

Les Délices du Jardin d'Ainval

Part A. Profile of business

“Les délices du jardin d'Ainval” is an agrotouristic family farm located in Grivesnes near Amiens, in a wonderful little village in the canton of Ailly sur Noye. It was taken over by Jacky Picard in 1994 after 4 generations of sheep and grain farming. Today, with his wife and his daughter, they are mainly vegetables producers.



Products, seasonal vegetables and fruits such as tomatoes, zucchini, celery, raspberries, are sold directly on the farm or in the various traditional markets. Recently, the company also began to participate in an online sales channel that allows people to order their products on a website "Le court circuit" and come pick them up at delivery points.

In parallel, the company also has a pedagogical welcome activity.



It is in the center of their farm that Sophie, Jacky, and their daughter Anne-flore, welcome up to 60 people to discover their job and their passion: the history of the place and the gardening activity. Schools, licensed centers, seniors' groups and individuals can learn about the farm and its

environment, understand how vegetables grow, rediscover seasonality and admire vegetables they've never seen before.

Part B. The family dimension of the business

Jacky's great-grandparents lived from what they produced, and were known for their generosity. It was a small sheep farm when Jacky's great-grandfather had the site rebuilt in 1924. Unfortunately, having failed to connect the horses and the tractor, he quickly stopped. When he stopped, there were 110 hectares of land, much of which was ceded outside the family. As a result, in 1965, when Jacky's father came in the business, he was only able to take back the land that belonged to the family, which was 60 hectares. The business has thus been reduced by almost half. He remained a grain farmer until 1995, before devoting himself to gardening during the last four years preceding his retirement.

Jacky, from the years 1988, began to rip what he wanted to do. He remained employed from 1988 to 1995, before taking over part of the land (one hectare and a half) on his behalf. After his father's retirement, Jacky took over 17 hectares of additional land. So it was a two-stage transmission. The remaining land (41 hectares and a half) that he did not wish to keep are part of the inheritance, a very complicated family joint ownership. Indeed, even the inheritance of his grandfather who died in 2003 is still not made, as well as that of his father who died in 2004. Both cases are still before the court.

In the farm business, the family involvement is a matter of passion and love of the job. For Anne-flore, it's a question of returning to the land and respecting the environment. For Sophie, it's a day-to-day discovery, you always learn new things. As for Jacky, for him, it's a freedom. However, it is the human side that seems most important to them. The smile of the people, the customers who sometimes come to visit them or even who invite them, they are moments of sharing very enriching which create the link and which bring satisfaction.

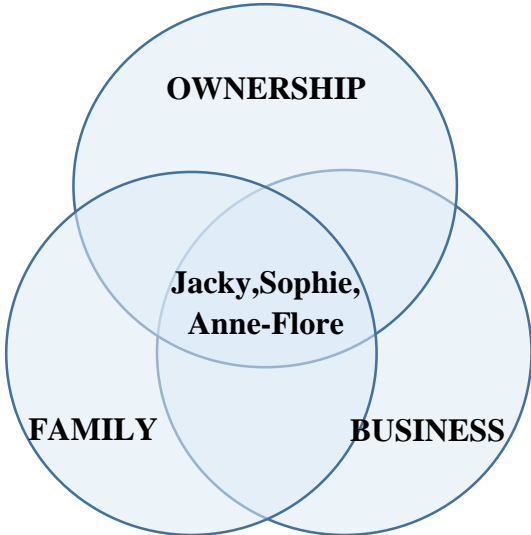


Figure 1 – Les Délices du Jardin d’Ainval 3 circle-diagram

Today, they are all three owners of the farm: Jacky the heir; Sophie, who was a collaborating spouse and who became chief operating officer in 2015; and Anne-flore who was an employee and who in turn became operations manager in November 2017.

Initially, Anne-Flore did not really want to join the family farm. But after vainly looking for work outside and also seeing that the parents had a lot of work on the farm, the desire to return to the countryside had finally taken over. She came from herself afterwards.

Part C. Challenges and opportunities of business growth & succession

The main challenge for Sophie and Jacky comes from excessive regulation. With the plethora of European and French standards, local markets are very likely to disappear. There is always something new, full of constraints and fines. They are in no way associated with the decisions taken by the authorities. They only suffer. The market participants do not want to continue. There were more than 300 of them, and there are only fifty left. As Sophie explains, they are given a hall while telling them that they will be fine, whereas they are used to selling outside. That only contributes to decrease the number of customers. By claiming to promote local products, the public authority is only putting barriers to markets and producers. There are far too many constraints, less freedom, and fewer gains. Moreover, the sites have become more expensive. The place for which they paid 5 euros is now at 25 euros. The price of the packaging also increased, with the new regulations: it went from 32 euros the 1000 units to 25 euros the 500 units.

There is also the challenge of climate hazards. It has already happened for example that the greenhouse get upside down, at the passage of storms. In these cases, it is necessary to get back to work and find a solution yourself. The year 2004 was particularly difficult in this respect. In addition, insurance companies do not often cover these types of risks for these types of businesses (gardening). Sophie and Jacky now know how to do it: they roll up their sleeves and fortify the structure with pieces of wood. They learned to fend for themselves!

However, there are still opportunities, because the market is growing on the internet. There is strong growth capacity in the online sale of vegetables that remains untapped. Currently the offer is lower than the demand. It is therefore possible to produce more, even if the range has already been greatly expanded with the help of Anne-Flore. But if we have to produce more, we would also need more labor, which would put the farm on a higher level. The question then arises whether it would be useful to cross this point, recruit two to three more employees, knowing that the day when there would be no enough orders, it would be very expensive to fire. It's a big risk to take. For the moment, Sophie and Jacky say they are still in a phase of reflection. A priori, they very clearly prefer to develop comfort (for example: investing in greenhouses to work warmer in winter in better conditions and to have more precocious crops) than to want to grow at any cost.

Part D. The entrepreneurial dimension

As the company is small and craft-oriented, one of the greatest difficulties is to manage to ensure the multitude of tasks: financial, technical, technological, managerial, etc., to which must be added the need to put the entrepreneurial spirit into practice.

As an entrepreneurial initiative at "Les Délices du Jardin d'Ainval", there has been the introduction of processed products. Vegetables in overproduction are transformed into a whole range of soups that contain only sterilized natural products (without meat and without chemicals). In July-August, for example, there is more production compared to demand, because most of customers are on vacation. So, instead of throwing away, the surplus is transformed. This transformation is done through outsourcing. To make one bottle, Sophie and Jacky pay 2,07 euros; amount to which must be added the cost of the product itself.



This initiative not only further diversified the product line, but also reduced the losses from unsold items that were usually discarded. The other advantages in terms of image and exchanges with other producers are not to be neglected either. It's a form of advertising for the farm, and it also allows Jacky and Sophie to participate in local product markets.

Another no less important aspect, is the relationship that Sophie and Jacky have with their dietician, who also advises many of their clients. Sophie and Jacky sometimes participate in exhibitions that the dietician organizes to promote healthy products. It is a form of partnership that turns out to be a real asset in terms of image for the family business. The dietician conveys the image of well-being and eating well. When Sophie and Jacky meet their customers at her place, it creates a link: ah it's your dietician! Through that, the business of Sophie and Jacky gains in image (eat well live well).

Key Partners * “La ruche qui dit oui” *Agricultural Chamber *Advisors for production and for the release of insects * Seed suppliers	Key Activities * Local markets * Les marchés du terroir * Discovery of the farm	Value Proposition * Gustative quality and healthy products * Health *Eat well	Customer Relationships * Role of advisor *Proximity * Sharing (a person who is not well who leaves with a smile)	Customer Segments * Historical customers on markets * New clientele, ecological trend
	Key Resources *Picard’s notoriety *The tool (greenhouses, planters, tractors) * Experience and good agreement		Channels * Markets * Web, Facebook, * Community (schools, restaurants)	
Cost Structure * Workforce *Transportation * Depreciation		Revenue Streams * Sale of fruits and vegetables * Sale of processed products (5%) * Educational welcome (less than 1%)		

Table 1. Les Délices du Jardin d’Ainval’s Business Model

Over time, Sophie and Jacky have realized that to succeed in entrepreneurship also means to climb on the bandwagon. There are more and more sales on the internet; they put themselves in it. The benefits gathered are numerous. With online sales, the quantity of products sold is planned and known in advance. As they say, "we know that everything we prepare is gone, it is sold, and we are sure to be paid; while with conventional markets, unsold products go in the trash because we take a volume but

we do not know how much we will sell. The delivery is done at the various withdrawal points: "Le court circuit" (The short circuit), "La ruche qui dit oui" (The hive that says yes). It is done on a time slot that usually corresponds to the hours when customers are not at work, which means late in the evening. They can even set a minimum of orders below which they cannot make the delivery, to avoid a high cost of movement compared to sales. It's not worth it to move for 10 clients. This transition was a great opportunity. It's not the same products, neither the same customers. On the market places, demand is directed towards rather traditional products: carrots, tomatoes, potatoes, etc. On the internet, demand is more specific: Chinese cabbages, long turnips, squash, etc. Prices are increased accordingly. Today, Jacky and Sophie sell a large part of their production on the internet, 80% of their turnover. The company that organizes this, is also responsible for marketing and the entire administrative and financial dimension. In return, it takes 20% of the turnover, which remains largely reasonable.

On the other hand, one of the disadvantages is that you do not have to count your hours. It's a lot of work because it's a lot of small volumes. In this regard, Anne-flore says for example that it happens that she prepares up to 500 orders in one day; which corresponds to one month of sales on the classic markets. Moreover, there is no more direct proximity with consumers. To meet them, you have to go online. There are no more human contacts as such.

Part E. Family entrepreneurialism: Lessons & conclusion

To succeed in family entrepreneurship today, you need transparency and trust, according to Sophie and Jacky.

You need to have the modern spirit of today. You must follow the trends, do not hesitate to integrate new technologies, or to renovate. In family businesses, recurring issues such as the question of the roles of spouses may prevent progress. You have to trust and open up to others. You have to listen to yourself. Do not hesitate to say the feelings to move forward.

It is also necessary to give complete freedom to the arriving generations, both in terms of involvement (to engage or not to engage in the company) and in terms of vision. It is necessary to have respect between generations who have different visions. You have to give the keys. It is absolutely necessary to involve the younger generations, to cede the reins, and to have confidence.