

## HUNGARY

### Farm's performance restructuring and modernisation

#### Location

Balatonvilágos

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P2 – Competitiveness

#### Measure

M4 – Investments in physical  
assets

#### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 47 897

EAFRD 20 356

National/Regional 3 592

Private 23 949

#### Project duration

2017 – 2018

#### Project promoter

Balaton Fruit Ltd.

#### Contact

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[ert.hu](http://ert.hu)

#### Website

n/a

Ensuring the productivity of a fruit-producing business by replacing low-yield apricot orchards with more reliable plants.

### Summary

Balaton Fruit produces 3-4% of the apricots grown in Hungary. The business, however, has been affected by diseases to its trees, which led to 50% of those less than four years old being destroyed.



RDP support helped the company to cut down the economically non-viable orchards and plant more resilient new ones that allow harvesting periods to be better balanced and make it easier and more efficient to organise seasonal work.

### Results

Two orchards installed with a water-saving drip irrigation system on a total area of 5.37 hectares.

Good yield from the orchard planted in 2017 meeting expectations.

Trees planted in 2018 developing well with an excellent growth potential.

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The graft is the most influential element of a new orchard, and thus acquiring the right one is the most important step in the process.
- ❑ It is important to carry out cost analysis per plot to determine which area can be maintained economically so that further plantation changes can be better integrated into the production cycle of the enterprise.

## Context

Balaton Fruit Ltd. produces 3-4% of the Hungarian apricot crop. Its orchard is located in Balatonvilágos, Somogy county, South Hungary covering an area is 53.8 ha. It contains 2.2 ha of cherry trees and 51.6 ha of apricot trees. The fruit is sold through the co-operative to which it belongs. The company has 12 permanent employees and employs around 250-300 seasonal workers.

In recent years diseases affecting apricot trees had an impact on the business, and in some areas 50% of trees under four years old had to be destroyed. Also plots of very mixed age plants could not be economically maintained, since the management costs of the whole area needed to be covered by income from only a few fruit-bearing trees. The yields achieved did not cover the total cost of the entire area. If the yield of an area does not exceed 6-8 tonnes per hectare during a normal year, it is not worthwhile to maintain the orchard. It is more economically efficient to replace the entire site rather than to continuously replace batches of trees.

New orchards would allow the harvesting periods to be better balanced, and it would be easier and more efficient to organise seasonal work. The delivery of the fruit would be more evenly distributed, while a larger number of new plants and applied rootstocks would also reduce the impact of diseases. Within five years the orchard would be able to reach a yield of 15 t/ha which is important for its sustainable development.

## Objectives

The overall objective of the project was to maintain and increase the competitiveness of the company by replanting low-yield apricot orchards with new trees of more efficient apricot varieties.

## Activities

In spring 2017, 0.57 hectares were cut down and replanted with the support of a contractor. The variety planted was the widespread and reliable Bergeron variety. Balaton made sure that the trees planted would come from a reliable, late-flowering, high-yield cultivar. They changed the traditional rootstock used in the region, and invested in the very popular Myrabolan and other rootstocks varieties such as Rootpac R or Wavit. In

addition, in order to have higher plant density the company also created a unique vase shape canopy to obtain the right yield in terms of quality and size. The previous 5x4 m density was increased to 5x3 m.

In spring 2018, 4.8 hectares were cut down and replanted. Three varieties on four rootstocks were included in the orchard in line with the local conditions. The propagating material came from four foreign nurseries. Here, the ambition was to provide a reliable nursery where a combination of varieties and rootstocks would be available.

After cutting the orchard, the remains were removed from the site and the soil was well prepared. Pre-planting nutrient application, designed by a soil expert, was carried out. On the basis of soil analyses, the experts compiled the location of the nutrient required to install the apricot plantation on a site-specific basis.

Preparations for planting, determination of exact place of variety-rootstock combinations and planting were carried out in accordance with the planting plan prepared by a consultant. The consultant planned the orchard to meet expectations and assisted in the practical implementation by offering guidance.

The cutting down of the old plantations was carried out mainly by the workforce of the beneficiary, while the preparation and installation works were carried out by reliable agricultural entrepreneurs.

## Main results

- Two orchards installed with water-saving drip irrigation system on a total area of 5.37 hectares.
- The yield of the orchard planted in 2017 meets the expectations.
- Trees planted in 2018 are well-developed, with an excellent growth potential.

Future expected results:

- The more resistant trees will give rise to a more balanced yield.
- The markets of the co-operative will be adequately supplied, increasing its competitiveness domestically and internationally.
- Sales revenue will increase.

### Key lessons

The graft is the most influential element of a new orchard, and thus acquiring the right one is the most important step in the project. Based on professional expertise, the company installed in the orchard combinations of variety-rootstock along the abovementioned goals, but their is dependent on many factors. During installation, for example, growers often need to apply emergency solutions. In such cases, professional advice is required.

The company bought grafts from five different nurseries, because the selected Hungarian nursery couldn't provide all the materials needed.

Based on the professional and practical experience of the past few years, the company will carry out a cost analysis per plot, which will determines which area can be maintained economically so that further plantation changes can be better integrated into the production cycle of the enterprise.



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### Additional sources of information

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