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Agricultural Development

Success Story

Albanian Olive Oil Processor Benefits From an IFDC Agribusiness Project

Throughout history the olive tree has been a symbol of abundance, glory, and peace. Homer called it “liquid gold”; its mystical glow illuminated history. Olive oil has been more than mere food to the people of the Mediterranean; it supposedly has medicinal and magical powers. It is an endless source of fascination and wonder and the fountain of great wealth and power. Olive culture has ancient roots. Olives were first cultivated in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean in the region known as the “fertile crescent” during the fifth century B.C.



Olive culture is not new to Albania, but the production of extra virgin olive oil is new to the country. Two years ago Anastas Gjikondi and other olive oil processors in Albania were told by the skeptics that it might take 10 years to produce extra-virgin olive oil in Albania. However, the skeptics were proven wrong in only 2 years. Supported by IFDC and the Assistance to Albanian Agricultural Trade Associations (AAATA) project during the past 2 years, the Albanian processors and members of the Albanian Alimentary Oil Association (AOA), including Gjikondi, were trained and assisted in country by local and foreign experts and in other countries by participating in study tours.

Gjikondi and his family have operated an olive oil processing company since 1995. The family profited from the 35-year experience of Gjikondi who is a former state employee of olive oil processing. In 2000 this active member of AOA doubled his company’s processing capacity by installing a second line by means of a loan provided through the Albanian Government. The company’s olive oil is sold in bulk to wholesale markets in Tirana. Since 1995 Gjikondi has invested \$550,000 in the business; total storage capacity is 100 tons, and processing capacity of olives is 1,800 kg/day. The IFDC AAATA Project has assisted the company by accomplishing the following:

- Locating equipment suppliers and receiving quotations for the necessary technology;
- Designing and assisting in procurement and installing the equipment;
- Selecting the most profitable products like extra-virgin olive oil;
- Providing information and contacts on raw material supply;
- Finding and procuring packaging materials;
- Conducting market research for livestock feed ingredients and developing a strategy.