

ITALY

Agri-food chain integration & quality

Location

Marche

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P3 - Food chain & risk management

Measures

M03 – Quality schemes

M04 – investments in physical assets

M16 - Cooperation

Funding

Total budget 9 741 974 (EUR)

EAFRD 1 714 709 (EUR)

National/Regional 2 261 889 (EUR)

Private 5 765 376 (EUR)

Project duration

2017 to 2019

Project promoter

Consorzio Marche

Biologiche Soc.Coop.

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Website

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Italian farmers join forces in new organics value chain.

Summary

Organic production increased following an RDP project supporting a consortium of farming cooperatives. Activities focused on enhancing the skills of farmers, increasing their storage and processing capacity, and raising consumer awareness about niche organic products.



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Project Results

The project has increased organic production in the region from an initial 4 500 up to 8 000 hectares.

The members now produce about 175 tonnes of pasta based on the old local wheat variety (*Triticum turgidum Turanicum*) and using organic farming practices.

The project enabled participating farmers to gain an average price that is 100% higher than that of conventional production.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ CAP funds can play a key role in boosting organic production by engaging large numbers of local farmers in new value chains.
- ❑ Combining different quality certifications might not be easy for producers due to the difficulties of integrating new rules and norms alongside existing and ongoing quality regulations.

Context

The main beneficiary (Consorzio Marche Biologiche) is a consortium of farming cooperatives that was established in 2010. Its mandate is to support and assist its members with organic production on arable lands in Italy's central region of Marche. The members needed, on the one hand, to improve their skills and capacities, and on the other, to develop an integrated value chain that would enable them to improve their market position.

Objectives

This project sought to innovate, improve, and promote the value chain of products produced on organic arable lands, thus enabling stakeholders to offer a wider range of end products.

Activities

The regional Rural Development Programme (RDP) supported the following value chain actions:

- Investment support was used to purchase a storage facility with a capacity of 200 tonnes and to acquire a mill which can produce steel and bronze cut pasta with a processing capacity of 6 000 to 9 000 tonnes annually.
- Tested the organic production of old and new varieties of wheat and lentils in two experimental plots. A new sowing system was tested and guidelines prepared for producing organic seeds. Gradually, the guidelines became mandatory for all 240 members of the consortium.
- Organised activities to assess consumer awareness of organic pasta and to gauge their appreciation of the new packaging. The project also assessed the economic and environmental sustainability of the new pasta with positive outcomes.
- Organised and delivered six training workshops to 90 farmers;

- Introduced the ISO 22005 certification to member farmers.
- Financed a communication campaign to promote the consortium's products. This action involved more than 30 initiatives including press releases, workshops, presentations, advertisements, etc.

Main results

The project increased organic production from 4 500 to 8 000 hectares and met its targets for the number of farms involved.

Circa 240 farmers gained an average price for their production that is 100% higher than that of conventional production.

The members now produce about 175 tonnes of pasta based on the old local wheat variety (*Triticum turgidum* Turanicum) and using organic farming practices.

Key lessons

CAP funds can play a key role in engaging large numbers of local farmers in new value chains. The RDP measure funding cooperation proved to be a particularly successful driver for both social and technical innovation in the regional farming context, as it was able to effectively support small- and medium-sized producers.

Combining different quality certifications and rules might not be easy for producers. In this case, where the project originally aimed to support around 100 producers to introduce the ISO 22005 certification, finally only about 25 farmers managed, due to the difficulties of integrating this norm alongside other ongoing quality rules.

"A comprehensive value chain approach is a key element in order to involve local stakeholders and producers".

Consorzio Marche Biologiche Soc.Coop.

Additional sources of information

n/a