

## MALTA

### Entry of skilled / younger farmers

#### Location

Haz-Zebbug

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P2 – Competitiveness

#### Measure

M06 – Farm & business development

#### Funding (EUR)

RDP contribution 70 000

EAFRD 52 500

National/Regional 15 500

#### Project duration

2018 – 2020

#### Project promoter

Joseph Agius

#### Contact

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#### Website

[www.tkf.mt](http://www.tkf.mt)

A Maltese young farmer took over his father's sheep farm in order to preserve local traditions, whilst incorporating new and innovative ideas in the production and marketing process.

## Summary

This investment project concerns a young farmer taking over his father's sheep farm which produces cheese. The goal was to preserve the local traditions from older generations, whilst incorporating new and innovative ideas in the production and marketing process.



Investment support from the Maltese Rural Development Programme was used to acquire new machinery and equipment for milking and producing cheese; install solar panels to generate renewable energy; set up a farm shop; carry out lab tests on the nutritional value of the products in order to improve their quality and range; and introduce new marketing methods to increase the farm's profitability.

## Results

The goal is to increase the farm's production by 300% within three years.

The new processing room allows the farm to handle a larger quantity of milk and produce cheese of higher quality.

The new processing room also allows for the creation of newer products such as sheep's milk ice cream. The farm is the first local business to produce this product in the country.

The farm shop has been partially completed and is now open to the public. This will attract customers who are interested in buying genuine local products directly from the farmer. Customers also have the opportunity to see the cheese making process while they shop.

## Lessons & Recommendations

- When EU funding is involved there is always an extra push to ensure the money is spent to maximise added value.

## Context

The sheep farm was owned by the beneficiary's father who was a 59 years old farmer close to retirement. The farm produced cheese that was sold on the farm's gate and there was very limited marketing. The farm also lacked adequate milking infrastructure and hence excessive time was spent on milking the sheep. The lack of specialised equipment for processing the milk also meant that the farm produced small volumes of cheese and consequently had only a small profit. An investment was crucial in order to provide the farm with the necessary capital to modernise and re-invent itself under the new management (the young farmer).

## Objectives

The objective of this project was to enable the farm to become more efficient, profitable and competitive in today's market. This would be achieved through the modernisation of the production process, the investment in quality production and the creation of innovative products.

## Activities

The RDP support was used to acquire new machinery and equipment; install solar panels to generate renewable energy; set up a farm shop; carry out lab tests to improve the nutritional value of its products; and invest in new marketing methods to increase the profitability of the farm.

## Main results

The goal is to increase the farm's production by 300% within three years.

The processing room has now been completed. With the completion of the processing room the farm can now handle a larger quantity of milk and produce cheese of higher quality.

The new processing room also allows the creation of newer products such as their renowned sheep's milk ice cream. The farm is now the first local business to produce this product in the country.

The farm shop has been partially completed and is now open to the public. The beneficiary is selling directly to the public in a more formal and customer friendly setting. This

will attract customers who are interested in buying genuine local products directly from the farmer. Customers also have the opportunity to see the cheese making process while they shop.



The beneficiary is currently in the process of designing the new milking parlour which will be able to increase the efficiency of milking the sheep. This will make the farm much more efficient since it will reduce milking times and allow for time spent on other activities.

Research is currently being carried out to procure an electric generator. This is of vital importance since if there is a sudden loss of electricity this would cost the farmer significant product losses. The beneficiary is currently consulting with an engineer to ensure that he gets the right generator to suit the farm's needs.

The farmer will also soon be installing the solar panels to reduce the farm's CO2 carbon footprint. He also plans to attend training abroad on specialised cheese manufacturing.

## Main lessons

The beneficiary is committed to a 'think twice spend wise' mindset. He does not just buy any piece of machinery or product. He carries out meticulous research beforehand to make sure that he will get the correct item to suit his needs. This is an important lesson stemming up from using EU funds, where there is always a push to ensure the money is spent to add maximum value.

*"We attended training overseas at a Gelato University in Italy, and now we are producing sheep milk ice-cream, a product rarely found around the world. We are working hard to have a farm which maintains tradition but makes full use of today's technology."*

Joseph Agius

## Additional sources of information

[www.facebook.com/tkf.mt/?tn-str=k\\*F](https://www.facebook.com/tkf.mt/?tn-str=k*F)

<https://lovinmalta.com/news/their-farm-failing-this-maltese-family-started-making-sheep-milk-ice-cream-and-now-business-is-booming/>