



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 28

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The adventurous dissemination process of avocado in Crete, Greece

The cultivation of avocado in Chania, Crete, initially attracted the scientific interest in 1968, when the Institute of Olive tree, Subtropical Plants and Viticulture established an experimental plantation. In 1974 the first commercial plantations were established in the area and during the decade 1985-1995 a project aiming at spreading the cultivation took place in the framework of the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes. The project did not bear fruits as only 11% of its original target was reached, since olive and citrus growers were reluctant to abandon traditional and profitable cultivations to adopt a new one whose demand was low. This situation started changing in 2008 due to the decreasing or even collapsing prices in the olive oil and oranges markets and the increasing demand for avocado globally. This triggered an explosion in demand for locally well-adapted varieties of high marketability as well as for healthy propagation material. Estimations refer to a rapid expansion of cultivated areas - especially over the last 3-4 years (80,000-100,000 new trees per year) - expecting to cover an area of more than 1,000 ha (more than double in comparison to the 450 ha in 2000). Therefore, farmers actively seek guidance and advice from public services and private sector agronomists, mainly through their personal networks. In this process, they have to overcome poor organization and coordination of actions related to the production and dissemination of reliable knowledge tailored to their needs. Nevertheless, farmers massively adopt the new cultivation even in marginal areas, thus challenging the established AKIS actors as far as their adaptability and responsiveness to such needs is concerned.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In Chania various actors have been trying to support avocado growers and enhance producers' knowledge but with dubious results. The main collective activity of the key advice suppliers is their engagement in an informal working group aiming at promoting proposals, which the regional government is called to endorse. However, this activity has not yet produced significant results for avocado growers partly owing to its non-formal status.

More info at: (<https://www.agrilink2020.eu>).



ABOUT AGRILINK

Agrilink is a multi-actor project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It brings together 16 partners from 13 countries, including universities, applied research institutes, advisors and consultants from public organisations, private SMEs, a farmer-based organisation and specialists in communication and distance learning.

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