

Summary

PSYHANTHOS engages in the cultivation, processing and trade of products, byproducts and derivatives of mainly commercial and traditional pulse varieties, as well as the integrated management vegetables and cereals, intended for human consumption. It further aims at engaging in the production and trade of traditional seeds. Its operation is based on the active participation of its members; the members meet almost on a weekly basis, in order to discuss and immediately resolve the issues that arise. The Cooperative currently has 16 members, farmers who also manage land plots of 30 non-farmers. The average size of the cultivated land for each member is 20 ha (12-50 ha). The Development Agency of Karditsa (ANKA S.A.) and the National Agricultural Research Foundation (NAGREF) contribute in the project.



Drivers

The Cooperative aims at creating a production and trade network that will ensure sustainable production and trade conditions for producers and better prices and high quality products for consumers.

Innovative points

At a technical level, the challenge consists of the experimental procedure for the adaptation of the varieties to the microclimate conditions of each region. However, the main challenge concerns the attraction of new members and the development of the cooperative spirit, given that a decision is taken only if the attendants reach consensus; in parallel, each of the members may act as the coops' president, at any time. The ultimate goal of the effort is to achieve sustainability at all levels.

Timeline- Activities and Results

The idea was put forward in March 2013; discussions were repeated in Sept 2013 and the Cooperative was founded in November 2014. Its first production was harvested in the summer of 2015. Its members were intended to buy a warehouse in the summer 2015 but the implementation of their plan was delayed due to the imposition of the capital controls in Greece. Nowadays, the coop standardizes and stores its products in rented establishments in Larissa area, while it is on a search for a second warehouse in Karditsa area. Meanwhile, its members intend to put together an investment proposal in the new Leader Programme which is expected to be launched around September 2016.

* The word for legumes in Greek is Psychanthes= flower like a butterfly (psyche); see also Papilionaceae.



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