

ROMANIA

Agri-food chain integration & quality

Location

Brasov County

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P3- Food chain & risk management

Measure

M16 – Cooperation

Funding

Total budget 100 000 (EUR)
EAFRD 85 000 (EUR)
National/Regional 15 000 (EUR)

Project duration

2018 to 2019

Project promoter

Brasov Association of
Traditional Product Farmers,
APPT

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CAP funding enables Romanian farmers to establish successful short supply chain for quality food.

Summary

Ten farmers from Braşov County used CAP funds to open their own physical and online store and to launch a successful promotional campaign of direct marketing for their branded food range.



Project Results

The association managed to establish a distribution network which, in addition to their own store and online shop, includes five bistros and several supermarkets and stores.

Discussions are underway regarding potential new food/marketing partnerships and a plan to expand the association's educational programme (farms visits, school workshops, etc.).

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The key strength of the brand is the variety of food products they can offer.
- ❑ Stable, pre-agreed prices negotiated directly between clients and producers provides security for all parties.
- ❑ The association plan to continue implementing modernisation projects that prioritise good working conditions, animal welfare, and climate change mitigation.

Context

Agricultural production in Brasov County, central Romania, is mainly focused on industrial crops such as potatoes, corn silage, and sugar beet, as well as cattle and sheep production, although beekeeping and fish farming have started to show an upward trend in recent years. A major challenge for many in the County, especially smallholders, is that they are often unable to capitalise on their own production as they lack direct access to local markets.

In this context, ten smallholders including crop producers, livestock farmers, beekeepers, and fish farmers set up an association through which they could collectively establish their own distribution network.

Objectives

This project aimed to set up a short supply chain which would enable a group of local farmers to increase their competitiveness by improving income opportunities from more direct sales of their produce.

Activities

Project actions included:

- The elaboration - working together with the Faculty of Food and Tourism of Transylvania University - of a strategy for controlling the quality of their products. From this they were able to identify the equipment that they would need to invest it.
- The acquisition, on a 10-month lease of a business facility in Rotbav which provides the association with an administrative base for their activities and a shop space.
- The design and implementation of a promotional campaign to find customers and partners. This included print advertising (brochures and leaflets), the production of a 10' promotional video, the development of a website, and the launch of a social media presence. The association also prepared specific materials to target the HORECA sector and ran promotional stands at various trade exhibitions.

Main results

The association managed to establish a distribution network for their food products, which include vegetables, fish, cheese, and meat. In addition to their own store in Rotbav and online shop, the association's distribution network includes five bistros and several supermarkets and stores in the neighboring cities of Brasov, Feldioatra and Rasnov.

In Carrefour supermarkets in Braşov, Ploieşti and Bucharest, the association's produce is displayed on their own stands, which are called 'Island of local producers'.

Discussions are underway regarding a potential new partnership with the 'Guild of Pubs' in Braşov. The Guild runs some successful projects in the HORECA sector and there are hopes of developing a new gastronomic hub in Rotbav.

Now that the farmers have a steady market in place, they know more about how to produce to avoid waste.

From the perspective of the bistros, they can now rely upon pre-agreed and stable prices negotiated directly with the producers, whereas in the past they were vulnerable to price hikes and overcharging.

Key lessons

A key success factor was the composition of the association, in which different types of complementary produce are represented. This constitutes an advantage (and is a key aspect of their brand) as they can offer their clients a one-stop-shop for a variety of high quality, healthy food.

The association considers education and awareness raising, on the subject of healthy eating and sustainable food production, to be an essential part of strengthening their customer base and maintaining their livelihoods. Their farms are open for visits, but they are planning to enhance their offer of educational programmes and services in the future.

Additional sources of information

<https://ro.linkedin.com/in/george-c%C4%83%C8%9Bbean-02576240>

www.youtube.com/watch?v=yranGFUw_O8

<https://at.unitbv.ro/ro/cercetare/grupuri-de-cercetare.html>

<https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/social/10-fermieri-au-gasit-reteta-succesului-pentru-a-si-vinde-produsele-restaurantelor-de-top.html>