

BOND national thematic workshop

“ Regenerative agriculture as a sustainable model and a new brand in Croatia”

1. Background

The BOND project is funded by the European Union under Horizon 2020, n. 774208, and involves 17 European partners. The aim of the project is to support farmers to cooperate for a common goal to form associations, federations in order to enhance their capacities to learn from each other, exchange reliable information and invest in new institutions that can support the economic, environmental and social development of their communities, territories and society.

In September 25-27, 2019 a national workshop was organized in Križevci, Croatia, on “Regenerative agriculture as a sustainable model and a new brand in Croatia”. The event gathered around 30 people representing the farmer community, Local Action Groups, the faculty of Agriculture, private sector, NGOs and Ministry of Agriculture.

The event was organized by Legacoop Agroalimentare, an Italian Federation of Cooperatives representing the agriculture and food sectors, the Vojakovac Ecological Association, RCTP and EZ. The FAO supported the methodological design of the event and its smooth implementation, and Bruna Tariba, Ivan Štefanić and Nikolina Pokupec were in charge of leading and moderating the event.



2. Objectives

The objectives of the workshop were:

- ✓ discuss and identify different ways of accessing markets for farmers
- ✓ increase awareness on the role and potential of regenerative agriculture and modalities to implement it
- ✓ create an Action Plan for the implementation of regenerative agriculture in the country for future revitalisation of villages

3. Results

Day 1 started with welcome and opening of the workshop by Mr Tihomir Hodak, Director of the technological center in Križevci, RCTP, and by the Legacoop representatives, organizers of the thematic workshop and the partners from Croatia.

The Legacoop representatives highlighted the role of Legacoop in the development of the agrifood sector in Italy and underlined the existence of cooperatives all over the country. Nowadays cooperatives in Italy are small, medium and big enterprises that are able to compete in the market due to a phenomenon of progressive consolidation in the Italian market, a process supported by the Legacoop federation.

Then, Assistant Professor Bruna Tariba introduced the topic of regenerative agriculture as a solution to the existing problem of soil degradation and as a new way to make agriculture more attractive to new generations. Emphasis was given to the fact that regenerative agriculture proposes a new partnership with nature, among communities, for the protection of soils and the protection of biodiversity.

The following session was articulated through interviews with four farmers representing four different production models, both conventional and regenerative (two regenerative, one integrated and one conventional). The example of local producers of beef selling through a beef association was highlighted, as an example of collective action group to access market and be competitive with imported meat. The example of a biodynamic vegetable production was also stressed to show the possibilities of market value for such produce and attractiveness of healthy foods for buyers.

Session 2 was devoted to increasing awareness of farmers on the existing national legislative framework and on the EU one. A representative from the MOA and two representatives from Hungary, KLT, engaged in providing information on similarities and differences between the European legislative framework for farmer development and the Croatian one. The result of the discussion was that the normative framework in Croatia is well developed, however, farmers are not aware of it and the complexity of the language in the texts are usually a barrier to increase knowledge on the regulations and farmers' rights.

Session 3 shared the good examples of collective action from Italy, Norway and Croatia. The experience of the cooperative Torri Superiore from the North of Italy showed the value of a community cooperative, where group work allowed to repopulate and restore a rural area through good planning and willingness to recreate community and wellbeing in an abandoned area. In Norway, the experience of Tine Cooperative underlined the importance of collective action and of the normative framework. Tine cooperatives gathers 98% of milk producers in the country and grants a fixed price, so the producer can rely on the best price for his produce. In addition, the government protects the milk production not allowing importation of foreign milk and dairy products. The Croatian experience of the Association Medimurski štacun pointed out the collective action of local farmers, who supply their produce to a local store, owned collectively and highlighted the importance of a leader, acting as a catalyst for the action of the group.

Day 1 concluded with an exercise on the analysis of needs, challenges and options in relation to three questions :

- ✓ How to develop communities that are connected beyond the material interests?
- ✓ How legislation can support and empower farmers and their organizations?
- ✓ How collective action through cooperatives, farmer organizations.. can be supported?

Three groups were formed and presented to plenary the results of their discussion that led to key recommendations for Day 1.

Day 2 began with the validation of the recommendations of day 1. Session 1 presented different experiences about local development through inspired leadership of individuals committed to developing their productive activities with the inclusion of the whole community.

The first experience was about an association created to use the wool as a recourse instead of waist creating art crafts, clothes and shoes. In the process of working with wool there was education of new generation, protection of forests, inclusion of the whole community.

The second experience was the one of an urban gardener from Zagreb who educates city people about the importance of knowing your farmer and knowing where your food comes from, about possibilities for urban people to grow at least some amount of their food in the city environment. She is a writer in a popular newspaper and she uses that opportunity to promote natural ways of growing food and to connect to consumers and educate urban people on farming.

The third experience was about CSA and the way to organise a functional group of people in production and pre-selling products of farmers through an online platform. The group decides about all the issues collectively and is functional even when the main leader is absent.

The following session was about regenerative agriculture throughout the world. A movie about regenerative experiences was projected.

After that, the professor Zeljko Jukic gave a short lecture of regenerative agriculture from the scientific point of view and the possibilities for regenerative agriculture to be introduced in the Faculty of Agriculture.

The day finished with an exercise on the analysis of needs, challenges and options on the question of how to implement regenerative agriculture in your community, association or village. The question lead to a very interesting discussion which produced additional recommendations for day two.



Day 3 started with the validation of the recommendations of day two and followed with an exercise engaging participants in drawing their vision on regenerative agriculture in 10 years time. Two groups were formed and each group presented their vision and they discussed about it.



After this creative exercise the plenary focused on creating a common vision which was summarised in the following sentences:

“In 10 year time, regenerative agriculture is implemented in at least 10 percent of the Croatian farms through a renewed partnership among the farmers, their organisations and in cooperation with academia and research entities. Regenerative agriculture is seen as a key activity to regenerate the ecosystem, preserve the soils, generate income, create healthy and happy communities in rural areas”.

After building a common vision, the group engaged in plenary in building an action plan for the implementation of regenerative agriculture in the country for the future revitalisation of villages.

The action plan follows:

ACTION PLAN			
AREAS OF ACTION	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIME FRAME
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT	Educate government officials (advisory	Call them on every awareness raising	6 months

	service)	event that will be organized	
HUMAN RESOURCES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Measurements of parameters on land, animals, plants 2. Developing examples of good practices which will attract new people and give us credibility 3. Educating customers and public 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University 2. All involved participants will work actively to achieve the regenerative farm goal 3. Marina Ninčević, Andreja Čoh 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Right away 2. 1-3 years 3. 1-3 years
MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing mechanisation to be applicable in regenerative agriculture 2. Lobbying for the land that is in national ownership 3. Crowdfunding (defining exactly what we need and how will we accomplish that) 4. EU projects 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University, Ivan Blažon 2. Karla Brandt 3. Ivan Blažon 4. Ivan Blažon 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 year 2. 3 years 3. 1,5 year 4. 1-5 years
LEGISLATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legal advice 2. Informing farmers about laws and regulations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agnes, Marina Ninčević 2. Ministry of Agriculture 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 month 2. 6 months
GREEN TECHNOLOGIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Solutions for logistics 2. Using waste as a resource 3. Platform for mapping farmers and technologies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nikolina 2. Bruna 3. Ivan Blažon 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2-3 years 2. 3 years 3. Right away
PEOPLE MOBILISATION	Informing people through social media, local committee, peer- to peer support	Everyone will spread the knowledge in his/hers surrounding	All the time

4. Conclusions

As an important conclusion of the three days, the participants agreed to **form a Task Group** to promote and implement regenerative agriculture in the country starting from the respective communities and engaging in information, education and creating demonstration plots. The group agreed on applying on mutual projects in the future. The participants also agreed on the following recommendations for future action and follow-up:

On collective action and community development

- ✓ Organization of awareness raising events or workshops in each community on the benefits of sustainable farming and collective action through farmer groups, associations, cooperatives
- ✓ Promotion of education opportunities since the early age on the importance of solidarity and cooperation
- ✓ Sharing positive stories that can influence and change mentality on cooperation for common goals
- ✓ Creation of online tools and use of social media to sensitize young generations on the importance of local communities
- ✓ Promote peer-to- peer exchanges among farmers and neighbourhood for continuous learning on sustainable farming and community development

For the enabling environment:

- ✓ Implementation of awareness raising events for farmers on the existing legislation at national and European level
- ✓ Advocacy activities by communities for clear rules on animal health, use of antibiotics, trade of living animals and incentives for farmers using good practices for soil fertility
- ✓ Support the creation of representative small farmer groups at EU level
- ✓ Creation of national mechanisms to support farmer participation to decision-making process at policy level.
- ✓ Promote investments for the development of local communities and advocacy activities with municipalities

For sustainable farming and regenerative agriculture

- ✓ Organization of info days on regenerative agriculture

- ✓ Creation of a center with the support of the academic community that will disseminate good agricultural practices
- ✓ Develop a list of farmers applying sustainable farming practices and put the basis of an online platform where also consumers can become aware
- ✓ Development of new tools for green technology
- ✓ Collection of statistics and data on good farming models
- ✓ Formation of advocacy groups to support the change of the local development strategies to introduce biodynamic agriculture
- ✓ Advocate for measures to encourage women participation in agriculture
- ✓ Encourage farmer meetings and exchanges at local level (demonstration plots, women farm gardens..)
- ✓ Explore the possibility for certification of practices of regenerative agriculture (similar to the carbon stock certificates) as an incentive to spread the practice on regenerative agriculture
- ✓ Promote education campaigns for consumers and municipalities
- ✓ Create marketing strategies.

Annex 1 - List of participants

Croatian participants	ime	prezime	organizacije
	Valentina	Hažić	AgroTina, Međimurski štacun
	Željko	Jukić	Faculty of agriculture
	Vesna	Jakić	Association Ruta
	Andrea	Čoh	Urban gardener
	Ivan	Blažon	A:C:T: Grupa, Čk
	Bruno	Motik	ZMAG
	Nikola	Pavičić	Baby Beef
	Željko	Iličić	Biomara, KŽ
	Jasminka	Iličić	Biomara, KŽ
	Ines	Dundović	Croatian association of jung farmers
	Andrea	MARtić	HUMP
	Snježana	Lugarić	Ministry of agriculture
	Ana MARIja	Prgomet	ZERoWasteCro
	MATEj	Pandža	LAg Prigorje
	KARla	Brandt	OPG Brandt
	MARina	Ninčević	CSA Remete
	Ernestina	Straga Šašić	Lag western Slavonija
	Saša	Sašić	Lag western Slavonija
	Bogdan	Šuica	OPG Šuica
	Zoran	Grković	Kluster of the island products
	Borna	Novak	ZEF
	Ivica	Budrovčan	OPG Budrovčan

	Martina	Muraro	ZEF
	Peter	Fabjan	UEZ
	Dijana	Fabjan	OPFabjan
Organisers			
	Mirko	Tukša	volonter
	Nataša	Gojković	volonter
	Ivan	Štefanić	organiser
	Nikolina	Pokupec	organiser
	Bruna	Tariba	organiser
Abroad participants			
	Hugo	Wink	Partner
	Agnes	Major	Partner
	Andrea	Szabadkai	Partner
	Flaminia	Vita	Partner
	Enrico	Pietrantonio	Partner
	MAssimo	Candela	Partner
	MArioagrazia	Rocchigiani	Partner
Interpretors			
	Denis		AdHoc
	marija		AdHoc
Chef	Marijan		

Annex 2 - Agenda

1. DAY

08:00-09:00	Breakfast
09:15-09:45	Registration of participants
09:45-10:45	Welcome and opening of the BOND workshop Tihomir Hodak, director RCTP-a Križevci Legacoop Agroalimentare- Enrico Pietrantonio, Flaminia Vita MariaGrazia about BOND
11:00-12:30	Section 1 Željko i Jasminka Iličić, Ervišci, Križevci) Karla Brandt, Svinjarevci, East Slavonia Nikola Pavičić, Association Baby Beef Bogdan Šuica, Križevci Q&A
12:30-13:00	Coffee Break
13:00-14:00	Section 2 mariapoli faro dr. Snježana Lugarić, Ministry of Agriculture dr. Agnes Major, Kislépték, Hungary Andrea Szabadkai, Kislépték, Hungary Q&A
14:15-15:00	Lunch
15:15-16:00	Section 3 Torri Superiore Italy Hugo Vink - TINE coop, Norway Valentina Hažić - Association Međimurski štacun
16:30-16:50	Section 4
16:30-17:00	Analysis 1
16:30-17:00	Coffee Break
17:00-19:00	Plenary discussion
19:30-20:30	Dinner

2. DAY

08:00-08:45	Breakfast
09:00-09:30	Recapitulation of the day 1 and introduction in the day 2
09:30-10:25	Sekcija 5 Vesna Jakić, Ruta Andrea Čoh, urban gardner dr. sc. Marina Ninčević, Head of the Community-supported agriculture Q&A
10:15-10:45	Coffee Break
10:45-12:30	Section 6 Bruno Motik, permaculturist, Green Network of Activistic Group

	“Regenerative secret” movie (8 min)
12:45-14:00	Lunch
14.15-15.15	izv. prof.dr. sc. Željko Jukić, Faculty of Agriculture, Zagreb Hugo Vink, farmer Q&A
15:30-15:50	Coffee Break
	Section 7 mariapoli faro
16:30-16:50	Analisis 2
17:00-18:30	Plenary discussion
19.30-20.30	Dinner

3. DAY

07:30-08:30	Breakfast
08:30-10:30	Section 8 Building a common vision
09:30-10:30	Coffee Break
10:30-12:00	Building a common vision
12:15-13:30	Lunch
14:00-16:30	Making an action plan
16:00-16:20	Conclusion and closure of the workshop