

FRANCE

Agri-food chain integration & quality

Location

May-en-Multien

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P3 – Food chain
& risk management

Measure

M4 – Investments in physical
assets

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 302 867.45
EAFRD 60 016.60
National/Regional 60 136.61
Private 182 714.24

Project duration

2017 – 2017

Project promoter

Les 3 Givrées

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Website

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In an area where the agricultural sector is under pressure due the expansion of a nearby urban centre, the diversification of farming activities e.g. ice-cream production and marketing, can ensure the farm's sustainability.

Summary

The Ile-de-France region is affected by strong land pressure due to urban expansion around Paris. The primary sector of the region has 5 000 farms employing 11 340 people. Three farming couples set up a company to produce ice-cream bringing together different types of expertise (including hygiene, commerce and management).



The project financed the development of a room for processing milk into ice cream. It included a feasibility study, interior fittings and the purchase of specific equipment. The total cost of the investments was shared between the three farms, in co-ownership.

Results

Since its launch, Les 3 Givrées has developed around 40 flavours: 20 for ice creams and 20 sorbets.

The business sells directly on the farm but also to a dozen retailers.

Since October 2017, the business has produced an average of 200 litres of ice cream and 145 litres of sorbet each week. Sorbets and milk-based ice creams are sold for 10 EUR.

Lessons & Recommendations

- Consumers prefer authentic, regional and natural food products. Many farmers have already embarked on similar adventures.
- Les 3 Givrées would like to invest in the restaurant market as they consider that there is a real desire from restaurateurs to offer local quality products.

Context

The Ile-de-France region is affected by strong land pressure and there is an intense urban sprawl. At the same time the primary sector of the region has 5 000 farms employing 11 340 people.

RDP support for farm investments in livestock and specialised agricultural sectors aims at improving economic competitiveness and environmental impact. About 900 out of the 5 000 farms are targeted (18% of the total).

The area of Seine et Marne is particularly threatened by the expansion of Paris. Farmland is disappearing in favour of new towns, particularly in the west of the department.

Livestock (dairy and suckling) but also cattle and sheep herds are in constant decline. In 2016, in particular, due to bad weather the harvest was very poor and in combination with low prices, many farms were faced with serious income losses.

The dairy sector, however, has some advantages since its products are widely appreciated by the public, as they are considered healthy and tasty. Many e-commerce websites offer dairy products delivered at the customers' homes, while public authorities encourage the supply of local and/or organic products for collective catering.

In this context, three farming couples got together to set up a company. Their farms were predominantly growing cereals and one of them had a dairy workshop. The six partners brought in different types of expertise (including hygiene, commerce and management) in this joint venture.

Objectives

The idea of this project was to diversify their agricultural activities by developing quality products for a niche market that did not exist in the area. The farmers wanted to promote their local products through direct selling and three marketing niches were identified for development:

- Set up an on-farm shop;
- Retailing through pick-ups and local produce stores;
- Selling to local restaurants using large containers.

The three couples also plan to use a ice cream trolley available for rental and an ice-truck.

Activities

Producing good quality ice cream from milk requires equipment and cooling capacities. The laboratory and the store are located in May-en-Multien (Pays d'Ourcq), in a former cattle house and they opened in November 2017. The setting is ideal to promote frozen dairy products and at the same time advertise rural heritage.

The raw materials they use are seasonal and as far as possible produced locally. Sorbets are prepared using apples and pears from the neighbouring farm and red fruits are provided by a farmers' group in Aisne.

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All work in the business is carried out by the three couples themselves. "*The six of us are really complementary,*" says Pauline Benoist, who left a senior position in an insurance company to embark on the ice cream adventure. Two ladies from the six partners were already in the farming sector, helping their husbands with the administration of their farms.

Emmanuelle Antoine and her husband Hugues provide the milk, with their 45 cows. "*A cow provides 1800 litres per year,*" says the farmer.

For Pascal Méheut, investing into ice-cream is an evolution of the agricultural sector. He discovered the concept of farm ice cream in Normandy.

As beginners in ice-cream production, the three couples are using specialised machines. For this purpose they received training in their use, as well as the production of labels that comply with food legislation. The company used pastry chefs who provided assistance in the development of recipes.

The production takes place two days a week. The fruit is processed on the farm including peeling, pressing, pitting and stewing. Everything is prepared before the production, always taking care to respect the maturity of the products. The preparation of the ingredients, the cleaning, ensuring the hygienic conditions and traceability are very time-consuming steps.

While the best-before date is relatively long (eight months), Les 3 givrées is currently producing on a just-in-time basis.

Main Results

The project enabled the creation of a workshop specialised in producing ice cream and other dairy desserts from milk. The 3 Givrées started selling their products at the farm in May-en-Multien, but also to a dozen retailers.

Since its launch, Les 3 Givrées has developed around 40 flavours: 20 for ice creams (including Armagnac and prunes, chocolate with candied oranges, vanilla and caramelised nuts) and 20 sorbets (including ginger pear, four berries, orange and strawberry).

All ingredients are carefully selected and are 100% natural. In addition to the sorbets and ice creams, they also make frozen desserts.

Since October 2017, the business has produced an average of 200 litres of ice cream and 145 litres of sorbets each week. Sorbets and milk-based ice creams are sold for 10 EUR.

According to Pascal Méheut, Alexandra's husband *"We are achieving beyond our objectives. In four to five years' time, we would like to increase the volume of ice cream and sorbets to 30 000 litres per year"*.

The ice cart rental for private and corporate events has been operational since spring 2018. The mobile ice cream truck (supported by participative financing launched in June 2018) is regularly used at markets and fairs.

Key lessons

Consumers prefer authentic, regional and natural food products. Many farmers have already embarked on similar adventures. Sales, which are very seasonal, are highly dependent on the summer climate. But the company is in full development.

Les 3 Givrées would like to invest in the restaurants market as they consider that there is a real desire from restaurateurs to offer local quality products.

"...we wanted to diversify through the direct sale of a product in order to have contact with the consumers and generate added value. We are fortunate to have a large consumer pool close by."

Jean-Baptiste Benoist



Additional sources of information

www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDJ8wTjg8Sk