

National Rural Network Malta

newsletter

5th Edition
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Dear All,

Welcome to the fifth edition of the NRN Malta newsletter! One of the objectives of the National Rural Network Malta is to provide information on the rural development policy, particularly its benefits to rural stakeholders and the general public.

The fifth issue of the NRN newsletter takes a different dimension from previous newsletters which usually focused on particular sectors. 3 case studies have been selected to give an overview of successful projects part-financed through the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013. Whereas the case studies start off with a description of the investment undertaken by the respective farmers, the crux lies on the training and information activities undertaken through Measure 111 of the RDP 2007-2013.

A synopsis of the activities held in the last quarter since the publication of the fourth newsletter shall be provided along with a highlight of the planned activities and events during the 4th quarter of 2012.

We strongly encourage you to read the National Rural Network newsletter. Any feedback on the case studies in question or on any other topic relevant to the National Rural Network Malta would be appreciated.

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Measure 111 – Training, Information and Diffusion of Knowledge

An Overview:

Training, information and diffusion of knowledge are the life-blood for the evolution and specialisation of any sector, including the agriculture and agro-food sectors.

Individuals working in agriculture necessitate the provision of training on the basic skills required to run their business activity in a profitable manner, to be kept informed about recent developments in the sector, to be made aware of developments in new regulations and to become knowledgeable about practices that respect the environment.

The Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 sought to fill this void, through Measure 111 - 'Training, Information and Diffusion of Knowledge'. The main aim of this measure is to provide the opportunity and the means for farmers involved in the local production of fruit and vegetables as well as in the production of animal products and individuals having a regulatory role in agriculture, to be trained and to improve their skills, thus meeting the challenges that result from the new standards and demands of the rural economy.

Measure 111 was initially rolled out in November 2010, with a noteworthy track-record of participation. Following a public call, three entities were approved by the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs to officially provide training to farmers and live-stock breeders around Malta and Gozo. These include; The Milk Producers Cooperative (KPH), The Farmers Association (ATB) and the Malta Organic Agricultural Movement (MOAM).

Altogether, over 3,370 farmers/live-stock breeders attended training courses offered through the first call of Measure 111. More people are expected to attend further courses through the second Call of Measure 111 launched in 2012. Moreover, the second call offers a broader range of courses; 8 more courses compared to the first call which offered 6 courses.

The training being made available relates to the following themes; fruit and vegetables, dairy, nitrates, rubble wall construction, crisis management, traditional products, commercial rabbit farming, young farmers, adding value to agricultural products, business management, health and safety of agricultural holdings, the role of women in agriculture and adherence to agri-environmental obligations.



The Benefits stemming from the Measure

1. Farmers, live-stock breeders and other eligible beneficiaries do not have to fork out any money to receive this training.
2. The courses offered are practical oriented, allowing participants to apply the knowledge and skills gained within their everyday working environment.
3. The training is tailored to the unique and specific conditions of Malta.
4. Training through Measure 111 equips beneficiaries with the right skills and attitudes to remain well in-tune with any developments in the sector.

**“Over 3,370
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Case Study 1

Joseph-Mary Farrugia Dairy Sector

"No matter how much you know, you never know enough. We may know the practical aspect thoroughly, but theory is critical too"

Joseph-Mary Farrugia is a young live-stock breeder operating in the dairy sector who has been investing significantly in modernising his farm to retain competitiveness, improve product quality and animal welfare. He was awarded funds under Measure 121 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 for the purchasing and installation of an automated milking system (milking robot) along with the necessary I.T infrastructure that indicates abnormalities in the milk and keeps track of herd records. Moreover, cow cages and brushes to improve herd healthcare were also part of the investment. The laying of concrete flooring prevents seepage of nitrates in the water table.

Following this investment, Mr. Farrugia attended over 37 hours of training directly related to his line of operation, wholly financed through Measure 111 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. This training was provided by the Milk Producers Cooperative (KPH) :- a service provider officially recognised by MRRRA.

The knowledge acquired includes general principles of dairy farm management and basic skills in business management, adherence to Cross Compliance requirements, principles of rearing dairy herd replacements, feeding and phases of feeding, nutrition and metabolic diseases, breeding and selection of breeding stock, principles of hygienic milk production, symptoms and control of Mastitis, farm housing & environment and Farm Assurance Scheme.

As Mr. Farrugia himself remarked, this training proved highly valuable in safeguarding the competitiveness of his dairy farm. . Despite the fact that he has been operating a dairy farm for many years and knows the practical aspect thoroughly, the theoretical element is essential too.



Case Study 2

Oliver John Briffa *Pork/Poultry Sectors*

Oliver John Briffa is a pro-active pork and poultry producer who like many others benefited through a number of measures under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 including Measure 121 - 'Modernisation of Agricultural Holdings' and Measure 111 - 'Training, Information and Diffusion of Knowledge'.

To improve farm performance and viability, Mr. Briffa's investment consisted of roofing of an existing yard leading to better water catchment and protection of the water table, building of a ventilated basement store, extension and upgrading of existing poultry sheds to increase economies of scale and improve animal welfare. In addition, Mr. Briffa sought to use alternative sources of energy, energy conservation and reduce water extraction through the installation of photovoltaic panels, roof and wall insulation and a water reservoir respectively. Mr. Briffa benefited from 36 hours of free training specifically on the pork sector, offered by the Farmers Association (ATB).

Mr. Briffa benefited from 36 hours of free training specifically on the pork sector, offered by the Farmers Association (ATB). The training offered helped this live-stock breeder adhering to Cross Compliance requirements and in familiarising himself with the importance of appropriate record keeping, general principles of pig farm management, replacement frequency and rearing, feeding and phases of feeding, breeding and selection of breeding stock, herd health through vaccination Programs and common diseases, farm environment and also basic skills for running one's own business.

From his testimony, Mr. Briffa found the course highly valuable and relevant, particularly the sessions on pork breeding, feeds and disease prevention. Indeed, following the course, Mr. Briffa adjusted the feeds according to the different stages in a pig's lifetime for better pork nutrition. This in turn, is resulting in higher quality pork to local consumers.

"The more you learn about your work, the better if you want to specialise."



Case Study 3

Joseph Muscat *Fruit and Vegetables Sector*

"The knowledge acquired through the training I received helped me in water conservation."

Joseph Muscat is an entrepreneurial farmer in the fruit and vegetable sector who invested in a revolutionary machine for soil sterilisation through Measure 121, allowing for crop production of a higher quality.

Subsequently, Mr. Muscat attended 36 hours of training organised by ATB which was specifically focused on the fruit and vegetable sector. Apart from learning the standard Cross Compliance requirements and basic business management skills, this farmer had the opportunity to familiarise himself more with the Nitrates Directive and how to adequately implement a Fertilizer Plan. Moreover, training leading to the professional use of plant production products, good environmental and agricultural practices and a guide to organic farming was provided. Contemporary training on quality assurance, the use of efficient production methods and the use of information technologies was also part of the course.

Mr. Muscat stressed that the lectures attended through Measure 111 were highly practical and useful for his agricultural holding. Following the course, he sought to put what he learnt into practice by importing compost and mixing it with soil in order to reduce the volume of water required, thereby maximising the efficiency of a scarce resource.



NRN Activities

in the 3rd quarter 2012

The Maltese NRN is particularly instrumental in promoting the RDP Axis and Measures. NRNM played an important role in the setting up and the development of the Leader approach in Malta. It is continuously working to involve and include the participation of all rural actors and stakeholders on horizontal thematic areas.

NRN Committee Meeting

10th July 2012, Birdpark Malta



Press Release: Site visit on Dingli Measure 313 project to attract tourism in rural areas.

26th September 2012

The Hon. George Pullicino, Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs accompanied by Paolo de Castro, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development visit agricultural fields in Dingli demonstrating the challenges posed by the geo-physical features of the terrain in the Maltese islands.

Moreover, De Castro also visited the heritage trail project being implemented by Dingli Local Council under Axis 3, Measure 313 to attract more tourism in rural areas. Through this heritage trail, tourists and locals alike can cherish the beauty of Dingli Cliffs and its surroundings.



The Mediterranean Agricultural Fair

On the occasion of the 9th Meeting of CIHEAM Ministers of Agriculture and the 50th Anniversary of CIHEAM

26th September 2012

Distribution of promotional material published by the Managing Authority and National Rural Network.



NRNM is constantly working in parallel with DG AGRI and ENRD. Throughout the year NRNM organises Steering Committee and Coordination Committee meetings to discuss the current situation of Rural Development in Malta and ways forward for the agricultural sector. NRNM representatives also attend and participate in NRN meetings organised by the different Member States.

NRN Activities in the 3rd quarter 2012

Participation in TV Programmes

Mad-Daqqa t'Ghajn on ONE TV



Transmission of an informative feature on the thematic areas and focus groups being organised by the Managing Authority and the National Rural Network Malta for the preparation of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020.

Date: Sunday 16th September 2012.

Other than specific features on the National Rural Network, a number of features were sponsored on several projects being implemented or measures launched through the RDP 2007-2013. These inter alia include; interviews with beneficiaries of Measure 111 - Training, Information and Diffusion of Knowledge, a feature on the LEADER Programme, features on investments undertaken by beneficiaries within the dairy, pork, poultry and crops sector through Measure 121 - Modernisation of Agricultural Holdings. Moreover, the projects being implemented by the Local Councils and the Restoration Unit within the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs under Axis 3 of the RDP 2007-2013 were also promoted.

Participation in Casal Fornaro Festival

Dates: 21st and 22nd September 2012

The Managing Authority and National Rural Network set up a stand and its representatives distributed leaflets on RDP projects, measures and CAP-related information. Moreover, various general queries on opportunities for rural development funding were also answered. The DVD played during the event provided footage on the role of the NRNM and the consultation process that is being undertaken till March 2013.

A detailed article was also written on the future of agriculture post 2013 and the role of the National Rural Network. This article featured in a booklet distributed to thousands of people who flocked the Casal Fornaro Festival, Qormi.



The launching of the Second Call of Measure 111 - "Training, Information and Diffusion of Knowledge"

An expression of interest was re-issued for training service providers to submit their application by 14th September 2012. Once these service providers are selected by the Managing Authority, farmers and live-stock breeders could undergo training provided to them free of charge.

NRN Activities in the 3rd quarter 2012

Thematic Focus Groups NRNM Consultation Process

The first focus group was held for each of the 6 themes as shown hereunder. Rural stakeholders who registered for these focus groups actively participated in the discussions and already highlighted certain vital issues worth considering for the new programming period.

- Theme 1 Increasing returns to the fresh produce sector and improving efficient input use. Focus Group held on 6th September 2012
- Theme 2 Improving the long term sustainability of the livestock sector in Malta. Focus Group held on 6th September 2012
- Theme 3 Food processing and adding value. Focus Group held on 4th October 2012
- Theme 4 Direct Sales of Fresh Produce. Focus Group held on 6th September 2012
- Theme 5 Making a high quality rural visitor experience. Focus Group held on 6th September 2012
- Theme 6 Enhancing the landscape and adapting to future water challenges. Focus Group held on 6th September 2012.



Participation of the Managing Authority together with Gozo Action Group in Naturalmet Malti - Tomatoes Festival, Gozo

11-12th August 2012

Publications were distributed to rural stakeholders and the general public present during the festival. Managing Authority and Gozo Action Group representatives who were manning the stand provided information to rural stakeholders on actions within the RDP 2007-2013.



Upcoming Events

NRN Committee Meeting

30th October 2012, Birdpark Malta

Providing an overview of the discussions taking place during the working groups.

Continuation of working group meetings for the preparation of the drafting process of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

1 meeting for each of the six themes every month. Any interested stakeholders can participate in these working group meetings by contacting the Managing Authority to provide further details.

The re-launch of Measures

In the coming months, farmers/Live-stock breeders can register for training courses provided to them for free.

Managing Authority participation in the Almonds Festival

10th November, 19.00-00.00hrs
11th November, 8.00-14.00hrs
Sliema (near Sacro Cuor Church)

Link with our European Counterparts:

European Network for Rural Development (ENRD):

<http://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.mrra@gov.mt

Make a link to the MA website on your own website.

www.mrra.gov.mt/ma

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 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.mrra@gov.mt

Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007 – 2013



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