

NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK FOR MALTA NEWSLETTER

9TH EDITION, MAY 2014

NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK

Ministry for European Affairs and the
Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto

Managing Authority
Funds and Programmes Division
Triq il-Kukkanja, St Venera, Malta
Tel: 00356 2200 1059
Email: rdd.meaim@gov.mt
Web site: www.eufunds.gov.mt

Dear Readers,

In this 9th edition of the NRN Malta newsletter we have brought to you the most recent, and significant events connected to the rural sector. Among these are the migration of the Managing Authority to the Ministry for European Affairs and the Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto, the launch of the Common Agricultural Policy reform, the launch of the food quality regime together with other interesting features.

Despite the size of our nation or maybe all the more because of it, there is much to discover and appreciate about agriculture and our rural communities and we hope to play a part in this.

We are also striving to bring about communication between all stakeholders as well as introducing tools and entities both on a local and EU level which can assist this process.

Network Support Unit

rdd.meaim@gov.mt



IN THIS ISSUE

Investing in our Rural Communities, Environment and Quality of Life.....	2
Launch of the Common Agricultural Policy Reform.....	3
Setting up a Food Quality Regime for Agricultural Products in Malta	4
Horizon 2020: over €79 billion for Research in Science and Technology	5
Launch of MaYA.....	5
The European Innovation Partnership: AGRI Promoting Innovation in Agriculture.....	6
RDP 2007-2013: Project Postcard	7
Young Farmers- Understanding the Landscape's Important Custodians....	8
The First LEADER Trans-National Co-Operation Project for Malta.....	9



Investing in our Rural Communities, Environment and Quality of Life

In order to strengthen and improve the governance and management of EU funds, the Managing Authority for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) has been integrated as part of the Funds and Programmes Division within the Ministry for European Affairs and the Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto (MEAIM) as of April 2014.

This decision was driven by the need to create better and stronger synergies at National level whilst seeking to achieve more effective and efficient use of the variety of EU funding programmes that Malta is benefiting from.

A package of 138 Million Euros was negotiated successfully under the new CAP out of which 132 Million Euros make up the share for rural development. Careful attention will be paid to ensure that the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme addresses specific needs of the Maltese and Gozitan rural territories and communities as we believe in safeguarding the environment and the countryside, valorise agriculture and farming, support locally based

approaches like LEADER, improve the quality of life and the development and growth of the rural economy.

This programme will see a wide range of stakeholders and proposals being supported ranging from, training, farm modernisation, research and innovation initiatives, investment in social capital, culture and rural heritage preservation and the diversification of rural products and services amongst many more. Farmers, Agro-Processors, Local Councils, NGOs, Local Action Groups, SME's and all those with innovative projects in the rural sector are all set to benefit.

For this reason we encourage all those with valid ideas and projects to seek support on how to make the best use of these funds so that we make sure that our rural areas are preserved and developed in the most sustainable ways possible.

Hon Dr Ian Borg

Parliamentary Secretary for
the EU Presidency 2017 and the EU Funds

Launch of the Common Agricultural Policy Reform

On the 25th February 2014, an information session was held at Dar l-Ewropa by the European Commission Representation in Malta, to present the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to Maltese stakeholders. The Green Team Ambassador from DG AGRI, Dr Leonard Mizzi, together with his colleagues Ms Peggy Dieryckxvisschers and Mr Roland Feral gave a presentation on the reform of the CAP to an audience of some 60 participants including representatives of the main agricultural cooperatives and producer organisations, agri processors, farmers, breeders, ministry officials and academics.

Mr. Mizzi spoke about the process leading to the CAP reform . The new CAP 2014-2020 retains most of the essential objectives and approaches



proposed by the Commission although with a lower budget than proposed. However the share of the CAP still constitutes 37.8% of the EU budget for the period 2014-2020 which clearly showed continued strong support for an ambitious agricultural policy. He then spoke about the challenges and objectives of the new policy and finally about the key issues for Malta vis a vis the new CAP whilst outlining the status of negotiations with the Maltese Authorities.

Commission officials Mr. Roland Feral then spoke about the new design of the direct payments in the new CAP aimed at achieving a fairer distribution and better targeting of support whilst enhancing the overall environmental performance of the CAP. Mrs Peggy Dieryckxvisschers spoke about the new framework of the rural development policy which as in past years will be implemented through national rural development programmes which set out the actions to be undertaken and their funding allocations for a 7 year period. The reform aims to improve the policy by strengthening its strategic approach as well as the common objectives and interactions between the two pillars leading to a more effective rural development policy.

The presentaion was followed by a debate between the Commission Officials and the participants on various issues mainly young farmers, the

By EU Commission Representation in Malta

challenges for Maltese agriculture, the need for innovation and research and renewed focus on quality products.

ec.europa.eu

www.facebook.com/EuropeanCommission



by Marco Dimech

Setting up a Food Quality Regime for Agricultural Products in Malta

From both a consumer and a farmer perspective, trust is seen as an important factor in ensuring and identifying quality products. In order to be in a position to guarantee and identify quality on the market, the Agricultural Directorate is in the process of setting up a food quality regime that will allow the Directorate to guarantee good, genuine, quality food identifiable through an approved quality mark.

The quality mark is set to bring a set of benefit to producers, consumers and also intermediate actors in the food supply chain. It envisages an increase in market access, market share and better profit margins for the producers of certified products, a reliable and trustworthy information on product and process attributes to the consumers and an assurance to intermediate actors in the food supply chain, by assuring standards and reputation for product and label claims.

This quality regime is being built by the Agricultural Directorate within the Parliamentary Secretariat for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal

Rights in collaboration with the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari which is part of CIHEAM. This collaboration was launched on the 24th of February 2014 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two entities following a seminar on the quality policy for agricultural products in Malta.

The setting up of a food quality regime to enable the certification of quality is the foundation for the establishment of a trustworthy National Food Quality Mark. The quality regime envisages the setting up of three major tools that will have the aim to safeguard the trustworthiness of the quality mark. The three tools will consist of a legal framework that defines the quality regime, technical specification for the production of quality products and a sound control system.

Certification of products will lead to added costs to the producer that intends on adopting to the quality regime and obtain recognition of the quality mark. Funds will be allocated in the new rural development plan 2014-2020 to support farmers recover these costs.



Horizon 2020: over €79 billion for Research in Science and Technology

by Denise Bartolo
Horizon 2020 National Contact Point

Making the best of our biological resources in a sustainable and innovative way contributes to securing sufficient supplies of safe, healthy and high quality food and other bio-based products. This also accelerates the transition to a sustainable European bio-economy, bridging the gap between new technologies and their implementation. This can be made possible through **Horizon 2020**, the world's largest funding programme for research, for which the Malta Council for Science and Technology is the official National Contact Point (NCP) Organisation. With a budget of over €79 billion, Horizon 2020 offers the opportunity to all local researchers, companies, organisations and individuals to tap into these funds with the aim of boosting future growth and jobs.

The objective of Horizon 2020 is to ensure that Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together through networking and collaboration actions in delivering innovation.

More jobs, improved lives and better societies

Horizon 2020 opens the doors to funding for all areas of research. Successful project proposals most often require a consortium made up of participants from various member states and associated countries with a stronger focus on the development of innovative solutions, and a market driven approach to responding to societal challenges.

MCST can provide support to participate in Horizon 2020 by assisting you in finding the right topic to fit your research idea, to help you find project partners and to guide you in the actual submission of your proposal. The Calls for Horizon 2020 were launched in December 2013 along with their respective 2 year Work Programme in which one can find all the topics and deadlines for submission.

MCST can be contacted on
h2020.mcst@gov.mt or on 2166 0340



Launch of MaYA

The Malta Youth in Agriculture Foundation (MaYA) was launched on the 30th of March of 2014 at the Limestone Heritage Park and Gardens in Siġġiewi.

The founder of the foundation Ms Jeanette Borg introduced the administrators Mr. John Gauci, a horticulture student and Mr. Karl Scerri, a poultry farmer who spoke about the objectives of the foundation in relation to young farmers, marketing and legislation, local sustainable agriculture, communication among stakeholders and Maltese quality agricultural products. The Hon. Roderick Galdes, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights gave the closing speech.

For more information about MaYA kindly contact Jeanette Borg on 7900 0143 or info@maya.org.mt

The European Innovation Partnership: AGRI Promoting Innovation in Agriculture

The European Agricultural Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) has been set up as a new way of helping the agricultural and forestry sector to become more productive, sustainable and capable of tackling current challenges such as fiercer competition, more volatile market prices, climate change and stricter environmental rules.

The EIP-AGRI focuses on forming partnerships and linking the different actors in the EIP-AGRI network through different types of innovation actions such as Operational Groups and Focus Groups. Different actors within innovation and agriculture – farmers, advisors, researchers, agribusinesses, NGOs and other actors – will work together, share their ideas and turn existing knowledge into innovative solutions and research results that can more easily be put into practice. By joining forces, everyone involved will achieve results more quickly. The EIP-AGRI will help spread all important new and existing knowledge on innovation and agriculture throughout the EU.

Funding Opportunities, Boosting Agricultural Innovation

Having an innovative idea is one thing, turning it into reality is another. There are different types of funding available that can help get a project started such as under the Rural Development programmes or under the EU research and innovation policy Horizon 2020.

EIP-AGRI and Rural Development

It is the EU member states or regions who decide how to support innovation projects through their Rural Development Programmes. They may provide funding to set up Operational Groups working on pilot projects, developing new products, cooperating among small operators, promoting activities etc. Rural Development Programmes can also offer project support for knowledge transfer, advisory services, investments and establishing networks and funding of Innovation Support Services. Each member state (or in some countries, region) decides if the support would need to prioritise certain issues, areas of action or specific groups of actors. However, all Operational Groups in the EU must contribute to a productive and sustainable agricultural sector.

Answering your questions

The EIP-AGRI Service Point invites all those interested in agricultural innovation to get in touch and see how they can be of service. They are available to provide information on questions such as funding opportunities, upcoming events organised by the EIP-AGRI, information on Operational Groups and many other issues related to the EIP-AGRI.

PARTICIPATING IN



eip-agri

AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

funded by



You can reach EIP-AGRI at their office:

EIP-AGRI Service Point
Avenue du Toison d'Or 72
1060 Brussels, Belgium
By telephone: +32 2 543 73 48
By email: servicepoint@eip-agri.eu

Through their website:
<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eip>

RDP 2007-2013 Project Postcard

Measure 121

Modernisation of agricultural holdings

Beneficiary: Ta' Mena Agri Limited

Sector: Rural Tourism



Aim: Through several projects under measure 123, Ta' Mena set up a state of the art winery, cellars, olive press and a facility to produce liqueurs.

Background: The Ta Mena Food and Beverages Complex is set up in the Xewkija Industrial Estate. Presently it produces around 150,000 bottles of wine, traditional preserved foods like tomato paste, sundried tomatoes, olives, jams, capers, and syrups. Ta' Mena also produces various liqueurs and cold pressed extra virgin olive oil. Most of this produce is sold in our estate -Ta Mena Estate which is the first agri-tourism complex on the Maltese Islands.

Ta' Mena also organized agri tourism events at their estate where they are promoting the local produce and Gozitan traditional foods and beverages which are becoming very popular with both Maltese and tourists.

Investments: Refrigeration system, Winery and Production of olive oil, machinery to produce liquors and machinery to produce jams and other typical products.

Results:

Future Plans: Ta' Mena would like to continue enlarging this project. Very soon they will be inaugurating the new wine underground cellars and the food production areas where their guests will be visiting the premises to experience all the processes in food, olive oil and wine productions.



Young Farmers- Understanding the Landscape's Important Custodians

By Malcolm Borg

Youth nowadays have shaped a Mount Olympus made up of their aspirations to have a glamorous career the carrots that pull them through bleakness and hardship

The young people who till the land would consider careers based on money, power and status superfluous for they know and accept that those three goals would not come in abundance by sowing lettuce seeds or milking a cow. Their hardship is seen off by something different and less elaborate. For although a good price for their produce is an important incentive, the nurturing and care of the living creatures in his/her care are the thrust that pushes them on in their back-breaking work.

In this era of whizzing and frantic speed, where the cities' hustling meets the household bustling, the young people are riding this wave. The young farmer looks at all of this with perplexity. For although agriculture has also benefited from this networking and connection (from more trade opportunities to GPS-driven tractors and much more) the young farmer chooses to give up most of this and spend day after day with little or no company. Instead, s/he chooses to partake in the discourse of the natural environment, tending and caring for the living creatures that rely on his/her serene passion for their existence.

The truism that the hard way is the satisfactory way is nowhere more blatant than in farming. The young farmer might have graduated from College or University but then drives to his farm and finds a blank canvas. He can create anything. And the art he has to master is somewhere between biology, chemistry, physics, engineering, accountancy, entrepreneurship, marketing and business management. The painting brushes are very hard manual work, patience, care, long hours and the acceptance of the fact that if a freak storm hits the farm overnight and tears everything apart, he has to pick himself up and start from scratch.

The choice of becoming a young farmer is bold and sometimes, downright crazy. Perhaps the qualities of our younger generation are changing, their traits are becoming more contemporary, their lifestyles galvanized in speed and modernity. But among us is a very small group of youth who are somewhat different from their peers. They are emboldened by a lifestyle of pacey serenity, of passionate nurturing, of admirable work ethic and of a kind understanding that they are the custodians of our landscape and our food.



The First LEADER Trans-National Co-Operation Project for Malta

Measure 421 – MeDIETerranea

Working together towards a sustainable use of Local Products

The Majjistral Action Group Foundation in collaboration with other Local Action Groups from Malta and Italy is implementing the 'MeDIETerranea' project. The aim of the project is to promote the Mediterranean Diet as a source of healthy food and an essential part of the cultural identity of the people of the Mediterranean. This project aims also to create more awareness about the heritage of each respective territory.

The lack of commercial relations between producers that provide the product mix on which the Mediterranean diet is based, and local tour operators as well as the lack of promotion of agro-food, local food, and products of a cultural heritage such as crafts, has prompted 9 Mediterranean Local Action Groups from Italy and Malta to join forces in 2012 in order to enable this project to take place. Project 'MeDIETerranea' aims to bring together producers and tourism operators to provide a better understanding of the local products and produce and enable them to jointly provide a better supply to the many consumers who nowadays seek "quality" genuine products. The project aims to encourage a more "sustainable" way to visit the territories, where tourists can see and taste the traditional

products and thus enhance the purchase and the knowledge of traditional production processes.

One of the recent activities organised within this project was the Simposio delle Identità Rurali Europee festival in Sardinia. All the Local Action groups worked jointly to bring together operators and producers from their respective territories to interact and share methodologies, techniques and common practices so as to build their capacity. In February 2014 Majjistral Action Group Foundation launched a call for interested operators from pre-selected sectors to participate in this Festival which took place between the 8th and 10th May 2014. Eight operators coming from agricultural, tourism and crafts sectors were chosen to showcase their products and promote them whilst increasing awareness about the territory's



heritage and way of living. MAGF also organised tasting activities and workshops with the help of a local chef who prepared local dishes of a high nutritional value which were savoured during the festival.

As part of this project, MAGF also launched a competition for children residing in the Majjistral territory to write an article about 'L-ikel bhala identita' taghna'- Food as our identity. All winning articles from all the territories involved were published in a book for children promoting the use of local products. The winner of this competition from the Majjistral territory was seven year old Aaron Cassar who accompanied the delegation of MAGF to the festival and participated in the launch of the publication.

Please note our new contact details



LINK WITH OUR EUROPEAN COUNTERPARTS

European Network for Rural Development (ENRD):
enrd.ec.europa.eu



SPREAD THE WORD

Inform and encourage other stakeholders to be added to our mailing list by sending us an email on:
rdd.meaim@gov.mt



MAKE A LINK TO THE MA WEBSITE ON YOUR OWN WEBSITE.

www.eufunds.gov.mt



LET US KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO

Send us information about relevant news, campaigns and initiatives within your organisation, area or region to be promoted on our website.



DO YOU HAVE ANY FEEDBACK OR SUGGESTIONS?

The NRN newsletter team looks forward to receiving feedback and suggestions as to continue improving this publication.
Send us an email on:
rdd.meaim@gov.mt



Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007 – 2013
Newsletter co-financed through Technical Assistance
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
Co-financing Rate: 75% European Union, 25% Government of Malta
Europe Investing in Rural Areas

