

## 'eva & adam' - Exclusive rarities of dessert fruit from traditional orchards

Enhancing the value of old fruit varieties to help preserve traditional orchards.

### EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** Styria, Austria

**Programming period:** 2014-2020

**Priority:** P3 - Food chain and risk management

**Focus Area:** Agri-food chain integration & quality

**Measures:** M16 - Cooperation

<b>Funding:</b>	Total budget	122 762 (EUR)
	RDP support	98 210 (EUR)
	Private/own	24 552 (EUR)

**Timeframe:** 05.02.2020 to 05.02.2022

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- All suppliers received a price for their fruit that was 10 to 40 times higher than the regular price from traditional orchards.
- More than 40 press articles, radio and TV reports generated enthusiasm in Austria and neighbouring countries. The project was presented at international conferences.
- Three similar initiatives are currently being planned in Germany and Switzerland.



### Summary

With more than 800 varieties, fruit from traditional orchards offer unique health and culinary potential. So far, this potential has hardly been used by the trading sector. However, the project 'eva & adam' addressed this potential and made fruit from traditional orchards available again as dessert fruit. A network of around 500 businesses was established, a plastic-free logistics system was developed and a website with an online store was created to promote and raise awareness of these almost forgotten fruits. The project re-established the connections between orchard farms and customers. Through this action and an improved appreciation of the old varieties, numerous suppliers were able to earn a secure income again. Customers also benefited as they were able to purchase a wide variety of fruit from traditional orchards through various, convenient channels. The project was well received by the public and the awareness and value of orchard fruit was significantly increased.

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### Key lessons and recommendations

- It is worthwhile not making any compromises when it comes to quality. The wooden delivery boxes were made by carpenters and carefully designed texts and appealing designs were used for the marketing.
- Providing individual support to suppliers and customers was essential.
- An important insight from the project has been that people could lose their agricultural heritage on a large scale unless they take immediate action to preserve it.

### Context

Due to climate change, fruit cultivation continues to shift to higher regions while traditional orchards are left behind. Styria, in Austria, still has a lot of fruit from traditional orchards, with about 800 old varieties of apples and pears. However, this fruit is traded at very low prices, ranging from two to twelve cents per kilogram on the world market during the period from 2018 to 2021. At the same time, there is an increasing

### Project results

- Old fruit varieties became available on the market again for the first time in 50 years.
- Within two years, a network of about 500 businesses was built. As a result, numerous farms were able to regain a profit from their orchards.

demand for diverse fruit that is non-allergenic, has a distinct flavour and is genetically resistant. With more than 800 old varieties, the fruit from traditional orchards offers a unique potential for delivering culinary as well as health benefits. Until now, this potential has hardly been used by the trading sector. To foster an improved utilisation of the traditional orchards, a better connection between fruit farms and customers was needed. This included the need to improve the awareness and appreciation of traditional varieties by customers and a realisation that this fruit can be used as dessert fruit.

The 'eva & adam' project was developed to address this need and to help improve the connection between traditional orchard fruit farms and customers. A central concern of the project was the promotion as well as the preservation of biodiversity in orchards.

## Objectives

The objective of the 'eva & adam' project was to promote fruit from traditional orchards, make it accessible again and valued as dessert fruit. The project focused specifically on the topic of maintaining "biodiversity and cultural landscape". The intention was to create a greater appreciation of old fruit varieties, the traditional orchard habitat and the work of producers.

Target groups of the project were mainly private individuals and the (top) gastronomy sector. Suppliers and partners, tree nurseries, etc. were also involved in the implementation of the project.



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## Activities

**The following activities were carried out:**

- Establishing a network of suppliers who operate their orchard fruit varieties according to defined quality standards. The suppliers were informed about the quality criteria through initial training sessions.
- Developing a logistics system to transport fruit from orchards to customers whereby a small ecological footprint was pursued and the use of plastic avoided.
- Developing a BIO certification label for the project.
- Designing and setting up a website and online store, which also acted as a central hub for stakeholders: suppliers registered their products and customers made their purchases through this website.
- Stimulating collaborations with several pomologists (fruit tree experts) to engage with the project. With their help, appealing descriptions of fruit varieties were developed.
- Developing a targeted marketing strategy to increase the attractiveness of the products and increase the appeal of the product line. The new product line emphasised the fine and exclusive character of the rare fruit varieties. In terms of marketing, the 'eva & adam' theme was consistently applied.

## Main results

- Old fruit varieties became available on the market again for the first time in 50 years. For example, more than 160 varieties of fruit from traditional orchards were on sale in 2020 and 2021.
- A network of about 500 businesses was created within the two years of the project. As a result, numerous farms were again able to make a profit from their orchards.
- All suppliers that participated in the project were able to raise the prices of their fruit substantially, ranging from 10 to 40 times higher than the regular price from traditional orchards. Thus, their income was secured, providing motivation to maintain and expand their orchards.
- Customers benefited from the project as well. Through the project website, private customers could purchase fruit either by e-mail order, at defined pick-up points or through partner businesses of 'eva & adam'. Clients in the gastronomy sector benefited from a direct delivery system. The exchange of information and the sale of products on the website was efficient.



- Public awareness was successfully raised through more than 40 press articles, radio and TV reports. This generated enthusiasm and created an interest in traditional orchard fruit in Austria as well as in neighbouring countries.
- The project was invited to present its achievements at numerous international conferences.
- Three similar initiatives are currently being planned in Germany and Switzerland to establish 'eva & adam' there.



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## Key lessons and recommendations

- The project's implementation and work with 160 orchard varieties was very complex. However, tackling this challenge increased the joy and enthusiasm for old fruit varieties from traditional orchards.
- The project has shown that it is worthwhile not making any compromises when it comes to quality. The wooden boxes for transport, for example, were made by qualified carpenters and high-quality promotional texts and appealing designs were used for the marketing of 'eva & adam'.
- A lot of emphasis was put on providing individual support to suppliers and customers.
- An important insight from the project was that people are at risk of losing their agricultural heritage on a large scale unless they take immediate action to preserve it.



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