A EU CAP

FARMA ŽIRO – Acquisition of technological equipment for the **production of inoculants**

LEADER funds in Czechia help a local company modernise production equipment for nature-based alternatives to synthetic fertilisers.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Nehvizdy, Czechia Programming period: 2014-2020 Priority: P6 - Social inclusion and local development Focus Area: Local development Measures: M19 - LEADER CLLD Funding: Total budget 75 445 (EUR) EAFRD 15 111 (EUR) National/Regional 8 500 (EUR) Private/own 38 740 (EUR) Other 13 094 (EUR) Timeframe: 01/05/2019 - 30/03/2020 Project promoter: FARMA ŽIRO s.r.o. Email: j.glatt@volny.cz

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Project results

- > The company's production capacity has increased by at least 25%.
- > One full time job was created.
- > The new technologies have improved working conditions and increased safety.

Key lessons and recommendations

- > Environmentally friendly alternatives to fertilisers exist and have a long productive history.
- Promoting the company's products is very important. The company's representatives attend various farmers' meetings where they raise awareness about their products among the farming community.
- Capacity building support and advice provided by the LAG staff about the grant application process and life cycle of an EUfunded project were very helpful.

Summary

Inoculants support the bioeconomy's sustainability by providing alternatives to chemical fertilisers which do not pollute the environment. Inoculants comprise bacteria and fungi that are used to support agricultural productivity. They are beneficial microorganisms offering effective alternatives to chemical fertilisers because their natural biological agents enhance soil fertility by facilitating nutrient availability and improving plant health. Unlike chemical fertilisers, which can lead to soil degradation and water pollution, inoculant actions promote sustainable agricultural practices by fostering a symbiotic relationship between plants and soil microbes. Inoculants not only support biodiversity but also enhance soil structure and resilience against climate change.

FARMA ŽIRO s.r.o. from Czechia produces inoculants for agricultural crops. Its products are sold in Czechia, Slovakia, Poland and Lithuania. The company used a LEADER Local Action Group's (LAG) business development assistance to help them cover the costs needed for investing in modernised production equipment as well as more efficient distribution of inoculants.



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Context

Inoculants comprise bacteria and fungi that are used to support agricultural productivity. They are beneficial microorganisms offering effective alternatives to chemical fertilisers because their natural biological agents enhance soil fertility by facilitating nutrient availability and improving plant health. Unlike chemical fertilisers, which can lead to soil degradation and water pollution, inoculant actions promote sustainable agricultural practices by fostering a symbiotic relationship between plants and soil microbes. Inoculants not only support biodiversity but also enhance soil structure and resilience against climate change.

FARMA ŽIRO s.r.o. has been the only Czech producer of agricultural crop inoculants. The company produces its NITRAZON and AZOTOBAG series, which contain the Rhizobia, Azotobacter and Bacillus soil bacteria. These bacteria are applied to the soil when the seed is planted. They supply the plants with nitrogen and phosphorus and also help the plant to absorb potassium and other micronutrients. In addition, they can decompose postharvest residues and produce soil enzymes and phytohormones. The company's products are sold in Czechia, Slovakia, Poland and Lithuania.

The company's manufacturing premises are relatively new and opportunities to strengthen their overall competitiveness were identified by investing in modernised production equipment as well as more efficient distribution.

Objectives

The aims of this LEADER-funded agri-investment project included:

> Improving productivity of nature-based solutions for farming providing alternatives to synthetic fertilisers.

- Strengthening long-term resilience of company and workforce competitiveness.
- Modernising the company's equipment with new technology to enhance manufacturing efficiency and occupational safety.

Activities

Investment support from the Czech Rural Development Programme was used to co-finance the purchase of a:

- > lima box;
- > steam generator;
- > vertically filled autoclave;
- biohazard box;
- microscope; and
- > N1 category vehicle.

Main results

Thanks to this investment:

- > One full time job was created.
- > The production capacity of the company increased by at least 25% while the transport efficiency also improved.
- The company can respond to increased demand for its products. This is forecast to reflect the increased environmental and financial cost of synthetic fertilisers, which motivates interest from farmers in greater use of organic products such as inoculants.
- The savings gained due to improved production efficiency are being invested in research and development, as the company explores new ideas for products that could contribute to the protection of the environment by replacing fertilisers with more natural products.
- > The company trained about 500 people in the uses and benefits of their products to spread awareness about the processes and technology they use.
- The new technologies improved employees' working conditions and increased work occupational safety.



Key lessons and recommendations

- > Using inoculants can notably reduce reliance on synthetic inputs, aligning with EU policies for the environment and organic farming. Wider integration of inoculants into EU agriculture offers an eco-friendly solution that addresses both productivity concerns and environmental sustainability. By using these microbial technologies, farmers can achieve optimal yields while helping to protect the integrity of their farm ecosystems.
- Actively promoting the company's products is very important. The company's representatives attend various farmers' meetings where they present their products and approaches. The company has participated in ten workshops where the main topic was using inoculants based on beneficial soil bacteria.
- > The implementation of the project was demanding because the company had not prepared a grant application like this before. The expert help of LAG staff can help applicants understand the commitments and administration involved in receiving EU funding.

Quote

"I did a yield trial to treat part of my field with your product and I was pleasantly surprised. The crop had very good colour and the yield was much higher".

Mr. Šlechta, farmer

Additional information:

Website: www.nitrazon.cz





