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Operational Programme Italy-Malta 2007-2013



IN THIS THIRD NEWSLETTER

*The **Promed**, **T-Cheesimal**, and **Moriso** projects have fostered innovation in the agricultural and food production sector through the valorisation of territorial areas and the preservation of resources and thus will be explored further in this issue. Promed had the protection of our natural habitat and the remunerability of the Italian and Maltese wine production at heart, safeguarding both the ecosystems and the products. And from wine to cheese. T-Cheesimal's objective was, in fact, the scientific study of dairy products obtained by processing raw milk from local animals and their marketing through the creation of a certified quality control system. The Moriso project was geared also towards protecting the environment through the constant monitoring of pollution levels in underground water caused by agricultural activity.*

Three projects, therefore, and three ways of looking after specific territories, safeguarding and developing their productive and economic potential.

>> THE ENVIRONMENT, GO GREEN, AND...WINEGROWING

*on Mediterranean islands: the **PROMED** project*

>> DAIRY PRODUCTS AND "RAW MILK" QUALITY

*a study carried out on Maltese and Sicilian dairy products processed exclusively from raw milk, their suitability through innovative technologies and the creation of a network of quality certified products: the **T-CHEESIMAL** project*

>> UNDERGROUND WATER RESOURCES, LET'S PROTECT THEM

*by monitoring and controlling action to prevent sea-water intrusion and reduce pollutants deriving from agricultural activity in Sicily and Malta: the **MORISO** project*





TO OPTIMIZE the system of vineyards and the correct utilization of grape varieties on Malta and Sicily's smaller islands so as to prevent soil erosion and guarantee the profitability of the system.

PROMED has experimented vine cultivation and developed its wines as a profitable system safeguarding the smaller Sicilian islands and Malta from soil erosion. Following the identification of areas at risk of soil erosion through the analysis of data collected on soil use, weather patterns, and on-site surveys, the design partnership identified Si-

cilian and Maltese areas where different vineyards were planted according to the best growing conditions. This survey was carried out over the whole islands of Linosa and Lampedusa and a large part of Malta. Following the on-site surveys, wine-making trials were carried out at the *Dalmasso winery* at Marsala (TP) as well as directly by chosen wine producers who both made and bottled the **PROMED** wines (see box). The results deriving from the implementation of a Territorial Information System in the Linosa, Pantelleria and Malta islands has allowed the definition of wine-producing protocols, one of which has already been recognized by MIPAAF, the Ministry for Agricultural, Food, and Forestry Policy, that guarantees system profitability. The project has also created a Maltese experimental research centre at Buskett, where the personnel has

been trained in the use of the latest technical protocols in the cultivation of the vines and the transformation of the grapes according to the methodologies experimented by the project. The project also exposed many Maltese local wine producers to new technologies which were previously not available and which will certainly contribute towards the wine industry.

THE PARTNERS: Istituto Regionale del Vino e dell'Olio [The Regional Wine and Oil Institute, lead partner]; Centro Studi di Economia Applicata all'Ingegneria; University of Malta - Institute of Earth Systems; Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change Malta; Comune di Lampedusa e Linosa; Comune di Pantelleria; Organizzazzjoni Produtturi Gheneb Ghall-Inbid/Vitimalta.



PROMED WINES

- Cabernet Sauvignon Malta 2011
- Chardonnay Malta 2011
- Gellewza Malta Burmarrad 2011
- Gellewza Malta New Mgarr 2011
- Gellewza Malta Old Mgarr 2011
- GirgentinaMaltaCentroSiggiewi2011
- Girgentina Malta criomacerato New Mgarr 2011
- Girgentina Malta New Mgarr 2011
- Girgentina Malta Old Mgarr 2011
- Merlot Gozo 2011
- Syrah Gozo 2011
- Syrah Malta 2011
- Syrah Malta Nord (high vigor) 2011
- Syrah Malta Sud 2011
- Syrah Malta Nord (low vigor) 2011
- Vermentino Malta criomacerato 2011
- Vermentino Malta 2011
- Zibibbo Malta 2011
- Zibibbo Linosa Secco 2011
- Zibibbo Linosa Dolce 2011
- Zibibbo Pantelleria 60% 2011
- Zibibbo Pantelleria 70% 2011
- Zibibbo Pantelleria 60% 2011 prova aziendale [trial]
- Zibibbo Pantelleria 70% 2011 prova aziendale [trial]
- Gellewza Malta Rosato 2011
- Blend Girgentina/Chardonnay Malta 2011
- Blend Gellewza Old Mgarr/Burmarrad Malta 2011
- Chardonnay Malta 2012
- Vermentino Malta 2012
- Chardonnay Gozo 2012
- Girgentina Siggiewi 2012
- Autoctono Gozo 2012
- Syrah Sud Malta 2012
- Syrah Malta (high vigor) 2012
- Gellewza Malta Burmarrad 2012
- Rosso Malta Siggiewi 2012
- Gellewza Malta Old Mgarr 2012
- Gellewza Malta New Mgarr 2012
- Girgentina Malta Old Mgarr 2012
- Girgentina Malta New Mgarr 2012
- Zibibbo Linosa secco 2012
- Zibibbo Linosa Dolce 2012



PROMED - Environmental protection on Mediterranean islands through the development of a vine-cultivation system

Web site: www.progettopromed.eu

Lead partner: Lucio Monte - Istituto Regionale del Vino e dell'Olio
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A GREENER FUTURE HAS ALREADY SUNK ITS ROOTS...

The activities of the PROMED project have guaranteed high added value in terms of **environmental and economic benefits** to the whole area of cooperation.

Project results have shown that the innovation of products and processes applied to viticulture, as well as the exchange and the transferral of knowledge, can increase the profitability of growing systems while safeguarding the ecosystem and final product. The project trailed three **innovative wine-making protocols**: two on Linosa, with the first production of Zibibbo, dry and sweet wine types, and one on Pantelleria that allowed a gain in fresh grape must from 60 to 70% with no loss in quality of the final product. The validity of this innovation has been recognized by **entrepreneurs showing interest in investing in viticulture** on Linosa

and by the Food, Agriculture, and Forestry Ministry that has accepted **the Pantelleria protocol within the DOC rules and regulations**. An **experimental winery was set up at Buskett**, Malta, along the lines of the Dalmasso winery at Marsala (TP) which brought about a **transfer of know-how** on methodologies helpful in compiling agronomic data and the sustainable management of the vineyard.

The European Commission recognized the results of the project during a visit to the Dalmasso winery and some vineyards on Pantelleria.

PROMED wines have received acclaim from both the press and buyers at the 2012 and 2013 Vinitaly Expo.

Good European practices for the economic development of the territory.

THE T-CHEESIMAL PROJECT has made the most of rural traditions, innovative technologies, and the transfer of know-how which has allowed the qualification of Sicilian and Maltese dairy products with a high content of biodiversity.

The analysis carried out by the design partnership defined the chemical-physical, aromatic-sensorial, and microbiological parameters for the samples of milk and cheese that distinguish dairy production in the different geographical areas of Malta. In particular CoRFiLaC, with the contribution of the University of Malta, conducted a traceability study that arrived at the specification and evaluation of important nutritional elements in the fodder that are transferred into the milk and thus to the cheeses. At the same time, Malta's territorial analysis allowed the identi-

fication and cataloguing of fodder plants that have effects on the organoleptic characteristics of milk and cheeses, enabling the creation of a herbarium and photographic archive containing an example of each specimen identified, classified and pressed. These results have been achieved thanks to the analysis carried out by CoRFiLaC's technologically advanced Sicilian laboratory which enabled the study of the origins and traceability of the aromatic and olfactory components which demonstrate the considerable territorial influence on the quality of the finished product.

The University of Malta provided information on the Maltese scenario and the farming industry and shared the competence acquired during the research work with the local herdsmen thus ensuring a better informed producer. Maltese consumers, the business sector

and restaurateurs were also informed of the findings through the organization of information days aimed at transferring the technological know-how, and qualitative, sensorial and nutritional information related to the traditional Sicilian and Maltese cheeses. This activity has been accompanied by market research on dairy product labelling conducted by DI.S.P.A. which has created a prototype packaging for typical Maltese and Sicilian cheeses, both on their own or in combination.



T-CHEESIMAL PRODUCTS

- Ġbejna
- Ġbejna Tal-Bżar
- Ricotta
- Iblea
- Provola
- Pecorino Siciliano DOP
- Ragusano DOP

>> T-CHEESIMAL - Traditional Cheeses in Sicily and Malta Islands

Web site:
<http://www.um.edu.mt/projects/tcheesimal>
Lead partner: Everaldo Attard
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A project that improves dairy traditions and spreads quality.



INNOVATION IN RURAL TRADITIONS.



Ph: Lorraine Caruana

Tradition and innovation are two key words that qualify the results of the T-CHEESIMAL project. The initial **component of applied research** allowed the project to develop rural traditions that characterise and qualify Sicilian and Maltese dairy products having a high content of biodiversity and a strong traditional value. The character and identity of "biodiverse characteristics" that render traditional cheeses an economic resource for geographically isolated territories, were the primary aims of researchers from CoRFiLaC – University of Catania and the University of Malta. Thanks to Sicilian know-how, that to date has four legally protected raw-milk cheeses on its territory – identified by the letters DOP – (Pecorino Siciliano DOP, Ragusano DOP, Piacentinu Ennese DOP, and Vastedda della Valle del Belice DOP) the project allowed the **exchange and transfer of the competences** necessary to draft

the first regulations in Malta for the production of Ġbejna DOP cheese. The relevant Maltese ministerial agency has adopted these regulations and is awaiting approval by community organisms. The project has aimed at the **greater involvement of women in agriculture** which, in both Sicily and Malta, has been traditionally dominated by men; the aim is to identify alternative forms of commerce and create associations and consortiums that valorise women's role and allows them to move out of a traditionally restrictive family economy. Lastly, T-CHEESIMAL has focused on aspects of **marketing** with the aim of identifying commercial, promotional, and communicative strategies able to strengthen the typical product of its territory i.e. the Ġbejna cheese in the Maltese market and at the same time open new opportunities for certified Sicilian dairy products.



MONITORING *underground water resources and controlling sea-water intrusion and the reduction of pollution from agricultural activity in the Ragusa-Malta, cross-border area.*

The MORISO project has reconstructed the hydro-geological structure of some aquifers and defined the quality and quantity of underground water resources falling within the Ragusa-Malta, cross-border area, allowing the identification of hydrological basins vulnerable to sea water intrusion and/or contamination caused by agricultural activity. In these basins the partnership began an experimental phase monitoring the underground water. In particular, the monitoring network of aquifers in the Ragusa Province was integrated with another four bore holes sunk in the

Donnalucata area with water samples monitored at monthly intervals. Furthermore, a protocol was underwritten by the Sicilian project partners and the Ragusa Province for the joint management of the underground water monitoring network in the region and a Geographical Information System (GIS) of water resources in the Ragusa Province was implemented.

On the island of Malta the monitoring of aquifers was conducted with one bore-hole analysed every 16 sq km. Furthermore, a simulation model was implemented for the aquifers identified within the areas of study in the Ragusa Province and in Malta. The results of this work also allowed the establishment and definition of agronomic practices aimed at saving water and safeguarding the water tables, courses

of action to prevent salt-water intrusion and contamination of the aquifers, and the evaluation and potential application of small-scale desalination plants of brackish water for irrigation purposes by implementing a prototype desalination plant on Malta. The evaluation of the effects of micro-irrigation of small fruits with brackish water and the involvement of stakeholders (addressees and not) of the project's activity (SOAT, Provinces, Professional guilds, land reclamation consortiums, and schools) was also within the area of intervention through the creation of a web site, as well as seminars and public debates. Provisions were also made for cooperation and the continual and profitable exchange of know-how between the Sicilian and Maltese partners.

At the close of the activity a publication has been planned contain-



THE PARTNERS

Regione Siciliana - Dipartimento Interventi Infrastrutturali per l'Agricoltura (lead partner); Università di Catania - Dipartimento di Gestione dei Sistemi Agroalimentari e Ambientali; Centro Studi di Economia Applicata all'Ingegneria (CSEI - Catania); Agenzia Regionale per la Protezione dell'Ambiente - ARPA Ragusa; Malta Resources Authority; Water Services Corporation.

ing the main results obtained for the sustainable management of water resources and the raising of awareness in saving water in the wider context of safeguarding the environment.

➤➤ **MORISO - Monitoring underground water resources and interventions for controlling sea-water intrusion and for the reduction of pollution caused by agricultural activity.**

Web site:
www.moriso.it

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**A control network
for underground
water resources.**



**"COAST-to-COAST"
POSITIVE RESULTS**



The MORISO project has attained many and meaningful results in the Ragusa-Malta, cross-border area.

Thanks to the project the system of monitoring the aquifers in the Ragusa province has been strengthened through the drilling of specific "spy" bore holes (between Donnalucata and Cava d'Aliga) equipped with sophisticated probes and measuring apparatus. These are connected in a network and allow the quality of the water to be kept under control in the Donnalucata area, benefiting both the environment and the local population whose water supply depends almost exclusively from underground water. On the other Mediterranean shore of the Maltese coastal area involved (where water supply is much

more compromised due to sea-water intrusion in the aquifers) desalination and water treatment plants have been activated at different levels of salinity and their re-use in irrigation plants has been evaluated.

The MORISO project has provided the opportunity of pooling especially Maltese desalination results with Sicilian results, thus significantly contributing to cooperation between the two countries (advantaging both the environment and the populations) and to the better control of water resources and a more conscious use/re-use of these resources as well as identifying agronomic practices aimed at saving resources but also at the creation of an information data bank open to all institutions involved in the management and safeguard of the environment.