

Processing

Large-scale processing was well developed during the Yugoslav centrally-planned period but that infrastructure now lies largely destroyed or under-utilised. What large-scale processing does occur is dependent on imported materials. The main exception is that of Agro Product Commerce of Podejevo that specialises in the processing and export of locally-collected mushrooms.

The Project works on three levels of intervention, ie (i) on-farm processing involving small-scale operations within farming families - mainly by women, (ii) medium-scale processing for example by groups of women or small cooperatives and (iii) linking producers to industrial processing units.

On-farm processing

Small-scale processing carried out by farming families offers considerable potential. All families involved in soft fruit scaling up (numbering over 50) have been trained in jam production with some marketing the product while others limiting its use to the family. Jam production also provides an alternative market if fresh sales prove problematic. A review at the end of 2005 (two years after the first training was given) found that 11 clients produced around 1.6 tonnes – as is detailed in the following table.

Jam Production Data Sheet							
Year	Clients involved	Straw-berry Kg	Rasp-berry Kg	Black-berry kg	Total/ Kg	Price €/Kg	Total value €
2004	3	750	150	200	1,100	2.35	2,585
2005	11	*650	570	410	1,630	2.35	3,830

** The production of strawberry jam declined in 2005 because of vibrant fresh sales.*

Promoting the home production of pickles and ajvar has mainly been done in connection with women's organisations (see below).

Medium-scale processing

The household production of pickles and ajvar is traditional – yet more and more families purchase such products in the market that is dominated by imports. The Project's focus has been placed on encouraging women's associations in improving efficiency and access to the market. At the end of 2007 it will start supporting the establishment of a wholesale company specialising in the sale of women's processed food products. The company will also provide training and testing services to its processing clients.

A small Serbian cooperative near Lipjan was supported in 2007 to extend its processing chain through the co-financing of a parboiler to allow it to dry carrots.

Linking producers to industrial processing

The Project has supported the establishment of a complete processing chain for cultivated as well as collected medicinal and aromatic plants (MAP) in Istog – currently the only one in Kosovo. This has had the direct result of encouraging both the cultivation and collection of MAP. Since the completion of the chain, the area under cultivation and supplied to him has increased from 4 to 12 ha – and the quantities collected increased from 6 to 30 tonnes – and increase equivalent to the provision of 10 full-time jobs.

Negotiations are currently underway (November 2007) with Agro Product Commerce to jointly promote the establishment of extensive raspberry and blackberry cultivation by small producers in the locality around the processing factory in Podejevo in order to supply the raw material for the export of the frozen product.

More information can be found for the period up to 2005 in 'Promoting Horticulture in Kosovo' (annexes pp 43-46).