

Production of healthy cereal snacks - sprouted buckwheat bars without added sugar

LEADER funds were used by a farmer to establish an award-winning new and nutritious food product series from organic buckwheat produced on her farm.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Kļasica, Ilzeskalna pagasts, Latvia

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6 - Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M19 - LEADER CLLD

Funding: Total budget: 23 049 (EUR)

EAFRD: 10 487 (EUR)

National/Regional: 5 647 (EUR)

Private/own: 6 915 (EUR)

Timeframe: 21/06/2021 - 27/12/2021

Project promoter: IK "Healthy Snacks"

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Summary

Julija Danilina and her family are the managers of a 220-hectare organic farm in Eastern Latvia. Among other grains, the farm grows buckwheat, which is naturally rich in protein, iron, antioxidants and magnesium. It is gluten-free and safe to eat for most people with type two diabetes. Julija received LEADER funding to set up her own company to produce healthy cereal snacks, and received advice from the experts of Latvia's Rezekne Academy of Technology. This support enabled her to develop the unique recipes of the company's products, as well as to design and acquire the custom-made machinery and equipment needed for production.

Project results

Thanks to LEADER, a series of healthy cereal snacks was created using sprouted buckwheat. The product is vegan, gluten-free and nutrient-dense, without added sugar.

Key lessons and recommendations

The project demonstrated that LEADER can play important roles in supporting nutrition and rural diversification.

LEADER also often leads in ensuring equal opportunities for all entrepreneurs in rural Europe.

Context

Julija Danilina and her family have been managing their 220-hectare organic farm in Eastern Latvia for many years, growing buckwheat, barley, rye, and other grains. They are committed to organic farming, believing that it is important for the protection of the environment and for the production of quality food. Buckwheat is naturally rich in protein, iron, antioxidants and magnesium. In addition to being gluten-free and safe to eat for most people with type two diabetes, buckwheat is also one of the few plants that contain high amounts of lysine - an essential amino acid that helps the body absorb other nutrients and build proteins.



Julija is also a qualified product processing specialist. She decided to apply her knowledge to create a new product that adds value to raw material from her farm. She set up the 'Healthy Snacks' company and developed the brand 'Griksi', a series of healthy cereal snacks. The primary ingredient of the Griksi snacks range is sprouted buckwheat; each product is vegan, gluten-free and nutrient-dense, without added sugar.

As a business owner and entrepreneur, Julija prides herself on her commitment to research and innovation in developing new recipes and producing products. The company has developed a unique production technology, and uses only sprouted and dried buckwheat groats. This allows them to increase the volume of antioxidants by 30% and eliminate the phytic acid that is found in raw buckwheat, which blocks the absorption of minerals and vitamins.



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Objectives

The aim of this project was to create an innovative, high-quality, sustainable range of nutritious food products from organically grown buckwheat in an environmentally friendly way through low GHG emissions.

Activities

Project activities included:

- Cooperating with specialists at Latvia's Rezekne Academy of Technology to develop the products and recipes.
- Purchasing custom-designed production equipment that meets the company's own specifications and needs.

- Purchasing and installing processing machinery and equipment to start preparing and packaging cereal snacks on-site on the farm.

The project was supported by Latvia's Rezekne Academy of Technology, which provided advice on the development of product recipes, prototypes and technological processes. Valuable support with product technology development and business implementation was also received from the Rezekne County Local Action Group (LAG).

Main results

- LEADER funds enabled the creation of innovative, healthy products produced from self-grown and sprouted green buckwheat, according to recipes that the entrepreneur developed personally.



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- LAG support enabled Julija and her family to create a visitor centre – the Buckwheat Residence – at the production facility, where they can receive guests and share information about their work, their products and their passion for organic buckwheat farming.
- Julija has participated in various international competitions and exhibitions. She represented Latvia at the world's largest B2B sweets and snacks exhibition – "ISM 2023" in Cologne, Germany; at the leading organic food exhibition "BIOFACH 2023", in Nuremberg, Germany; and at the "NORDIC ORGANIC FOOD FAIR 2022" in Malmö, Sweden. The 'Griksi' brand won 1st place in 2023 in the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) support program for women entrepreneurs in the agriculture and food sector – "Empowering Women in Agrifood" (EWA).



Key lessons and recommendations

- > This project is an example of how LEADER support can help a farm to innovate and add value to its own produce.
- > The project demonstrated that LEADER could play an important role in supporting nutrition and rural diversification.
- > LEADER also often leads in ensuring equal opportunities for all entrepreneurs in rural Europe.

Quote

“With this technology we give the buckwheat a new life and make it even more nutritious”.

Julija Danilina

Additional information:

www.griksi.com/

www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJ1-zCS4zJ4

www.facebook.com/liepkalnsbio/

