



UNISECO



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The role of collective efforts in fostering agro-ecological transition in Imathia, Northern Greece

Photo: Y. Iordanidis

Understanding and Improving the Sustainability of Agro-ecological Farming Systems in the EU

POLICY BRIEF

An intensive market-oriented fruit tree farming system comprised of small size farms, in Imathia, Northern Greece.

Organised in Producer Groups, farmers invest on less-to-zero pesticide residues and rational management of natural resources, in order to maintain their position in highly competitive domestic and export markets.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This case study focused on peach production, fresh and for canning. There are approximately 19,000 ha of peach orchards in the area with an average permanent crop area per of around 3.5 ha.

Based on the Socio-Ecological Systems approach adapted for farming, we conducted a Social Network Analysis, Farm Level sustainability assessment and Governance & Policy Assessment engaging farmers, representatives of local Producers' Groups, advisory services, fruit processing industries, the public sector as well as external stakeholders and experts.

Co-operation among farmers and key value chain actors based on trust is essential in order to initiate an agro-ecological transition and overcome barriers.

Hence, organisational forms, initiatives and actions promoting collaboration enhance transition to agro-ecology. Tangible results in practice and support in the form of advice from experts and peer-to-peer information seemed to be crucial for farmers and actors to overcome uncertainties and embrace innovation.

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UNISECO case
study:**

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Peach orchard in the case study area

Photo: Y. Iordanidis

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to promote co-operation among farmers and value chain actors, special emphasis should be given to support collective agrienvironmental measures. Furthermore, multiannual investment plans submitted by Producers' Groups under the market measures line or in the form of collective physical investments in order to facilitate gradual conversion to the new pruning system and selection of appropriate varieties. A "sine qua non" precondition for the success of agro-ecological transition is the provision of evidence based advisory service focusing on the novel practices. Furthermore, the promotion of information and knowledge transfer through exchange among farmers, advisors, scientists and value chain actors through pilot farm visits and peer to peer contacts is essential.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Case study page: <https://uniseco-project.eu/case-study/greece>

The transition of a fruit producing area to sustainability "[story map](#)"

ABOUT UNISECO:

UNISECO is a European research project aiming to develop innovative approaches to enhance the understanding of socio-economic and policy drivers and barriers for further development and implementation of agro-ecological practices in EU farming systems.

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<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/773901>

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