



Raising Employability of Women  
through entrepreneurial Activities  
fostering Rural Development

CASE STUDY

CHARLOTTE VASSANT


# INTRODUCTION

Charlotte Vassant is a farmer near St Quentin, a middle town in the north of France, between Lille and Paris. She produces wheat, rapeseed, sugar beets, and industrial vegetables (onions, potatoes, peas, beans, pumpkins). On her farm, she employs one person and contributes to maintaining an activity on her territory and supplying a local business with fruit and vegetables. She also has revitalized an historic market garden activity in the Saint Quentin region. These vegetables are guaranteed “pesticide residue free” (this is an adaptation to the local market). She uses precision agriculture, especially with irrigation. Some of these vegetables are also produced for a Bonduelle factory, an historic company founded in 1853 in the Hauts de France region. The company is the leading producer of “ready-to-use” vegetables in Europe in the form of canned and frozen vegetables. She’s very committed to the union action of her department and at the national level for producer protection.

## 1. PERSONAL DATA

 **Name:** Charlotte Vassant

 **Age range:** 46 +

 **Education:** She obtained a mechanical engineer degree as well as a farmer bachelor in order to gain the skills to be a farm manager.

 **Occupation:** Farmer crop.



## 2. FARM PROFILE


 **Address:**  
54 Grande Rue 02490 Attilly.

 **Farm Area in ha:** 180 ha.

 **Date since when the female entrepreneur owns/rents the farm:** 2005.

**N° of workers on the farms:**

	FULL TIME	PART-TIME/SEASONAL	WOMEN
Family members			
Other than family members	1		Charlotte Vassant

 **Farm description:** The farm is located near St Quentin, between Lille and Paris. On the farm, wheat, industrial vegetables, rapeseed and sugar beets are produced. Culture is made on the

silt plain for the vegetables and in the slope. Charlotte has decided to stop cropping rapeseed in the sand, chalk and clay. She buys all the mechanical materials with another colleague and manages the work on his farm for him. They have two employees together.

🏠 **Website and social networks accounts:** @ecvass02 on twitter

### 3. MULTIFUNCTIONALITY / RURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

After following mechanical engineering studies, she wanted to take over her family's farm and developed an activity of industrial vegetables production. This activity requires precision and technicality. Thus, she maintains in her village a vegetable production activity for the nearby Saint Quentin town. It also supplies a famous company in France located near Lille metropole to make steamed, preserved or frozen vegetables. This is a way of maintaining a production activity in this poor region. In addition to her activity, she is very committed to her union to defend all farmers and all types of agriculture.

“ I'm fortunate enough to believe that nothing is impossible for me. I believe that I am able to achieve anything and I love challenges. Sometimes, I failed but I always try. I meet many women who dream of being farmers and who don't know they have the potential. Don't regret it. Don't wait an accident. Don't stay with a job you don't like. Don't continue with the pressure of "I would like to do it, but I didn't do it". With technology, it has become easier for women to manage a farm. Do what you dream on time. Share your passion inside your heart. Do what you like.

”



## 4. CONSIDERATIONS, TRAINING / COMPETENCES INVOLVED

### General considerations:

“Initial training to become a farmer is essential. My profession and my crop productions require sharp expertise. But for all of that, we are well surrounded with advisors in the agricultural cooperative for technical advices, accountant advisory or legal counsel. Nothing is impossible. I think it is also important to have done other activities before becoming a farmer as it allows to be more open-minded.”

### SWOT analysis:



### Training/Competences (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes) especially relevant for the process:

“I followed a theory training during the engineer cycle. Later, I have obtained a bachelor in farming in continuing education. A lot of experience outside the family farm is essential for the training. If I need additional knowledge, I can go back to the training program.

Regarding the agronomic aspect, I employ, together with 60 other farmers, an agronomic engineer. We receive necessary information about the crops and we participate in many tests in all the farms. It is a way for everybody to learn a lot through the experimentations each year. We can suggest the experimentations and we can improve them together.

Curiosity is also important. For example, I like to go on Twitter because it is a place where you

can find many new experiences and read special reviews or articles.

I like to travel and visit different systems to open my mind.

For my farm enterprise, the principle is to always stay on the cutting edge of technology. I was trained by my father. Nothing can replace your own experience with earth contact or with the tractor. It is not explained in the books: It is a sixth sense of farming. This sixth sense of farming can be won after spending many hours on the tractor and when coming back to your car, you don't know how to back up!"

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