



Project acronym: PROTEIN2FOOD

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D6.4 Seminars and training courses for farmers

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SATEAN FUNDATIA

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	



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1. Introduction and objectives

Cultivation of quinoa in Romania was introduced for the first time in March 2015 with the start-up of PROTEIN2FOOD. The aim with starting quinoa cultivation in Romania was to test how this new crop (quinoa) could grow: since its climate conditions, in fact, Romania represents a valid choice to start this new cultivation in the Central Europe area. Moreover, Romania has been included as a model for social innovation for investigation of consumer-farmer interactions as incentives for introduction of new crops and cropping systems resulting in food products meeting consumer demands.

The work with establishing quinoa production in Romania is supported by SATEAN FUNDATIA which is a non-profit corporate body located in Braila, in the South-East of Romania. It was established in 2007 by a group of Romanian and Italian partners and operates as a business incubator and a business innovation center, to support enterprises in their early stage of development. SATEAN is involved in several EU co-financed projects, and is responsible of the implementation of communication and dissemination activities, thanks to its wide network spread throughout Europe.

SATEAN FUNDATIA works, in the framework of the PROTEIN2FOOD, on the implementation of workshops, seminars and training courses addressing the local farmers and the local food processing SMEs, in order to increase their knowledge on the quinoa crop, their competencies on the new and innovative production process and on the crop management. Quinoa was selected as the case crop for Romania since its specific characteristics suitable for the Romanian territory, like the adaptation to climate changes, drought and salinity tolerance, etc. At the same time, testing the quinoa cultivation in Romania would mean to give this area the chance and the opportunity to increase the local economy and to favour the growth of the area and to increase the potential interest for local production of quinoa in Central Europe where Romania is located.

2. Activities for solving the task(s)

Starting in July 2015, SATEAN has organised several seminars and training classes addressing local farmers and food processing SMEs. The events were organized and repeated in different cities and regions of Romania (mostly in the Region of South-east, Galati and Braila, and in the historical Region of Moldavia, in Cudalbi). Participants were primarily local farmers and stakeholders potentially interested in growing the quinoa and in being involved in the project.

The content of these first seminars was mainly focused on the introduction to the quinoa crop and the presentation of Protein2Food Project. In fact, during these first seminars, SATEAN FUNDATIA presented the Protein2Food project, the reasons behind the project, its aims, activities and expected results. Moreover, SATEAN FUNDATIA presented a brief history of the quinoa cultivation, the nutritional value of quinoa seed, the botanical and genetic characteristics of the quinoa plant, its environmental stress tolerance to drought and salinity and the characteristics of the crop that make the quinoa suitable to be cultivated in Romania.

After the first seminars, SATEAN FUNDATIA gathered those farmers interested in starting the pilot action of cultivating quinoa in Romania. Before starting with the cultivation test, these local farmers received specific training on quinoa cultivation and management from a technical agronomist, Mr Vitanescu Maricel, employed by SATEAN FUNDATIA. Mr Vitanescu Maricel was selected and assigned to the project for his great competencies in the field.



At the same time, in order to ensure that the chosen agronomist could perform at the highest level his assignment on Protein2food, he was supported since the very beginning by CNR-ISAFOM staff, who transferred their knowledge and experiences to Mr Vitanescu Maricel. Moreover, in order to give a deeper support to Mr Vitanescu, SATEAN FUNDATION organized a field visit of CNR staff in Romania, in July 2015. At the end of July 2015, Cataldo Pulvento, referent of CNR ISAFOM, went to Cudalbi to give a greater support in terms of know-how transfer to the Romanian agronomist, increasing his specific competencies on the quinoa crop management and process.

As said, the Romanian farmers interested in taking part to the quinoa cultivation pilot test, received specific training by SATEAN FUNDATIA, through the agronomist Mr Vitanescu Maricel. In particular, from July 2015 to December 2016 SATEAN FUNDATIA organized 4 training courses focusing on the following topics:

Quinoa cultivation: characteristics and techniques.

ADDRESSED THEMES: cultivation, sowing and fertilization of quinoa, the crop water requirements and irrigation, the biotic threats: pests and diseases, the seed harvest and post-harvest technology.

Growing the quinoa: the potential of using natural enemies and chemical compounds in quinoa for biological control of insect pests.

ADDRESSED THEMES: main pests of quinoa, insects attacking the quinoa, beneficial insects in quinoa, parasitoids, predators, entomophagous, chemical responses of quinoa to insect herbivory, potential of biological control in quinoa, potential for ecological management in quinoa.

Life Cycle of the quinoa and market expectations –In the framework of this seminar.

ADDRESSED THEMES: the phase of the quinoa growing; the resistance to biotic stresses and to abiotic stresses; the plant morphology and the seed characteristics, the harvest index. Romanian and European market expectations as for the quinoa production and the requirements of the industry and consumers.

Each training course lasted for 8 hours. SATEAN FUNDATIA also provided the Romanian farmers participating in the pilot action with training material (guidelines and manuals on the quinoa growing techniques and process). The aim of the training course was to provide the Romanian farmers with the proper and needed competencies and knowledge allowing them to start the cultivation of quinoa on the selected plots of land.

Along with the training, SATEAN FUNDATIA guaranteed to the Romanian farmers (involved in the pilot cultivation) the daily support and assistance of its technical agronomist during the growth season, who followed the cultivation of the quinoa directly in the field step by step. At the end of July 2016, SATEAN organised the site visit of project coordinator, Sven Erik Jacobsen, where he met several stakeholders in Cudalbi and the farmers involved in the project. He also gave two lectures on the global status of quinoa and specific growth instructions for quinoa in Romania.

3. Results and next steps

Thanks to the held training courses organized in 2015-2016, around 10 Romanian farmers have been trained on the quinoa cultivation and were involved in the pilot cultivation. These farmers could acquire specific knowledge and competencies on the cultivation, management and process of a crop (quinoa) that was completely unknown before.



In 2017 and till the end of the project implementation, SATEAN FUNDATION will carry on with the organization of seminars and training courses, with the aim to involve a larger number of local farmers in the pilot cultivation of quinoa and therefore to start the cultivation and production of quinoa on a larger scale. As for the training content, the addressed topics (above described) will be expanded with the addition of case studies coming from the previous cultivation carried out in Romania (in 2015 and 2016). Moreover, specific on-the-field training and sessions will be added.

4. Delays and difficulties

The main challenges that SATEAN FUNDATIA faced, since the very beginning of the project implementation, were:

1. The absolutely lack of knowledge among the farmers and SMEs about the quinoa crop, the cultivation techniques, the growing steps and phases and the chances of enter the local market;
2. (as a consequence of the first point) the skepticism of the local farmers and food processing SMEs in introducing this crop in their ordinary cultivation and therefore the skepticism in investing time and resources in cultivating this unknown crop.

Despite quinoa is an ancient grain, in fact, it is almost unknown in Romania and its popularity has grown only in recent years. The quinoa has been known as a good source of both protein and fiber but the main actors, i.e. the Romanian agronomists, farmers and the food processing SMEs do not know anything about the crop, the cultivation techniques, the growing steps and processing phases challenge the chances of entering the local market.

A part for the skepticism and lack of knowledge among the Romanian farmers and stakeholders, no relevant problems or difficulties have been met.

Picture 1: CNR-ISAFOM site visit on July 2015



Picture 2: Training course with local farmers



Picture 3: Lecture by UCPH at site visit on July 2016



Picture 4: Field visit with local farmers July 2016

