Creation of a spirulina production workshop in Guadeloupe

CAP funds used by farmers in Guadeloupe to diversify via an investment in spirulina microalga cultivation.

EAFRD-funded projects

Country: France
Location: Petit-Canal, Guadeloupe
Programming period: 2014-2020
RDP Priority: P2. Competitiveness
Focus Area: Farm performance, restructuring & modernisation
Measures: M04. Investments in physical assets
Funding: RDP support 93 860 (EUR)
EAFRD 78 489 (EUR)
National/regional 15 371 (EUR)
Timeframe: 2018-2022
Project promoter: GAEC de Chabert
Email: gaecdechabert@gmail.com

Summary

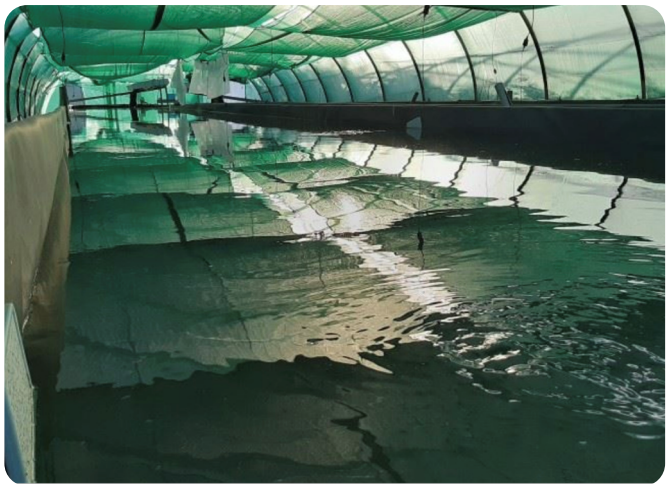
The Chabert farm collective began working to diversify its production activities by experimenting with spirulina, an edible microalga that is sold locally. They received Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) support in 2018, and again in 2021, to develop their production infrastructure for spirulina cultivation.

Project results

- With their spirulina products now well established on the local market, the GAEC de Chabert produces and sells around 20kg each month, which equates to around 1kg of spirulina from each m2 annually.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Rural Development Programme (RDP) support has helped the farmers to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis in a good position to pursue their goals and expand their cultivation capacity.
- This type of production may need a lot of experimentation to achieve satisfying results.



©GAEC Chabert

Context

A collective or 'co-op' farm is known in France and the French-administered territories as a Groupement Agricole d'Exploitation en Commun (GAEC). The Chabert Agricultural Group in France's Outermost Region of Guadeloupe is one such GAEC and has been producing lettuces, roses and vegetable seedlings since 1992.

In 2015, the GAEC de Chabert's members came up with the idea of producing spirulina for the local market. After experimenting a little to understand how the production of this edible microalga could best be established and managed, the group decided to equip itself and launch production. In 2018, they submitted their first application for RDP funding and were able to invest in a greenhouse and a production workshop. In 2021, they applied again for RDP funding to extend their cultivation area to a total of 480m2.

Objectives

The aims of this project were to:

- Produce spirulina of high quality and with a low environmental impact.
- Develop a new production line to help diversify and expand the framework of an existing agricultural group.
- Enhance production through the development of new infrastructure and an expanded cultivation area.
- Enable a viable production model for the group's producers.

Activities

- The GAEC de Chabert first applied for RDP support in 2018. The funds co-financed the set-up of production facilities, including a greenhouse and a 160m2 container to be used as a drying workshop and storage space, as well as the installation of growing basins for the alga.
- In 2021, the group used RDP support for the development of two new cultivation greenhouses, each with its own basins, and the installation of a 50m2 nursery to develop the spirulina alga.
- In 2021, the producers also decided to create a packaging workspace to facilitate the sale of the product on the local market.

Main results

- The GAEC de Chabert sells around 15 and 20kg of pure spirulina locally per month.
- They produce around a kg of spirulina from each m2 annually to high environmental standards.
- Having reached their initial production objective of 1.5 kg per m2 / per year in 2022, the project is expected to grow further in the coming years.
- This project contributes to Guadeloupe's self-sufficiency in high-quality spirulina production.
- Spirulina requires only small quantities of water, which responds to the current need to reduce the environmental impact of agricultural production.

©GAEC Chabert

Key lessons

- New product lines are available to help farmers adapt to changing environmental conditions and to diversify rural economies, making them more resilient in the long term.
- This type of production may need a lot of experimentation to achieve satisfying results, especially when it is a new field for the farmers involved.

"The CAP funds enabled us to start this new production and to ensure a development that would probably have been more difficult otherwise."

GAEC de Chabert

Additional information:

http://paysguadeloupe.com/annuaire/item/gaec-de-chabert/

Funded by the European Union