do it like that, and I do it. It’s like that.

**Do you feel free from physical problems and economic problems?**

Physical and economic problems, you always have. Economic, that depends a lot on the production. Here, the harvest, for example the olive we are harvesting this year, we only see the income from it a year later. You need to think ahead about the next year, economic problems you can always have. Because you work the whole year, but don’t have the money until after the harvest. Sometimes they give you a little payment in advance, but you don’t get paid until December or later.

*[name]: now in our cooperative we are going to do the first payment in December, for the farmers. They are starting to harvest now the olives, but that is work from 2020. That is one year of work, and they get paid only now.*

That is a bit unstable.

**Are there public services here that you lack? For example infrastructure, or electricity?**

Ah yes infrastructure, there is a road here that they are working on to finish for 30 years now.

*[name]: Susan, you should round up now*

**Ok yes, last question. If there are things that you would like to change or improve in your life?**

(they both start to laugh), well I don’t know, I feel very fortunate, I wouldn’t know what to change.

**Thank you very much for your time**