

GREECE

Improving the
competitiveness of
the agricultural and
forestry sector

Location

Koliri, Pyrgos, Ileia region

Programming period

2007-2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 1

Measure

123 - Adding value to
agricultural and forestry
products

Funding

Total budget 470 613 EUR
EAFRD 223 541 EUR
National/Region. 11 765 EUR
Private 235 307 EUR

Project duration

Jun 2014 – Dec 2015

Project promoter

SME

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EAFRD support enabled a cooperative to set up a fully-automated production line for 100 % natural pomegranate juice and distil a spirit of cooperation among its members.

Summary

Following the creation of cooperative venture, ALFIOS POMEGRANATE SA, the pomegranate producer shareholders used EAFRD funding to create a complete fully-automated production line for 100 % natural pomegranate juice.



EAFRD supported the creation of a complete production line for producing pomegranate juice and pomegranate seeds. This includes a complete production unit fully automated from the washing stage to the process of selection, peeling, separating the fruit pulping and automatic transfer of the juice to the fermentation and pasteurisation unit and finally the bottling stage. The fruit comes from the producer shareholders and is produced under common standards as to ensure optimum quality.

Results

The juice unit began production at the end of 2015, initially producing 16 332 bottles of 100% natural juice without preservatives, sweeteners and flavourings. The juice is bottled in 250 ml glass bottles. Around three tonnes of raw material can be processed by the plant per hour giving an annual production of an estimated 822 000 litres of juice.

The company maintains a scientific database, and it is achieving AGRO 2.1 and 2.2 certificates for its crops. It has also established a distribution network.

The plant is welcoming school visits and is cooperating with a university to further promote the quality of its product. It is looking to capitalise on the product's local identity and to open up the pomegranate fields and plant to interested locals.

The project also investigated the potential use of the residues (seeds) for the production of essential oils. The company is also looking to produce fresh juice for direct local marketing, such as the tourist area of Ancient Olympia.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The plant capitalises on the economies of scale that can be realised when producers cooperate on a large scale. The project proved that fruit producers can work well together on a large scale even in an area without a tradition of collaboration.

Context

Pomegranate producers in the region were looking for new ways to sell their produce, including making pomegranate juice. Increased costs (along with transportation costs) and low prices were having an impact of producers, so after many discussions and consultations, they came together to create a joint-stock company, ALFIOS POMEGRANATE SA, in 2011, initially with the participation of 69 producer shareholders. No single shareholder holds more than 1.2% of the share capital. Today the company has 120 shareholders with producers covering 2 000 acres and geographically spread across the Peloponnese and Attica regions.

Objectives

The project aimed to carry out the next stage for the joint-stock company set up by the pomegranate producers to offer high-quality products at competitive prices in Greece and abroad.

The aim was to produce 100 % natural juice in contrast to the powder and juice concentrate products already available on the market. The producers would follow the same quality requirements of the crop until the final

stage. The added value of the juice would come through vertical integration and a reduction in the distance between the producer and the consumer. Cooperation among farmers would also enable them to take joint advisory and technical support decisions on raw fruit quality and the promotion of end products.

Activities

The project created an integrated refinery for the production of standardised natural pomegranate juice. The investment supported the creation of a complete production line for producing pomegranate juice and pomegranate seeds. The plant was set up in a leased industrial building in the Koliriou area of Pyrgos municipality. A quality assurance system, ISO 22000: 2005, was installed.

The complete production unit is fully automated from the washing stage to the process of selection, peeling, separating the fruit pulping and automatic transfer of the juice to the fermentation and pasteurisation unit and finally the bottling stage. The fruit comes from the producer shareholders and retains certain qualities that lead to a quality end product that is 100% natural.



Additional sources of information

n/a