

# SNOWBOARDING & MAIZE PRODUCTION



*"Everything is equally important because everything is made important by the feeling with which one looks upon the world"*

*Sándor Márai quote, source: [www.citatum.hu](http://www.citatum.hu)*

## ***The reason why am I quoting this very thought right now is:***

*Because I had expectations concerning the day on which I visited Csaba Kardos, knowing only two things about him.*

## ***What I knew about him is this:***

*He likes snowboarding and is a successful maize producer, one of the great discoveries of the Corn Yield Contest.*

## ***Here is what I expected of this day:***

*I hoped that I would be able to find out the secret of how a passion for snowboarding and dedication to maize production come together in a single individual. It is a true success story how a family farm called Kardos-Farm Kft. has been built up step-by-step near the town of Hajdúböszörmény.*

*The enterprise was launched by Csaba's father, Ferenc Kardos back in 1990. Today they are farming 550 hectares of land, with seven workers. In addition to their own land and leased fields they provide tillage services for customers on about a thousand hectares and they dry the produce of 2500 hectares at their own central plant equipped with a machine yard, storage facilities and produce dryer.*

*The development and progress of their enterprise had been driven by building up an increasingly professional machine park and extending their lands as well as the range of their services.*

*On my way to meet Csaba Kardos I tried to imagine what he might be like but I must confess at first I was somewhat disappointed.*



*Having heard of his passion of snowboarding and his successes in the corn yield contests I had been expecting a kind of a cool guy, slightly conceited but nonetheless easygoing, rather than a modest, nice young man of about thirty with such an honest look in his eyes that nearly makes one feel a little uncomfortable. I felt a certain calmness taking over, as we shook hands – at the end of this article you will also understand why that happened. Perhaps Csaba also pardons me for saying that from the very first moment he became sort of my accomplice and made it a little easier to explore that secret. It is really true that one should go closer to the person who is to be written about. He was born under the sign of the scorpion. He does not find himself to be a true scorpion but despite his modesty he is a determined and inquisitive character. And he is also proud.*

He is proud of having gone without ploughs since 2004 because in this region they are the pioneers of ploughless tillage. Accordingly, they are looked upon as something of a “bunch of weirdos” since neighbouring farmers still tend to come to see the wonders produced by this new tillage system and they find it difficult to believe their own eyes; and when visiting the machine yard they secretly look around to spot the hidden ploughs. They have fields scattered around the town of Hajdúböszörmény within about 70 kilometres and with heavy soils that are difficult to till. One example is a piece of untended land purchased some time ago near Görbeháza which is where they made their first attempts at mulch tillage, a technique they have come to apply not only on their own lands but also on leased fields.

*“Because we do not exploit the soil” – he emphasised – “instead, we try and protect it and in addition to the application of reasonable amounts and nutrients we boost our yields by applying various other techniques such as the application of bacterial manure or growing mustard. This creates an excellent, crumbly soil structure of the optimum aggregate sizes, with active soil-borne life in which the number of earthworms grows dramatically.”* The economic efficiency and the improvements in the soil structure as well as the average yields convinced him that one must indeed be open to new things and – another thing he finds to be very important – one must think in terms of systems. Because once Csaba undertakes something he will very avidly and purposefully work for it and drive it towards success. Talk about not being a typical scorpion!



Those with some history of skiing tend to say that anyone choosing the snowboard chooses the dark side. Csaba does not agree with this and refers to the previously discussed issue: what may have an inveterate plough user thought of a thing called mulch tillage?

*– “I dare to like challenges brought about by new things” – says this modest boy with a sudden enthusiasm – “I bravely undertake progressive and extraordinary things.”* All the more so, because a few seemingly more dangerous steps may result in a better feeling than thousands of prudent purposeful ones. This is why he gave up skiing for snowboarding. He talks about how he is drawn to the unknown, he loves challenge, he loves being tested, indeed **he is bursting with a competitive spirit.**

*To switch to mulch tillage or snowboarding?*

Each was a challenge. Trying and applying the first one was aimed at achieving economic efficiency, improved soil structure and increased yields, while the latter stirs up stagnant waters and gives him an intense experience of the joy of life. He is happiest when things are running well and smoothly and this applies to his work as well. This is why he goes in for extreme sports, including wakeboarding, parachuting, rafting and perhaps this is also the driving force of his persistent participation in the **Corn Yield Contest** as well. He has vivid memories of the “first one” of both: his first downhill run ended in a severe crash, he ended up in hospital but his opinion was that he “only had a simple concussion”. He did not give it up, he liked the thing despite the first failure and he wanted to continue. Because if he wants to do something, he will make a seventeenth attempt even after sixteen accidents.

When we first entered the yield contest in 2012 we were registered without even knowing about it. The good result – which he regarded as the luck of the beginner – made him enthusiastic but did not see it as part of his personal story. A variety of circumstances had to be aligned, such as the favourable weather conditions in that year in that particular region, the successful technology or the good choice of variety. In the next year, however, having passed the phase of being surprised, he received the award given to the winner. He has been an avid competitor ever since his childhood – since the times of those maths competitions – and he has always been driven by a competitive spirit. He is definitely encouraged by competitive situations. He says he is not a real daredevil – this is reflected by his behaviour – he goes for safety and security whether it is a downhill run or maize production. In addition to protecting and increasing the yields he also aims at minimising risks. This had also been one of the reasons for his choice of DEKALB, along with aiming at ensuring that the brand of his choice should represent excellent, reliable quality. This equally applies to the safety gear and the board used when snowboarding, his everyday clothing, the machines in his fleet and the above maize hybrids as well.





## SNOWBOARDING & MAIZE PRODUCTION

In maize production he prefers hybrids that have proven on his fields but he is always ready to try newly developed ones. He is getting regularly informed of the new genetic materials and he frequently consults the DEKALB advisor who has ample knowledge of their areas.

It was on the basis of such an advice that in this year's Corn Yield Contest he will use DKC4943, a new member of the DEKALB portfolio. Its high yield potential, outstanding drought tolerance and favourable water release characteristics convinced him to opt for DKC4943. He lays particularly heavy emphasis on the importance of partnership. DEKALB's expert László Kovács keeps monitoring the production cycles and actively participates in seeking for the best possible solutions, just like they are also doing in relation to their partners using their services.

His favourite hybrid is, by the way, the one called DKC5276, which the enterprise has been growing on the largest part of their lands because this DEKALB produces the best in terms of both quality and quantity. Its reliable performance provides security because this is, clearly, an important consideration in view of the widely varying conditions of their widely scattered fields.

Both Csaba and DKC5276 are excellent competitors –no wonder that the two of them won the 2013 Corn Yield Contest.

The farmer's opinion is the same as that of the distributor in that DKC5276 is the hybrid for disciplined farmers aiming at producing outstanding yields. He says that there is, indeed, a need for a variety of secure points that can be relied on in the course of cropping. Having confidence in himself and his good decisions – something essential in extreme sports as well of course – is not enough: he also trusts the knowingly applied technology as well as high potential hybrids. This trust and confidence then provides him with a degree of freedom even when facing a series of challenges, such as the current dry spell, as this region saw a mere 120-130 mm of rain during the growing season. The answers to weather extremes that often force him to make decisions or simply limit the available time for the work to be carried out, are provided by their highly advanced machine park, assisted by the carefully chosen and applied technology as well as the reasonable choice of varieties.

**Their development plans are focused on expanding their irrigation potentials, as they wish to increase the area that can be irrigated when necessary from the current 50 hectares to 200 hectares. Accordingly, he is taking carefully planned steps to increase quantity and improve quality; he is not content with the current results in his work or when it comes to his winter passion, as he keeps improving his snowboarding technique and dynamic year after year on hills that he wants to conquer.**

**He is facing a variety of challenges day after day on all of the different fields because he must harvest maximum yields from pieces of land of widely varying potentials. He is making efforts to reduce his exposure to the forces of nature by constant learning and gathering information. To increase the professional standards of cropping he is about to obtain a diploma as an agricultural engineer specialising in crop protection.**

---

*Again, a new challenge!*

*I have a feeling that I have made a full circle in my search for the secret, I have deciphered the enigma of the feelings generated by snowboarding and maize production, two widely different activities, within the soul of a single man: going for the more, the better, the challenge of what is new, performance, a competitive spirit; and all combined with a rarely-seen modesty and humility.*

*I cannot forget the feeling of security reflected by Csaba's character besides this traits relating to his dynamism.*

*"Because" – to finally quote the proud father who casts a look towards as now and then as he is doing his daily tasks at the farm – "it is when my son is here that I am not worried, because it is then that I know that everything will be all right."*

*Do you remember how I also had a similar feeling of calmness during the first moments of my meeting him?*

---

Gáspár Andrea  
Agro Napló