

## PA #22 BioRural success stories: Sustainable local aquaculture by Pustelnia

Pustelnia, a family-owned fish farming business, stands as a testimony to sustainable aquaculture. Operating with a Fish Welfare Certificate and adhering to the Code of Good Fishing Practice, Pustelnia was founded in 1980 and specializes in breeding common carp and rainbow trout. Since 2016, Pustelnia has grown into a multi-dimensional entity, comprising fish farming, a processing plant, a restaurant, shops, and an online store. With 28 employees, Pustelnia prioritizes local, stable, year-round markets for its produce.



Figure 1: Pustelnia Fish Truck

Pustelnia's innovative journey began with adapting to a significant decrease in fish production, leading to unsustainable wholesale. Diversifying its operation and expanding market reach, such as adjusting the production model was key. Namely by expanding the capacity of the processing plant, and processing 80 tons instead of 20-30 tons.

The circular business model at Pustelnia revolves around local engagement and multiple touchpoints. The farm's diversification into a restaurant, shops, and online platforms ensures a direct connection with consumers. The processing plant, delivering to about 100 local contractors, enhances the farm-to-table concept. Initiatives like FishTrucks take products directly to cities within a 100 km radius and the online store broadens accessibility across Poland.

Pustelnia's success lies not only in its innovative approach but also in its replicability potential. The farm's model of combining fish farming with the whole value chain can be adapted by similar enterprises globally. The emphasis on local markets, engagement with experts, and a gradual, well-planned expansion strategy are sustainable growth components. Accordingly, the ability to navigate legislative challenges and environmental impacts, along with continuous adaptation to market dynamics, provides a blueprint for other aquaculture ventures aiming for sustainable, local, and diversified operations.





*Figure 2: Pustelnia's Products*

The journey involved crucial shifts, from wholesale to retail. Pustelnia redesigned the company strategic organizational assignment. A balanced marketing approach, coupled with direct deliveries to regular customers, strengthened the farm-to-table concept. These key improvements transformed Pustelnia into a sustainable, diversified, and replicable aquaculture model.

When facing challenges with declining fish production and sales, it encouraged a processing plant upgrade. Shifting societal attitudes, protected species limitation and internal management attribution required entrepreneurship expertise while establishing trust in the local market. Pustelnia focused on a long-term label, educating restaurants, and ensuring daily consumer access.



*Figure 3: Pustelnia Team*

