



# NOTICE

## THE INNOVATIVE A G R I C U L T U R E

Agricultural project examples of Estonian  
Rural Development Plan 2007-2013



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# Notice the Innovative Agriculture

## Agricultural project examples of Estonian Rural Development Plan 2007-2013

### Background Information

The full budget period for the European Union is coming to an end, having lasted for seven years altogether. We have had the opportunity to fully implement the Rural Development Plan, and to use the resources of European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and from the Estonian government's budget to be able to realise some very good ideas and some highly useful activities. All of the applicants for support had one common aim in common, which was being able to improve something, and if they did not have the resources to realise their ideas, they applied for support.

### The Aim

One of the Estonian Rural Network's aims is to collect and disseminate information about projects that have been realised and those that have yet to be started. While being able to present highly useful projects that have received support, it is also a great opportunity to show publicly what has been done, and also be able to inspire those who are searching for great new project ideas. There are many ways in which successful project examples can be found, one of which is to organise a public project competition. The Rural Network Bureau of Rural Economy Research Centre organised the first projects competition of the Estonian Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 which was entitled "Notice Leader" and this covered the Leader measure Axis 4 projects. In 2012 there was a similar competition for RDP Axis 1 projects which served to raise competitiveness levels in agriculture and forestry. The competition was named "Notice the Innovative Agriculture".

### The Competition

One of the important aims of the competition was to present and acknowledge RDP projects and project leaders. The competition had three categories: joint activities in agriculture, innovation agriculture, and knowledge transfer in agriculture. One project could also be nominated in all of the

categories. All together, eighteen projects were nominated for entry into the competition; one project was nominated into two categories. This publication presents eleven nominated projects and also one example in the knowledge transfer projects category. This means that the publication includes four inspiring projects about each category.

### Selecting the Projects

Naturally it would be incredibly difficult, not to say impossible, to compare these projects against one another. That is why the publication is more like a collection of good project examples, and readers will not be able to see which projects have won the “Notice the Innovative Agriculture” competition here. Even so, all of the projects that have been presented as examples are successful, and they are also different, and every project is really important for the place and time in which it has been implemented.

### The Measures

In addition to project examples, the publication includes information about the support measures which were used to implement these projects. Each category involves two measures, so readers can find the descriptions of six RDP measures. The descriptions for the measures have been put together by specialists from the Estonian Ministry of Agriculture.

### Thanks

The Estonian Rural Network would like to say a big thank you to everyone who nominated the projects, as well as thanking the members of the pre-selection and evaluation committee who helped to make the final decision. The biggest thank you goes to the project implementers who have had enough sense, will and energy to elucidate their ideas, and who think that a life lived in the countryside is worth living!

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## Milk Automat

**Beneficiary:**  
Ltd A Piim

**Location:**  
Põhjakeskus Shopping Centre, Tõrremäe, Rakvere Municipality, Lääne-Viru County

**Support:**  
Support amount from the RDP 2007-2013 Leader Measure: in the area of LAG The Partners, a total of 8,429 euros

**Project period:**  
spring-autumn 2012

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## The first untreated milk automat in Estonia

Once someone has tasted good untreated milk, then he will definitely want it again. But where can you get it from these days? The cows are kept mostly on big farms. There are not many people who could afford to keep one or two cows of their own. Even so, the non-pasteurised milk from big farms could also be sold in supermarkets. Surely there have been a large number of people who have had the same kind of idea. The more industrially-minded men around the Rakvere area, from Ltd Vaeküla Suurtalu, Roodevälja Uustalu, and Saaremetsa Farm Rakvere, also found this to be an intriguing idea, and decided to establish Ltd A Piim which was officially entered into the Business Register at the beginning of 2012. They wrote a project brief so that they could gain support from the Leader Measure. The application was approved and they were able to purchase a milk automat, a MilkMat Midi Supra, from Poland. This is an approach that is unique in Estonia, although similar ideas have circulated before.

The milk automat is situated into the foyer of the Põhjakeskus Shopping Centre in the town of Rakvere. In order to attract customers, the full-sized figure of a cow was placed alongside the automat, along with an information screen. The cow is especially popular amongst children, but it also helps the grown-ups to notice the automat.

The board member of A Piim, Alo Altermann, said that the interest shown towards the automat had been extremely high during the first few days. Now they have stable circle of consumers who are buying about fifty litres of milk a day on a weekday, and even more on weekends. Currently, the milk is transported from Vaeküla Suurtalu with a recently-purchased car that is equipped with a freezer. But the men also hope that people will soon be able to buy milk from other stakeholder farms.

The system employed by the milk automat is an easy one. It is fitted with a container for 200 litres of milk which keeps the milk chilled, and mixes it once in a while. The customer slots their money into the machine and is then offered the selection of using the special plastic milk containers that are supplied by the automat or their own container. Alo Alterman thinks that it could have been possible to have a machine with a card payment option, but they personally prefer the coin system. The machine accepts coins to the value of ten cents upwards. This is how the inhabitants of Rakvere have

*"It is easier to realise good ideas through cooperation."*

Alo Altermann



### Project activities:

Purchasing and setting up the milk automat and presentation equipment to show the video, and the creation of the information video.

gained the opportunity to drink real untreated milk - because what else is milk with a fat content between 3.6 and 4.2%? Anyway, the feedback has been positive. Older people who remember how wonderful sour milk tasted now mostly buy the milk three litres at a time. The people involved in this enterprise agree that it is easier to realise good ideas through cooperation. And local consumers can buy a new product now - healthy untreated milk



Aivar Juhkov, Merle Kuus ja Oleg Pavlov

## Joint activities for pig-breeders

**Beneficiary:**  
Meat co-operative PYHL (Lihahühistu PYHL)

**Location:**  
Betooni 9, Tartu City

**Support:**  
Support amount from RDP 2007-2013 Measure 1.9  
(creating and developing the producer groups): a  
total of 158,098 euros in 2010 and 2011

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## The cooperative connects the cooperation partners, not rivals

The meat co-operative PYHL was established in 1999 with the aim of selling porkers to its members, and to secure the best possible price. The cooperative includes six pig-breeding companies and five employees. The members of the cooperative are different - with some of them have their own slaughterhouses. There is no special membership fee, but they set new prices for the pigs every week so that the cooperation members are able to gain the best price.

In addition to cooperating with their own members, they work together with other pig-breeding entrepreneurs, and many of them use a pig realisation service. This aspect helped to boost exports because the quality of Estonian pork is considered to be very high by foreign countries. The members have guaranteed access to the pig realisation service even during the outbidding process, and it is something that is really important because pigs cannot be stored. On the other hand, the bigger the sales values, the more dignified and trustworthy they are in the eyes of consumers, and it also allows pig breeders to cope with higher prices.

The cooperative started exporting the pigs in 2004, and it is a really important part of their activities. Almost 90% of the pigs were exported to Russia until the beginning of 2012. After Russia began to enforce new limitations, the pigs began mainly to be exported to Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia. Now that Russia is a member of the WTO, it is believed that this could help to re-establish exports there. The members have the privilege of gaining the purchase and sales service straight from "the door of the pigsty". They can also regularly purchase the raw materials for pig-feed. So far, the members of the cooperation have marketed their production on an individual basis, and have acted as rivals, but now that's changed as they have become partners.

The members of the cooperative have participated in study trips to Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and other countries to extend their market. They also visited agricultural fairs to build up their knowledge and experience in the trends in breeding, and overall trends in the agricultural sector. Members constantly follow the trends in the world meat market. They also have the opportunity to use a tractor and dryer, items that are common property between them.

Currently they are building a modern pigsty to accommodate thoroughbred pigs. The pigs are purchased from Canada, to

improve the quality of the pork, in order to increase the level of twenty-four-hour growth for pigs, and also to improve the culinary characteristics of the pork. The chairman of the cooperative, Aivar Juhkov, thinks that this is a significant step because the price of pork has increased by as much as 40% during the last couple of years. At the same time, the costs for cooperative management have also increased, because prices for pig feed and other inputs have gone up. So those members who do not deal with grain farming have to face these further difficulties.

*"To become truly great, one has to stand with people, not above them!"*

*(Montesquieu)*

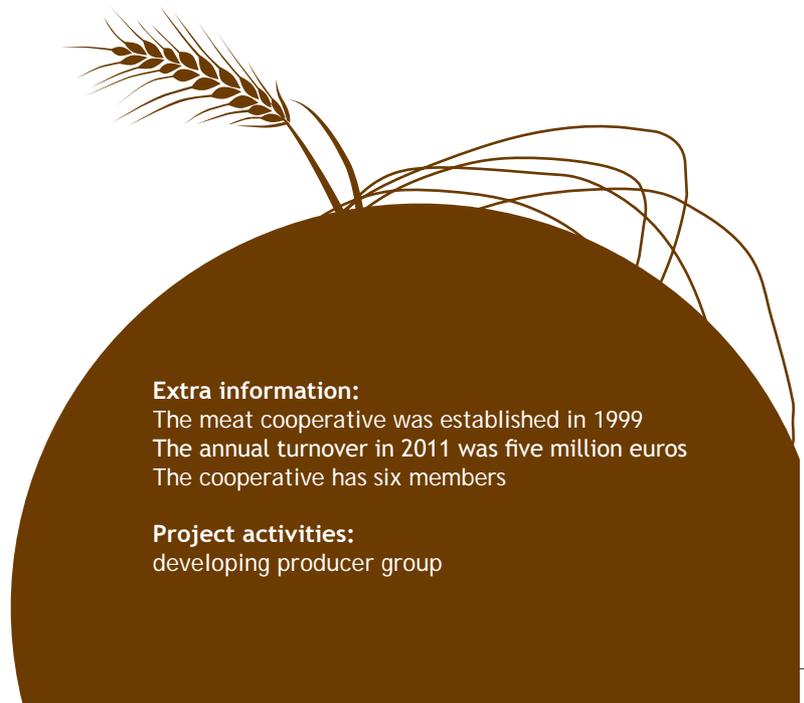
PYHL's annual turnover in 2011 was five million euros, and it is believed that this will grow in 2012. The question of whether there is a plan to establish a totally separate meat industry was answered by Aivar Juhkov, who thinks that it is quite difficult to reach the market with new products, so for now they are sticking with their current production.

### Extra information:

The meat cooperative was established in 1999  
The annual turnover in 2011 was five million euros  
The cooperative has six members

### Project activities:

developing producer group





Liivimaa  
Lihaveis

Developing the  
marketing strategy for the  
label "Liivimaa Lihaveis"

**Beneficiary:** NGO Liivimaa Lihaveis

**Location:** Mäe Farm, Hüti Village,  
Mõniste Municipality, Võru County

**Support:**

Support amount from the RDP 2007-2013 Leader Measure in the area of LAG Võrumaa Partnership Assembly to a total of 29,011 euros

**Project period and current state:**

between autumn 2011 to the end of 2013, the project is unfinished

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## Establishing their own label has helped to introduce their beef

**N**GO Liivimaa Lihaveis was established in 2010 by the biggest breeders of Aberdeen-Angus and Hereford breeds in Estonia, with the aim of promoting and marketing beef from grass-feed cattle. It is a traditional producer group that connects bovine breeders who are mostly from southern and central Estonia, but officially an NGO cannot be a producer group.

The cattle of the members are located in areas within the historic region of Livonia (Liivimaa), and they have the special acknowledgement of an ecological label - their cattle is not fed with feed supplements or grain that is used in conventional agriculture. The aim of the cooperative is to offer safe and natural raw materials for their customers - in other words, grass-feed beef. The cooperation members emphasise that they highly value the welfare of the cattle,

*“Our aim is to help customers to think more about their relations with local agricultural producers where this concerns daily eating habits, and to help people to start noticing the whole food processing chain.”*

Katrin Noorkõiv

Leader Measure was used to receive support for marketing their label. It involves elaborating a long-term marketing strategy, cookbooks that include recipes involving grass-feed beef, organising a “beef month” in various restaurants, presenting their products on the biggest food website, participating on television in cooking programmes, organising training sessions about beef for food magazine journalists, and developing the website. The NGO created a special label which belongs to the members of the cooperative, who sell their products through marketing networks and the HORECA\* sector using this common label. The number of bovines that have been sold through the cooperative has been thriving. While in 2010 they sold 200 cows but only managed to realise one third of the meat, it is predicted that in 2013 they will sell as many as 800 cows, and will realise all of them from nose to tail.

Liivimaa Lihaveis purchases the bovines from producers, takes them to slaughter house, and processes and sells them to Ltd Nordic Beef, whose task it is to market the meat through HORECA and in retail sales. Currently, the bovines are transported to slaughterhouses in

**Extra information:**  
The cooperative was established in 2010  
The proposed turnover in 2012 on the national market is 250,000 euros  
The cooperative has eleven members

**Project activities:**  
developing the marketing strategy of for the Liivimaa Lihaveis label, and financing marketing activities.

Latvia, and afterwards the carcasses are taken to Adavere, where the beef is processed and packaged.

The breeders know that their beef can only be effectively marketed if they provide cooking recipes alongside it. This is why they have built up close ties with the developers of the Toidutare website and the producers of cooking programmes. The average Liivimaa Lihaveis consumer is a well-informed gastronome, someone who knows how to cook, and who primarily values the great taste of beef. The Liivimaa Lihaveis product range is a wide one, and various parts of the bovine are perfect for making stews, classic roast beef, steaks, or meat salads.

NGO Liivimaa Lihaveis follows the conception held by the farmers market overall that local food should not reach customers through traditional retail outlets, but should do it instead through producer markets. This is why the products of Liivimaa Lihaveis can be purchased in the farmers market in Tartu's Lõunakeskus shopping centre, at the Chef Foods butcher's shop in Adavere, in the gourmet areas in Tallinna Kaubamaja shopping centre, at the Solaris shopping centre, at the “Talu toidab” stand in the grocery department in Haabersti and Mustakivi RIMI, and at the Sadamaturg market. In the near future the plan is to modernise the Adavere butcher's shop so it will be more convenient for customers to reach. Noorkõiv has presented their strategy which is entitled “In addition to joint operations with shops, they cooperate with top chefs by organising training”.

The NGO has also considered reaching out to the foreign market. But if it does then its exported meat must be of a suitably high quality, utilising the dried parts of good quality beef. To achieve this they will have to work hard for a couple of years, otherwise they will have to compete with cheap beef producers from Poland and Lithuania.

\* HORECA - HoReCa is an acronym of the words hotels, restaurants, and cafés.



Sulev Kuus

## Joint activities for milk-producers

**Beneficiary:**

The Milk producers Cooperative of Tartu County

**Location:**

Teedla Village, Rõngu Municipality, Tartu County

**Support:**

Support amount from RDP 2007-2013 Measure 1.9 (the setting-up and development of producer groups) to a total of 66,586 euros in 2010 and 2010

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## The entrepreneurs, both big and small, of the Milk Producers Cooperative of Tartu County all want to fulfil one aim

The function of the cooperative is to serve its customers equally, and act in a profit-making manner. The biggest member of the Milk Producers Cooperative of Tartu County has 550 cows, a couple of members have 400 cows, and there are producers who have only between twenty to thirty cows. Most of the members also cultivate. The milk is being sold to two milk production, these being Rannu Cheese Factory (Rannu Juustutööstus), and Valio. All of the milk that is produced has one price for the producer, except in terms of differences that arise with protein and fat content. If one member earns more, it does not mean that somebody else should make a smaller profit, says Sulev Kruus.

Only two local milk producers have wound-up their efforts because they could not make the necessary investments to assure the high quality of the milk they were producing. Sulev Kuus thinks that keeping a hundred cows is the most difficult part of the process. This is why it is important to purchase all of the necessary services and inputs through the cooperative. The members of the cooperative are provided with veterinary services, milk transport, surety for loans, and also the training that they need (which covers first aid, pesticides, milk quality, environment, occupational healthcare, different technologies, and cooperative activity), which is organised amongst them all. Sulev Kuus is a little worried that there is an enormous dearth of veterinaries in Estonia. That is why the Milk Producers Cooperative of Tartu County began its cooperation with a small veterinary clinic, so that it could ensure that such services were more accessible.

Sulev Kuus finds that joint activities are pretty underdeveloped in Estonia. So he has searched for new experiences in New Zealand, Australia and Canada. The development of these countries is remarkable when compared to Estonia. Although there are times in which the aim of trips like these is misunderstood, Sulev Kuus thinks that similar undertakings are definitely essential, and helpful for instilling great deals of new knowledge and experience that are useful in daily work. They will also organise study trips for their own members, so that farmers are able to learn from other experiences and good practice.

Through the Measure 1.9 support aids, it was possible to purchase computers for the cooperative members, and also to cover the salaries of employees. In addition, every member will pay three

Estonian cents (from each pre-euro kroner) from the price of each kilo of milk. For now, the cooperative has not had the need or will to take out a loan. When the cooperative wants to purchase new equipment (such as, for example, silage production machinery) then it will probably have to use the help of lease-purchase companies.

Sulev Kuus thinks that keeping the local living environment clean and liveable is crucial. The cooperative has done a lot to unite the local community. For example, there is a party at the end of each year for the local community, so that the best producers and elderly people can be recognised. Sulev Kuus emphasises that cooperation is the important aspect for the local community.

*"If one member earns more, it does not mean that somebody else should make smaller profit."*

Sulev Kuus

The members of the cooperative communicate mostly by telephone or e-mail. This especially concerns accountants, with whom they meet three or four times

a year, and they have one annual general meeting. They try to guarantee sustainability by teaching the basics of the rural economy (subjects which include food technology and agriculture) in local schools, as well as involving local youths who could make career in the region and would then not have to leave their homes for work. The cooperative uses the offer of scholarships as a method of attraction, and hopes that some young people, such as veterinaries, will decide to work near home. Kuus has a dream that after perhaps five or ten years, the cooperative might have its own milk industry, as there has long been a desire amongst the members to develop their own production and therefore raise profitability levels.

### Extra information:

The cooperative was established in 1999  
The annual turnover in 2011 was 4.9 million euros  
The cooperative has fifteen members

### Project activities:

developing producer group

## The setting-up and development of producer groups (RDP Measure 1.9)

The problems for agricultural producers (including ecological farmers and niche-producers) involve the incompleteness of the supply chain (production - processing - trade - consumer), the absence of nationally recognised quality schemes, weak joint activities and marketing, and a low budget for innovations. The adaptation capability of farmers is low and they face difficulties in reprocessing their products before they are sold, fulfilling the required levels of quality, and carrying out marketing activities. The important aspect of successful marketing is to assure a continuous supply and sufficient volumes of production.

The solution might be the development of the supply chain as a whole, the development of cooperation between producers (in terms of joint production, and the processing and marketing of self-produced goods), the participation of agricultural producers in quality schemes, and a significant increase in joint marketing. A profit association is the proper development tool for joint economic activities where this involves producer groups.

By supporting the creation of producer groups by agricultural producers and supporting their activities, it is possible to widen the opportunities for marketing the niche products that have small and fragmented production volumes, and to increase their market share.

### The general aim of Measure 1.9:

Raising the competitiveness and increasing the market share of agricultural enterprises through the joint promotion of economic activities.

### The specific aims of Measure 1.9:

- To create and develop producer groups in a sustainable manner, to increase sales revenue and the number of members;
- To raise the capacity of joint marketing for agricultural products in the sales revenue of the agricultural sector;
- To raise the capacity of commonly prepared and processed agricultural products in the sales revenue of producer groups;

- To adjust the production and products of entrepreneurs in producer groups to match the requirements of the market.

### The target group of Measure 1.9:

The support can be applied by an acknowledged profit association that connects agricultural producers, and whose aim is to jointly market their members' agricultural products, and reprocessed products.

The first call for application into the scheme took place in 2010, when twelve profit organisations received acknowledgement. The second call took place in 2012. The final results of the second call have not yet been announced, but seven new profit organisations have been acknowledged as of 3 October 2012.

### The supported activities for Measure 1.9:

Supporting those activities that are related to the creation and development of producer groups which are in accordance with the action plan of the producer group, and which are necessary for fulfilling the aims specified in the action plan. For example, eligible costs such as purchasing stationery, salaries, costs for accounting, marketing and training, investments into capital assets with the aim of developing common pre-sale preparation or processing, and so on.

### The support for Measure 1.9:

Support is paid in fixed amounts by annual instalments. Support can be applied for within five years of the acknowledgement date, and this amounts to a total of 310,000 euros. Assigned support aid depends on the sales revenue of the annual marketed production for the producer group.

### Implementing Measure 1.9:

The measure implementation started in 2010. There have been four calls for application during the four years, one in 2010, one in 2011, and two in 2012. The following tables present the results for 2010 and 2011.

### Application and approval based on calls for application

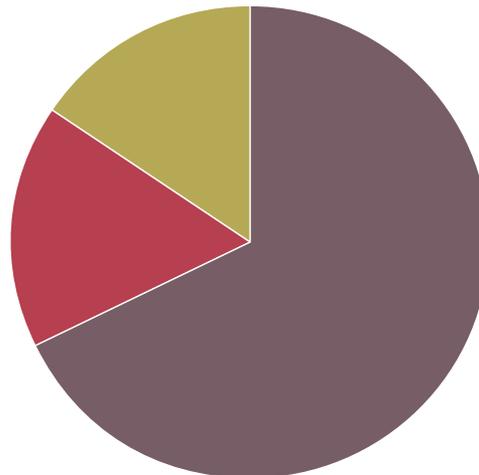
Call for application	Number of approved applications	Support aid, euros	Average support aid, euros	Amount of investment, euros	Amount of average investment, euros
First call for application	11	622 229	56 566	641 612	58 328
Second call for application	12	749 353	62 446	749 353	62 446
<b>IN TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1 371 582</b>	<b>59 634</b>	<b>1 390 965</b>	<b>60 477</b>

### The division of beneficiaries and average support aid by domains

Domain developed by the profit association	The number of beneficiaries		Number of applications	Support aid, euros
	Call 1	Call 2		
Marketing for milk and other dairy products	7	7	14	932 446
Marketing for livestock products (except milk and other dairy products)	2	2	4	210 340
Marketing for other agricultural products (including potatoes and vegetables, grain, rape and various ecological products)	2	3	5	228 797
<b>IN TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1 371 582</b>

### The division of support aid by domains, %

- Marketing for milk and other dairy products
- Marketing for livestock products - (except milk and other dairy products)
- Marketing for other agricultural products (including potatoes and vegetables, grain, rape and various ecological products)



## Leader Measure

### *The aim of Measure 1.9:*

The aims of Leader Measure are promoting local initiative, contributing to the improvement of competitiveness of agriculture and forestry sector, improving the living quality in rural areas, diversifying economical activities, and giving the decision making rights to local level through Leader local action groups. To fulfill this aim, 26 Leader local action groups have been established, which comprise 99% of Estonian rural area. Local action groups (LAGs) are based on partnerships, act as non-profit organizations, and involve representatives of local government, local entrepreneurs and representatives of third sector. Local action groups have compiled their strategies, and they can use allocated support from Axis 4 of RDP for fulfilling the aims of it. To fulfill the aims of local area strategy, the LAGs open the call for tenders for Leader Measure projects in their area.

### *The implementation of Leader Measure in 2007-2011:*

The overall budget allocation for Leader Measure for current programming period is 85.8 million euros. For the period 2007-2011 Leader Measure has supported projects in total of 58.4 million euros. 24.6% of this is allocated for local action groups (including cooperation projects), and 75.4% for supporting Leader projects. For the period 2007-2011 Leader project support has allocated for 2340 projects in total of 44 million euros. 48.5% of the assigned support sum was paid out for the end of 2011. Out of 14.4 million euros that was assigned to LAGs is paid out 47.2%.

### *The contribution of Leader for the outcomes of Axis 1 of RDP:*

In the framework of Axis 1 of RDP the Leader-support was given to applications about the five following activities:

- Vocational training and information actions - 7 approved applications (code 111);
- Modernization of agricultural holdings - 58 approved applications (code 121);
- Adding value to agricultural and forestry products - 46 approved applications (code 123);
- Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and

food sector and the forestry sector - 10 approved applications (code 124);

- Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry - 2 approved applications (code 125).

### *Seven principles of Leader-implementation:*

- Area-based local development strategies
- Bottom-up approach
- Public-private partnership: local action groups
- Promoting innovations
- Integrated and multisectoral support measures
- Networking
- Cooperation

### The number of approved applications and assigned support aids of the Axis 1 of Leader Measure

Measure	The number of approved applications	Sum of assigned support	Average sum of support
Vocational training and information actions	7	36 801	5 257
Modernization of agricultural holdings	58	505 173	7 965
Adding value to agricultural and forestry products	46	989 057	21 501
Cooperation for development of new products, processes and technologies in the agriculture and food sector and the forestry sector	10	131 776	13 178
Infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture and forestry	2	139 670	69 850
<b>IN TOTAL</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>1 802 477</b>	<b>14 654</b>

In the framework of Leader Measure it was assigned the support total of 1.8 million euros for RDP Axis 1 activities, which forms 0.7% of the total sum of assigned support aids for RDP Axis 1 in 2007-2011 (for comparison, in 2007-2011 the assigned support sum for RDP Axis 1 measure was 225.3 million euros). As of 31.12.2011, 0.9 million euros was paid out. The support is assigned for 123 applications all together which forms 5% of all Leader applications, and 4% of assigned support aid for that period of time. The biggest part of the support aid was assigned to measure 123 - adding value to agricultural and forestry products - 55%, and for measure 121 - the modernization of agricultural holdings - 28%.

As of August 2012, there were 50 extra projects in Leader Measure Axis 1 comparing to the end of 2011 - in total of 173 projects, and the support aid for approved applications was 2.54 million euros. The Axis 1 projects were approved in the areas of 23 local action groups. The biggest number of Axis 1 projects was approved in the area of LAG Jõgevamaa Cooperation Chamber, and in LAG Peipsi-Alutaguse Chamber of Cooperation (22 projects for both LAGs), and they were followed by LAG Tartu Rural Development Association with 19 projects.

### The division of approved applications in Leader Measure Axis 1

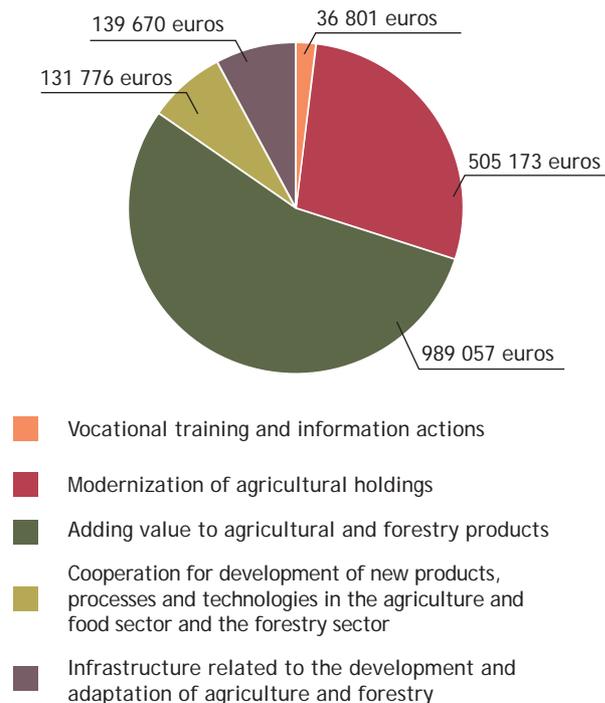




Foto: Peeter Padrik

## Building a free-range pedigree bull barn

### Beneficiary:

The Animals Breeders Association of Estonia

### Location:

Keava, Kehtna Municipality, Rapla County

### Support:

Support amount from RDP 2007-2013 Measure 1.4.2 (Investments in livestock building) to a total of 211,750 euros

**Project period:** November 2010 - May 2012

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## The breeding activities of the Animals Breeders Association of Estonia will guarantee the milk supply of Estonian cows

One of the biggest cooperatives in Estonia is definitely the Animals Breeders Association of Estonia which was established in 1993, and for the moment it has almost 1,200 members (including meat bovine breeders). The association's members also include the breeders of Estonian Holstein bulls, Estonian Red bulls, and Estonian Native cattle. Peeter Padrik, who is the member of the board and manager of the laboratory, welcomes us to Keava, at the head-office of the cooperative. He kindly asks us to take a look at his possessions.

The laboratory involves various technological equipment and machinery. Padrik is proud to be able to say that the Animals Breeders Association of Estonia is one of the first in Eastern Europe that has such technologies available to it. A modern laboratory allows high-

*The role of the Animals Breeders Association of Estonia is to be a guide in the bovine breeding sector, so that Estonian farmers, who are investing in the establishment of new farms, will also become well known for their high levels of production quality and pedigree cattle, which will raise Estonia so that it can be ranked among the very best cattle breeder countries in Europe.*

quality frozen bovine sperm to be offered to farmers. There are almost 220 bulls in the cooperative's artificial insemination centres. They are sampled once a week, while better bulls are sampled twice a week. Each dose involves between 15-20 million sperm. The annual output of sperm doses is about 550,000. Previously they may have checked only on sperm movement, whereas nowadays modern technology allows fifteen different indicators to be examined.

Pedigree bulls must possess the best characteristics so that these best qualities can be transmitted onto new generations. For now the technology has already been highly developed, so that it is possible to gain the required offspring with an accuracy of up to 90-95%, and calves are the most highly prized of those offspring. Calves are raised to become bull dams with the best milk output and many other fine qualities. In turn, it is believed that their offspring grow into pedigree bulls with the best characteristics. These valuable bulls are highly pampered in Keava, because their sperm is also exported out

of Estonia. Peeter Padrik says facetiously that their bulls have the best living conditions out of all the males in Estonia. Currently, the cooperative has two „crowning-bulls“ whose sperm is used to cover almost half of the total number of inseminations across Estonia. Sperm is a highly valued product. Fortunately it can be preserved in liquid nitrogen at a temperature of 196 degrees Celsius for a period of up to fifty or sixty years. The price of one dose depends on the characteristics of the donating bull. The most expensive dose can be purchased at 55 euros, based on the information given on the cooperative's website, but for the most part one dose costs around four to ten euros. Thanks to their cooperation with the leading countries involved in the breeding process (The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, the USA, and Canada) Estonian breeders can use the world's top class breeding materials.

In order to improve the welfare of the animals, they built a free-range barn in Keava for 81 animals, something that is unique in the Baltic States, so that the five year maturation period for the animals is not as uncomfortable as it is for caged animals. Near the new barn, there is also a recently-built feed storage silo. The cooperative possesses almost 180 hectares of land, and they have built this silo for their own usage.

The cooperative is also linked into research and development work. Their project gained approval from the research and development measure in the Estonian Rural Development Plan, allowing them to develop a form of technology that permits the genetic value of animals to be proved in an easier and faster way (in other words, genome selection). A sex-selection production technology, meaning that sex-selected frozen bull semen will be produced, is aimed to be developed with the help of the aid received under the same project.

Currently there are 125 bulls involved in the programme to improve breeds. The cooperative tries to hold its indicators high by renting some bulls from the best breeding enterprises across Europe. A total of 10% of the income will go to the owner of the bull.

The land held by the cooperative is in good order and the cattle sheds are extremely clean. Peeter Padrik emphasises that all of their employees have been working there for a long time, and that they simply do not hire random people off the streets.

### Extra information:

The cooperative was established in 1993  
The turnover in 2011 was 9.2 million euros  
The cooperative has 1,200 members

### Project activities:

Building a pedigree bull barn  
and feed storage



Triinu Schneider

## Producing eco-juice

**Beneficiary:**

Triinu Schneider, self-employed entrepreneur

**Location:**

Esiküla, Kassari, Hiiumaa Island

**Support:**

Support amount from Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 Measure 1.4.1 (Investments into micro enterprises), Measure 3.1 (Investment support for the diversification of the rural economy), and the Leader Measure in the area of Hiiumaa Cooperation Network LAG to a total of 34,405 euros

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## You can live and work on Hiiumaa Island when you do it with all your heart

**W**hen Triinu Schneider started producing apple juice in Hiiumaa, it was because it was a traditional activity for Estonians anyway. Who has not picked apples from their garden, made them into apple juice and bottle it? This often amounted to about 300 litres at once, enough for the family for two years, as apples tend to crop over the course of a year.

Since Estonia's market economy has developed, it has become easier to buy juice from grocery shops since the squeezing-boiling-bottling process is fairly arduous work. Triinu's parents privatised a large apple garden in Kassari as the collective farm system was being ended. All together it amounts to six hectares. The garden contains various varieties of apple tree, including the favourite of Estonians, the Golden Reinette. The crop of apples were collected each autumn, something had to be done with them. In addition, based on the modern approach, the whole production process is considered to be purely ecological - in other words it is very valuable raw material. From Triinu's point of view the apples should be squeezed, bottled and sent to supermarkets, but the question is how to achieve this while also considering the tiniest input in terms of finance and time. With the help of her brother, Triinu composed a sketch of a juice squeezer that would squeeze the apples as fast as possible, creating high quality apple juice at the same time. The squeezer had to be made of stainless steel, so that the juice could be a slightly rusty colour, just as good home-made juice should be.

*"Just start working - that's how you will start loving the things you do!"*

*Triinu Schneider, self-employed entrepreneur*

Triinu found a possible producer of squeezers in Austria who was willing to turn her sketch into reality after a long period of negotiations. Triinu purchased the juice squeezer on its wheelbarrow after placing a special order with a company called Voran, and it allows a hundred litres of apple juice to be squeezed within ten minutes, with Triinu's help of course. The wheelbarrow allows her to be mobile so that she can take her squeezer anywhere that has a need for making juice. Every autumn, Triinu also travels inland to offer her juice squeezing service.

Despite all this activity, the juice squeezing is not enough, and for selling purposes the juice also needs to be bottled. Triinu has a kitchen at home that has been inspected and approved by the Veterinary and Food Board, which is where Triinu bottles the output from



### Project activities:

Purchasing the necessary equipment for producing fruit and vegetable juice (Measure 3.1), purchasing the pasteurising unit (Leader Measure), purchasing other necessary machines and apple tree plants (Measure 1.4.1)

her production. Triinu has also purchased a pasteurising unit with the same support from Voran, which she uses to fill two half litre bottles at a time with their red and green bottle caps. The heating process takes only thirty seconds, ensuring that the juice does not lose any of its necessary vitamins. Currently the annual output is at about 4,000 litres of juice.

Triinu ordered an analysis of the juice from the Veterinary and Food Board, and the results were excellent. The juice has a long shelf life even without adding sugar, because the acid concentration in the apples is a good preservative.

This ecologically-friendly product, which is known as Triinu's Apple Juice, can be purchased from almost seventy shops all over Estonia. Triinu also has a really close working relationship with the marketing association, Ecological Estonia (Eesti Mahe), which distributes her products.

Triinu is also thinking about the future. This year she established a new apple-garden covering 1.7 hectares of land, mostly using a variety of apple tree that is favoured by Estonians, the Golden Reinette. That is how Triinu makes the whole undertaking sustainable because she thinks that Hiiumaa is the right place for her to live and work.



Arvi Aleste

## Automated barn

**Beneficiary:** Ltd Vaeküla Suurtalu

**Location:**  
Vaeküla, Sõmeru Municipality, Lääne-Viru County

**Support:** Support amount from Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 Measure 1.4.2 (Investments in livestock buildings) to a total of 500,000 euros

**Project period:** October 2012 to autumn 2012

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## The free-range cows of the Vaeküla Suurtalu automated barn produce 10% greater production volumes

The head of Vaeküla Suurtalu and board member, Arvi Aleste, says that while the automated barn does not contain any actual robots, it is still effectively a robot barn. The new barn was ready in February and an automatic feeding device was installed, a JOMBO, along with four automated milking machines which could also measure various milk indicators. A whole new ventilation system was built, with roof lighting and panels which allows a regular temperature and clean air to be maintained. To keep the cowsheds tidy, they are implementing a self-acting system which will ensure that manure will automatically drop to a lower level, so the animals are kept cleaner than they were in the old shed. The barn also has a diesel generator which guarantees an automatic 24-hour milking operation even when the national power supply is interrupted. The automated milking machine cleans itself thoroughly every

*“If we had not received the support, we would not have had any other choice but to end milk production.”*

*Arve Aleste*

The new cowshed has room for the animals of three entrepreneurs; they also keep together the young animals of all of the entrepreneurs. They started moving the animals into the new shed in the middle of February. Aleste, as an experienced farmer, knows that young animals would be able to get used to the new systems more easily, which is why he brought the young cows to the automated barn. Next to a new cowshed there is an old shed for the older cows. Heifers, on the other hand, are allowed to roam grazing land during the summer.

Only one person is capable of doing all of the work in the new cow shed, but somebody has to keep guard around the clock. The automated machine milks the cows an average of 2.7 times a day. The free range barn is designed to accommodate 282 cows but the animals are just being settled into the new sheds now, which is why two sheds are working simultaneously and not all of the places have yet been occupied. The plan is to buy more cows in order to reach maximum output for the new shed.

Arvi Aleste says that cows can enjoy themselves in the new shed. If the milk output in 2011 for eight months was 4900 kilos per cow, then the output for eight months of the new

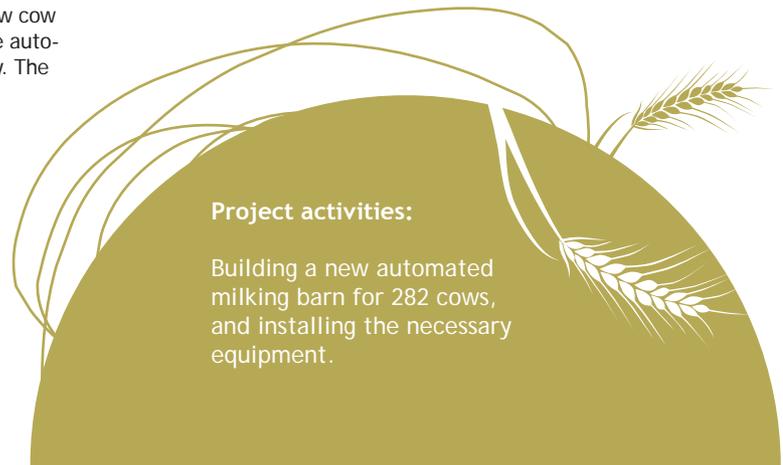
robot-barn was 5400 kilos - and the amounts of animal feed have not increased due to that. Robots are counting the food ration based by individual preferences, so that every cow could get the necessary amount and concentrate of feed. The average annual milk output per cow should be 9500 kilos. Aleste also emphasises that every cowshed needs a well or water system because cows need a lot of clean drinking water (70 litres of water per cow daily) to produce the best quality milk.

These are pretty tough times for dairy production at the moment, because the price of feed is high. But this sphere has never achieved its results easily; a good deal of calculations are required to be able to manage with reasonable resources and costs, thinks Aleste. The milk from Vaeküla Suurtalu is being sold to the Rakvere milking cooperative, and then onto the Estonian Milk Board (EPIKO), which will deliver the untreated milk to Lithuania. Some of the untreated milk goes to the innovative untreated milk automat in Rakvere, in the Põhjakeskus shopping centre, where everybody is able to buy natural unpasteurised milk.

The thought that Aleste cares a great deal about the welfare of the animals is also proven by the fact that he is the first person in Estonia to want to have an automated barn, but at that time, in 2005, they did not manage to secure enough support. The new project was ready in 2009; and they received their first support in 2010 and could then start building up the barn in 2011. Aleste says that if they had not received the support they needed, they would not have had any choice but to end milk production, as they had to end the production of grain in 2007. But now they are able to continue milk production, and the people of Vaeküla have work to go to. The future plans of Vaeküla Suurtalu involve building its own small industry and starting to deliver milk for the town's people.

### Project activities:

Building a new automated milking barn for 282 cows, and installing the necessary equipment.





Veiko Alberg

## Producing bio-humus

**Beneficiary:**  
Ökomuld Ltd

**Location:** Hõbesalu Village, Varbla Municipality, Pärnu County

**Support:** Support amount from Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 Leader Measure in the area of LAG Pärnu Bay Partnership to a total of 22,879 euros

**Project period and current state:** December 2010 to the end of 2012, the project is unfinished

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## Everything new is forgotten old one - nature's annual rotation gives power to the soil

With every passing year, securing a sufficient food supply for people is developing more and more into a crucial global problem. What is being emphasised is that production must be effective and output should be greater, which is why the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides has increased enormously. But this aspect of productivity also has another side. It is a widely accepted point of view that pesticides, which leave residues that often remain in the final food product, are safe, but in fact they are becoming more harmful to human organisms. This is the reason why "green thinking", a sphere of agriculture that does not use chemical compounds, is growing more popular in Estonia and around the entire world.

Veiko Alberg, who is a "green" producer for Ltd Õkomuld, which is based in Varbla Municipality, in Pärnu County, has actively developed manure-worm-breeding for producing bio-humus -vermin compost in other words - from the residues left by the vital activity of manure worms. It should be noted that the company name starts with the letter "õ" because the Business Register replaced the original "o" with an "õ", and whether this was done on purpose or not is unknown.

Veiko Alberg moved from the town to his current home a couple of years ago, along with his family. He remembers that the Varbla area was often called the Siberia of Pärnu County because it was a remote area in which the collective farming system was barely breathing. Now he hopes to enliven the village and create new jobs. Currently they are using the old cow shed for producing vermin compost, and the shed is being renovated with the help of an allocation of support funds. The shed's main floor space has received new floors, and the central ceiling and walls have been "winterised". The activity is continuous, so that in the future packaging can take place on the upper floor, and the roof will also be winterised to reduce the need for internal heating. To ensure their quality of life, the manure worms need a stable and warm ambient temperature, roughly around the 17-20 degrees Celsius mark. These are not the usual dew worms, they are bred in Russia. Two years ago, the company purchased 200 kilos of them, and the total volume of them now is up to as much as five or six tons.

The manure worm is bisexual; one egg contains twelve to fourteen 12-14 worms. Alberg will overturn the myth that the worms repro-

The motto of Ltd Õkomuld is:

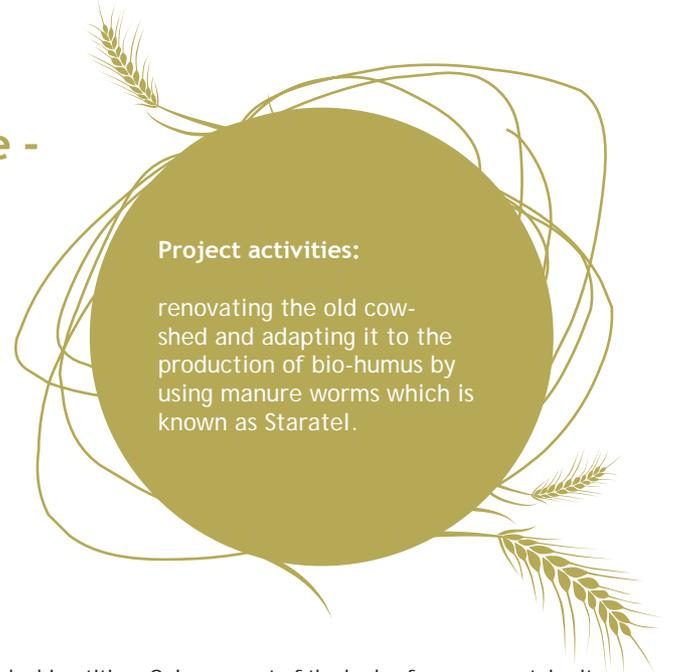
*"A cleaner environment guarantees a healthier future. Agriculture can be developed without using chemicals. Everything is in our own hands."*

### Project activities:

renovating the old cowshed and adapting it to the production of bio-humus by using manure worms which is known as Staratel.

duce by bipartition. Only one part of the body of a worm contains its respiratory system while the other part has its reproductive organs. Worms live in swathes of soil that have been mixed with manure, and they are fed with bovine manure. The swathe will grow annually by about 60cm, and the worms continue to move upwards within it because there they can find fresh feed. Veiko Alberg knows that it is not only bovine manure that is suitable for feeding them - mud from waste water works just as well. In fact, the worms are even able to eliminate oil pollution. This is why they could be used and grown for many different purposes. This is also one of the future aims of the company.

The manure produced by worms is dried out, sifted and packaged. The bio-humus output for this year is a total of eleven tons. The manure has only been available since this spring for purchase in markets by horticultural producers and the general public. The aim is to encourage plant growers and animal breeders to change over to chemical-free and environmentally-friendly production, because until the plants mature and animals have been raised, we have plenty of organic raw material for such undertaking. Plants use the vermin compost only as and when they need it, so there is no risk of nutrients accumulating in them. Bio-humus is a rich and odour-free substance which is suitable for fertilising both house and garden plants. Once the farm is ready to start working at its full capacity then Alberg determines that the annual output of Õkomuld Ltd should be between 50-100 tons of packaged bio-humus, or worm-manure in other words. The worms are also packaged for the use of fishermen and are available in fishing shops. So this activity is actually creating a varied array of opportunities.



## Investments in agriculture (RDP Measure 1.4)

### **The general aim of Measure 1.4:**

The general aim is to increase the competitiveness of agricultural production through the diversification of agricultural activities, the development of agriculture that meets the requirements, and the promotion of biomass usage. In order to fulfil these aims the agricultural entrepreneurs are being supported through three sub-measures: Sub-Measure 1.4.1 (investments into the development of micro-agricultural holdings); Sub-Measure 1.4.2 (investments into livestock buildings); Sub-Measure 1.4.3 (investments into the production of bio-energy).

### **Sub-measure 1.4.1 - investments into the development of micro-agricultural holdings: general aim, target group, and supported activities:**

The main aim is to raise the competitiveness of micro-agricultural enterprises through diversification and/or by developing production.

The target group is the micro-agricultural producers themselves (including joint activities organisations that have been formed by micro-agricultural producers). One investment programme can be supported by numerous micro-agricultural producers if the profits generated by the programme's subject are to be shared between them after their investments have been realised.

Supported activities for Sub-Measure 1.4.1: the construction and renovation of agricultural (production) buildings or facilities, to raise the competitiveness of micro agricultural entrepreneurs which act as animal breeders; the purchase of a machine or the equipment necessary for agricultural production; the purchase and installation of plant sets, a boundary fence and the construction of the plantation; the purchase and installation of beekeeping and mushroom production equipment.

**The implementation of Sub-Measure 1.4.1 in 2007-2012:** Sub-Measure 1.4.1 had five application calls in

2008-2011 (five in 2008, and one application run in 2009, 2010, and 2011). The plan is to hold the sixth application run at the end of 2012.

The total number of applications in 2008-2011 stood at 3,055. A total of 2,196 of them were approved, with support aid worth a total of 87 million euros (the total value of aid in terms of investments carried out with the help of the support is worth over 185 million euros).

About half of the approved projects (based on domain) in every application run concerned plant growing, while the remaining projects concerned various other domains

### **Sub-measure 1.4.2 - investments into livestock buildings: general aim, target group and supported activities:**

The main aims are to increase competitiveness, including in the facilitation of applying new technologies and innovations, and contributing to conformity requirements where these are related to the improvement of environmental and occupational safety and animal welfare.

The target group is agricultural producers who deal with breeding cows, pigs, sheep, goats, horses, or poultry, organisations formed to handle joint activities by agricultural producers, or independent agricultural producers who are working in cooperation.

The activities of Sub-Measure 1.4.2 cover investments into building and renovating livestock buildings.

### **The implementation of Sub-Measure 1.4.2 in 2007-2012:**

Sub-Measure 1.4.2 has had five application calls in 2008-2011 (two in 2008 and one each in 2009, 2010 and 2011). No further application calls are planned for this programming period.

The total number of applications in 2008-2011 was at 586. A total of 418 of them (71.3%) were approved, with support aid worth a total of 88.3 million euros. The average paid support aid came to 211,231 euros.

The biggest number of applicants and beneficiaries were combined producers, milk producers and stock-breeders (except those involved in milk production). Of all the approved applications, a total of 40.2% were combined producers, 26.3% were milk producers, and 18.2% were stock-breeders (excluding milk producers).

### Support application and approval by domain

Domain	Number of applications	Applied support aid, million euros	Number of approved applications	Supported investment aid, million euros	Paid support aid, million euros	Average assigned support, euros
Horticulture	173	4,13	133	7,10	3,34	25 000
Poultry farming	2	0,02	2	0,03	0,02	8 000
Animal husbandry	239	5,48	142	7,11	3,65	26 000
Milk production	278	10,05	164	12,77	6,09	37 000
Perm cultures	32	0,57	27	0,94	0,49	18 000
Pig breeding	13	1,05	9	1,75	0,80	89 000
Combined production	824	27,05	638	46,97	21,70	34 000
Plant cultivation	1 490	68,93	1 078	109,03	50,91	47 000
Other	4	0,07	3	0,11	0,06	21 000
<b>IN TOTAL</b>	<b>3 055</b>	<b>117,35</b>	<b>2 196</b>	<b>185,83</b>	<b>87,07</b>	<b>39 649</b>

### Support division by domains

Domain	Number of applications	Applied support aid, million euros	Number of approved applications	Assigned support aid, million euros	Relative importance of approved applications from the number of applications
Combined production	209	44,20	168	34,94	207 949
Milk production	167	44,04	110	27,41	249 217
Animal husbandry except milk production	121	14,58	76	9,41	123 808
Pig breeding	55	14,16	39	10,32	264 495
Plant cultivation	23	5,38	16	3,96	247 207
Poultry farming	10	2,86	8	2,18	272 486
Perm cultures	1	0,09	1	0,09	85 304
<b>IN TOTAL</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>125,31</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>88,29</b>	<b>207 209</b>

## Investments into the diversification of the rural economy (RDP Measure 3.1)

**R**DP Measure 3.1 aims to facilitate the diversification of agricultural production for agricultural entrepreneurs and the development of non-agricultural micro-entrepreneurship in rural areas. The projects are divided into two categories: small projects (public sector support worth up to 100,000 euros) and big projects (public sector support worth between 100,000 to 300,000 euros). The projects are also divided into two sub-measures: Sub-Measure 3.1.1 (diversification into non-agricultural activities) and Sub-Measure 3.1.2 (the development of micro-enterprises).

### The general aim of Measure 3.1:

The aim of Measure 3.1 is to increase the vivacity and sustainability of rural entrepreneurs through the diversification of rural entrepreneurship (mostly in remote areas) and to facilitate the creation and improvement of new jobs.

The aim of the big projects is to diversify agricultural production and to develop rural entrepreneurship through investments for bio-energy and other innovations. It will also facilitate the development of environmentally-friendly entrepreneurship and, according to the general aim - it will facilitate the process of creating better jobs.

### Sub-measure 3.1.1 - diversification into non-agricultural activities - specific aims:

Diversifying the activities implemented by agricultural producers with other non-agricultural activities that are realised in rural areas. Implementing the re-use of disused buildings with the aim of developing non-agricultural production and services.

### Sub-measure 3.1.2 -the development of micro-enterprises - special aims:

Developing non-agricultural micro-entrepreneurship where it is related to the improvement of living quality in rural areas based on local resources, and implemen-

ting the re-use of disused buildings with the aim of developing non-agricultural production and services.

### The special aims of Measure 3.1, which are common to both sub-measures:

- The special aims of Measure 3.1, which are common to both sub-measures;
- To facilitate the participation of youths and women in entrepreneurship, and to establish working conditions and services that correspond with the special needs of disabled people;
- To increase production volumes with the aim of marketing bio-fuel, bio-electricity, and bio-heat out of bio-mass.

### Target group for Measure 3.1:

The target-group for Sub-Measure 3.1.1 is agricultural micro-producers in rural areas, while small and medium producers can also apply for support while they are investing into the bio-energy field. The target-group for Sub-Measure 3.1.2 is micro-enterprises in rural areas.

### Supported activities for Measure 3.1:

- Developing mobile solutions for marketing various goods and services, and for implementing info-technology;
- Providing services in rural areas, including the development of multi-functional service-centres, and providing agricultural services;
- Investing into bio-energy production;
- Creating and improving accommodation services in rural areas.

### The target-area for Measure 3.1:

The sub-measure is implemented in Estonian rural areas. A rural area is considered to consist of municipalities (including towns in municipalities that have less than 4,000 inhabitants) and small towns with up to 4,000 inhabitants.

### Current state of Measure 3.1:

The implementation of the measure started in February 2008. There have been six application calls since the beginning of the

measure implementation period up until 2012. Four of them are for small projects (in 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012), and two of them are for big projects (in 2008 and 2010).

The total number of applications in 2008-2011 was 1,569. A total of 15% (230 projects) out of these were implemented by agricultural micro-entrepreneurs and 17% (266) were big projects. Out of all the projects from the period of 2008-2011, a total of 56% (761

projects) were approved, and the support aid for these projects was worth 66 million euros. A total of 14% (nine million euros) of these projects are being implemented by agricultural micro-entrepreneurs, and 34% (22.4 million euros) of it is meant for the implementation of big projects.

### Information about applications and support aid

Application call	Type of entrepreneur	Application		Assignment		
		Number of proposed applications	Support aid, million euros	Number of assigned support	Cost of eligible investment, million euros	Support aid, million euros
Small projects (2008, 2009, 2011, 2012)	Micro-entrepreneurs	1091	73,7	534	77,8	36,8
	Agricultural micro-entrepreneurs	212	12,1	124	14,3	6,8
	<b>In total</b>	<b>1303</b>	<b>85,7</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>92,1</b>	<b>43,7</b>
Big projects (2008, 2010)	Micro-entrepreneurs	248	53,5	91	43,3	20,2
	Agricultural micro-entrepreneurs	18	3,3	12	4,7	2,2
	<b>In total</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>56,8</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>48,0</b>	<b>22,4</b>
<b>IN TOTAL</b>		<b>1569</b>	<b>142,5</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>140,1</b>	<b>66,1</b>

**Figure: The division of approved applications and assigned support aid, and average support aid by domains**

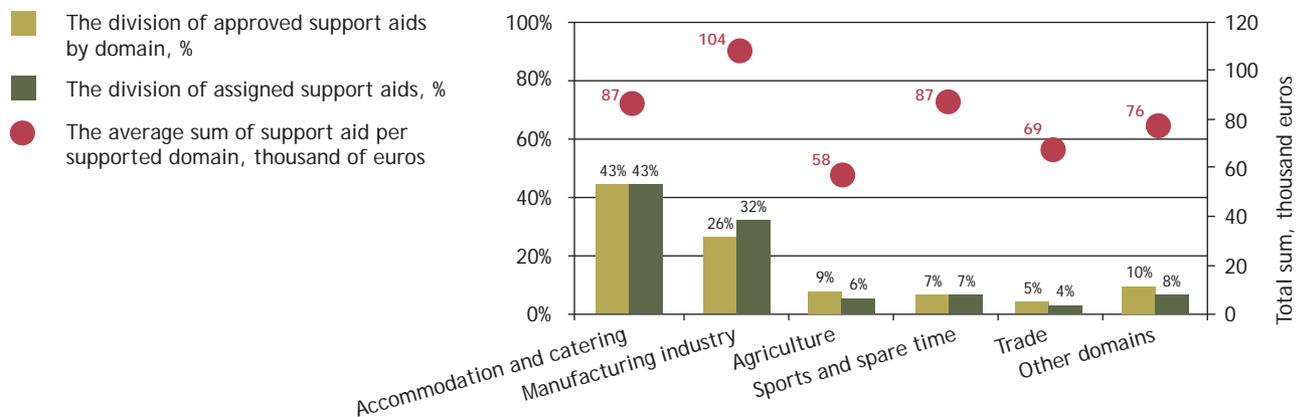




Photo by Roomet Sormus

## Applied research covering ecological grain farming

**Beneficiary:**  
Ltd Kuresoo  
**Location:**  
Avinurme, Ida-Viru County

**Support:** Support amount from RDP 2007-2013 Measure 1.7.1 (the development of new products, processes and technologies in the sectors of agriculture, food and forestry) to a total of 307,689 euros

**Project period and current state:** spring 2011 to winter 2014, the project is unfinished

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## Applied research covering ecological grain farming to raise crop productivity

At the beginning of 2011 the land usage for ecological cultivation purposes exceeded 120,000 hectares. The average productivity in ecological production is quite low in Estonia and it will probably stay lower than in mainstream production because of the technology available. The manager of Ltd Kuresoo, Mai Tooming, says that she lacks the knowledge about how to take the maximum out of ecological grain production. This is why she accepted the challenge to carry out thorough applied research together with Jõgeva Plant Breeding Institute (Jõgeva Sordiaietuse Instituut) and

*“Sangaste rye is like the Singing Festival for Estonians - it is incredibly important!”*

Mai Tooming

the Estonian Research Institute of Agriculture (Eesti Põllumajandus-uuringute Keskus) using support money.

Ecological grain production exceeds local consumption. Mai Toomingas is convinced that the successful development of ecological grain cultivation could continue without support only when they have managed to ensure good soil quality and have raised the ecological effectiveness of production. The production of stable quality ecological grain could allow higher prices to be demanded, therefore increasing the profitability of production.

The aim of the project is to carry out applied research about raising the effectiveness of ecological production, about sustainability, and about improving ecological grain quality. To fulfil this aim they are using the innovative direct sowing approach; exploring the concurrence of cultivating intensity and papilionaceous crops for soil and the growing processes of crops, for growing processes of crops, and field output and its quality; testing green manure and inter-crops and their usability during sowing; exploring the efficiency of various ecological fertilisers and bio-coal in terms of improving soil quality; exploring the usage of liquid manure; exploring the impact of nutrients, growing location, and cultivation method for seed quality and vitality. In addition they are exploring the factors that influence the quality of beer barley, and endeavouring to discover a growing method that is suitable for ecological agriculture, along with establishing how to use the opportunities offered by perm culture\* in large scale production.

In order to carry out the research and tests, they involved Jõgeva Plant Breeding Institute, and the tests are being carried out on plots held by the institute in the form of plot experiments, while Kuresoo Ltd and the farm of Jaan Tooming Väljaots are being used

for production experiments. They are purchasing the necessary equipment that will help to realise the project because its aim is to determine which are necessary for producing ecological grain. Last autumn, they started testing intercrops, something that was necessary for keeping the land “green” all the time, and avoiding the proliferation of weeds. Different intercrops have different influences on different plants, because they helping to release different soil minerals. Even so, the general aim of production is to increase crop output.

During the applied research phase they are going to develop technologies that are suitable for ecological production. Hopefully, the new knowledge gained from this will help to raise crop output and quality, and will increase the amount of stable quality, locally-produced ecological grain in the market. The project will end at the beginning of 2014, and has already been a positive influence for the enterprises that have been involved. The new knowledge gained through this experience will be shared with the members of Wiru Vili, a cooperative that was established in 2011 by Toomingas. The cooperation network involves an even wider group of entrepreneurs. Mai Toomingas believes that it is a really interesting project because, for example, in the case of direct sowing we know in which direction we need to move. Only time can show where we are finally heading. It is really great to see how producers are developing it together!

\* *Perm-culture* - At first it was a sustainable or continuous form of agriculture but nowadays the term has been widened a great deal to include harmony between limited resources, people and other creatures on the planet, creating a living place that answers the needs of its inhabitants.

### Project activities:

Carrying out the applied research in terms of raising the effectiveness of ecological production, increasing sustainability, and improving the quality of ecological grain.





Marika Vartla is on the right-hand side of the photo

### Training programme "From the home kitchen to consumers"

**Beneficiary:** The Rural Women's Society of Lääne-Viru County

**Location:** Mädapea Village, Rakvere Municipality, Lääne-Viru County

**Support:** Support amount from Estonian Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 Measure 1.1 (training and information activities) to a total of 9,816 euros

**Project period:** spring 2011 to autumn 2012

**Contact details:**

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## The HomeMade trademark (“Kodupoolis”) is a by word for interesting and delicious products made by the Rural Women’s Society of Lääne-Viru County

Some years ago, the Rural Women’s Society of Lääne-Viru County (Lääne-Viru Maanaiste Liit) gathered together a group of active ladies who are interested in cooking. Such an activity is nothing special because most of the women are related to cooking somehow, and some of them even take it as a real hobby. All of them have visited fairs in Lääne-Viru County and in Olustvere which have covered

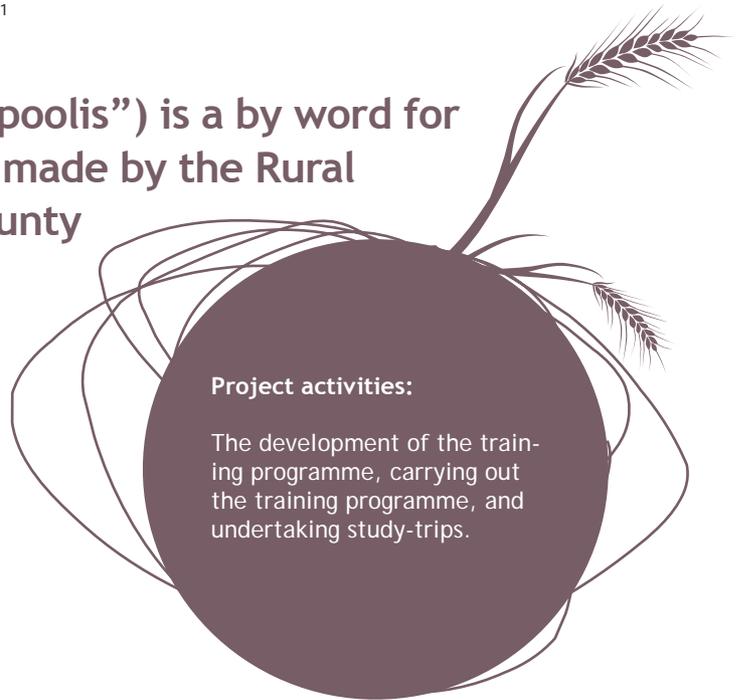
*“If you try really hard, it is possible to develop a home kitchen undertaking into a real job.”*

Marika Vartla

the subject of preserves and jams, as well as the pâté fair - and some of them did not have a job at the time. But they were united by a common wish to build up their levels of information in terms of one very popular theme - local food development. In addition to this, the project leader, Marika Vartla, participated in the study trip in Latvia-Lithuania-Poland in 2010 which was organised by the Estonian Rural Network Unit. These experiences gave them a strong push and showed that they had the willingness to start something similar in Estonia. They discussed the possibility that they could even share their knowledge with a wider audience. Thanks to this, the NGO was not able to finance their training, and people who do not have work tend not to be sitting on a pile of money, which meant that they decided to write a project in order to be able to receive support from Measure 1.1 of the Rural Development Plan. The project was approved and it included seven training sessions and three study trips: to visit the Taluturg at Lõunakeskus shopping centre in Tartu, the Sadamaturg in Tallinn, and Olustvere.

Koolituspäevadel seati eesmärgiks teadmised koduköökidest tunnustamisest ja teavitamisest ning toodete valmistamisest. Marika Vartla ütleb, et Veterinaar- ja Toiduameti soovitud ja õpetussõnadest oli väga palju abi. Praeguseks on teavitatud-tunnustatud Lääne-Viru Maanaiste Liidu toiduhuviliste sektiooni liikmete 4-5 kodukööki, kus saab ja tohib valmistada tooteid ka müügi. Kuid Vartla sõnul tuleb neid kindlasti juurde, sest nagu koolitusel õpetati, saab koduköögi lihtsate vahenditega teha nõuetekohaseks.

Kui alguses seati eesmärgiks välja töötada 20 uut toodet, siis koolituspäevade lõpuks sai neid kokku 46. Kõik kohalikust toorainest. Ja kui palju mõtteid ja ideid uuteks toodeteks, mida võiks arendada! Aga koduköögis keetmisest-küpsetamisest üksi on vähe, need tooted tuleb ka maha müüa. See on juba keerulisem. Ühiselt otsustati luua oma kaubamärk Kodupoolis, et selle all saaksid oma tooteid müüa



### Project activities:

The development of the training programme, carrying out the training programme, and undertaking study-trips.

need kodukokad ja -pagarid, kes on lõpetanud Maanaiste Liidu korraldatud koolituse ja saanud tunnustuse. Oma kaubamärk peab tarbijatele andma kindla teadmise kodumaisest toorainest, koka oskustest ja toote kvaliteedist. Kaubamärk töötati välja ilma rahalise toeta - saadi lihtsalt isekeskis kokku, uuriti ja mõeldi, mis sellel võiks olla ja kuidas seda kujundada.

Marika Vartla ütleb uhkuse ja rõõmuga, et suur tunnustus tuli eelmisel aastal Olustveres toimunud hoidistemessil, kus Lääne-Viru maanaised said kokku neli esikohta. Nüüd on need ja paljud muud põneva koostise ja nimetustega tooted müügil Tallinna Sadamaturul ja Tartus taluturul, neid võib tihti leida ka kohalikest laadadelt ja messidelt. Marika Vartla aga kutsuti tänava Olustvere hoidiste messi žürii liikmeks. Üks väike nüanss veel, mida Marika rõhutab: võidud tulid tänu sellele, et hoidiseid pakuti messi külastajatele maitsta. See on väga hea võimalus oma toote tutvustamiseks.

Üks oluline asi õpiti koolituspäevadel veel selgeks - kuidas paken-dada oma toodet ja teha neile silte. Ka siin oli palju abi kogenud õpetajatest nii VTA-st kui Maailikoolist ja Olustvere Teenindus- ja Maamajanduskoolist.

Kui väga tahta, siis võib koduköögist saada ka uus töökoht, teab nii Marika Vartla kui ka tema ettevõtlikud kaaslannad Rakvere Maanaiste Liidust. Oktoobri teisel nädalal sõideti aga jälle teadmisi saama – seekordseid maitseid otsiti Lätist ja Leedust.



Foto: Tiiu Marran ja Kaire Mets



## Trainings for agricultural and food sector entrepreneurs

**Beneficiary:** The Foundation Development Centre of Põlva County

**Location:** Keskk 20, Põlva

**Support:**  
Support amount from Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 Measure 1.1 (training and information activities) to a total of 57,730 euros for five projects

**Project period:** autumn 2008-2012

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## One project is not enough to be able to teach one how to be a successful entrepreneur

The foundation known as the Development Centre of Põlva County is a county-based consultation and development entrepreneurship which was established by county's own authorities with the aim of promoting balanced and successful development in the area. To fulfil these aims, they are implementing development programmes and projects, consulting entrepreneurs and civil societies, and organising training and research.

Põlva County is a traditional agricultural area. The production of agricultural products, food and drinks is still one of the most important industries in the area. This supplies jobs for more than 600 people, and its annual budget is about a fifth of the total proceeds from sales made by all of the entrepreneurs in the county. This is why local production plays a really important role in maintaining the local living and business environment, as well as in retaining local jobs.

One of the priorities of the Development Centre is to promote agricultural and food production. To ensure this, the centre has organised training, study-trips, and counselling. It has also established a network which connects local producers. The Greener Mark of Põlva County (Põlvamaa Rohelisem Märk) is a label that guarantees that the product has been made in Põlva County and that it is made of local raw materials. It supports cooperation with it by small businesses because it is a win-win situation for everybody. It is easier to pop out and market the products across the entire network, and communications between members facilitates the creation of new synergies. Through the publication entitled "Farm Food of Põlva County: Stories about our experiences" ("Põlvamaa talutoit: Lood meie kogemustest"), the good practices that have been generated by all of this can also be shared with the readers.

The members of the Development Centre of Põlva County have realised that one project is not enough to improve the competitiveness of the small entrepreneur. It is a process that will be repeated times over from different point of views and in various spheres. In addition, the training groups do not have quite enough participants, so the aim is to sharpen up the learning process and facilitate the process of finding new direct contacts. The manager of the Development Centre, Kaire Mets, and its project manager, Tiit Marran, point out the importance of common work between the consultant tutors and the producers. Only activities that are handled together can deliver the best results that will develop the business.

\* *Knowledge* - a collective pool of information about a particular subject. Knowledge transmission is the distribution of knowledge.

*"One project is not enough to improve the competitiveness of a small business. Developments are much more noticeable and much more long-term when they are continuous."*

Kaire Mets

For now, the Development Centre has organised four groups of information training programmes with the help of the support. The aim of these training programmes is to support the diversification and development of agricultural products. The training methods include organising lectures, providing consultation, and tutoring, and the centres has had study days at Polli Product Development Centre (Polli Tootearenduskeskus), the micro dairy house at the Estonian University of Life Sciences (Eesti Maaülikool), and in Olustvere School of Service and Rural Economics (Olustvere Teenindus- ja Maamajanduskool). The Development Centre also has really close ties of cooperation with

academics at the Estonian University of Life Sciences and the University of Tartu. The training has shown visible results. Entrepreneurs have continued developing their products, and some of these have already reached the external market. For example, the tea blends that are produced by Põhjala Farm are being exported to Germany, and a number of restaurants in Tallinn are hoping to offer their tea soon. Another

good example is Ltd Lõuna Pagarid, which redesigned its packaging with the help of a designer, and the sales figures of Mooste Linen Bun (Mooste Linakukkel) have increased two fold.

There are also new ongoing projects. They published a book about marketing for small producers which was written by Tiit Ohvril, who is an academic at the Estonian University of Life Sciences; another publication which was released was "Product Development for Small Producers", which was written by Indrek Kivisalu. The book teaches readers how to reach consumers. In addition, they are implementing a project known as FOODART which involves the food producers and restaurants of South Estonia and Northern Latvia.

### Project activities:

Organising training projects entitled "The Diversification of Rural Entrepreneurship" (January-March 2009), "Developing farm production" (January - March 2010), "New Product - New Opportunities" (January-March 2011 and publication in June 2012), "The common marketing and sale of agricultural- and food products" (January-April 2012), and a brochure was also produced, entitled "About the marketing processes of the small producer. How to stand out above the big players" (November 2012).



Mati Koppel  
Photo by Reve Lambur

## Applied research in potato growing

**Beneficiary:**  
Farm Association Talukartul

**Location:** Allikjärve Village, Roosna-Alliku Municipality, Järva County

**Support:** Support amount from Rural Development Plan 2007-2013 Measure 1.7.1 (Cooperation in the development of new products, processes and technologies in the sectors of agriculture, food and forestry) to a total of 85,694 euros

**Project period and current state:** spring 2010 to winter 2013, the project is unfinished

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## Applied research for developing a potato blight protection system

This is a three year cooperation project between CA Talukartul and Jõgeva Plant Breeding Institute (PBI). The project is led by Jõgeva PBI which is managed by Mati Koppel. The exact name of the applied research is quite difficult to for the average person to fully understand: "The protection of place-specific potato blight and the implementation of a monitoring system for irrigation need to raise the quality of potatoes and optimising their cost price". But the actual content is not so difficult in essence. They are exploring a protection system to prevent potato blight with the help of automatic weather forecast centres that are situated in the fields, as well as observing the need for humidification for potatoes.

One of the project activities was to build thirteen automatic weather forecast observatories in potato fields all over Estonia, and three enterprises have two automatic stations. The recorded by the stations will be automatically saved and will be available via the internet for all of the project's participants. The website also allows farmers to subscribe to a local weather forecast which is based on the location of the observatory.

The automatic observatories can measure atmospheric humidity and temperature, precipitation, Aeolian speed, solar radiation, frost and soil humidity with an inner ground sensor. The observatories are powered by solar batteries and the information they record is sent directly to the server in Austria by GPRS modem. The observatories

can be programmed to measure the information and send it to users at whatever frequency is required. The information is measured once every half an hour. The information that is received is uploaded to the internet three times a day, which means that the farmer can check for new information every morning, at midday and in the evening.

*"You cannot grow potatoes without using any fertilisers, but with the help of the weather observatories it is possible to reduce the amount of chemicals you use, and this is also good for the health of consumers."*

Mati Koppel

All necessary guides, the website content, and the usable programmes are translated into Estonian. They have licences for various potato blight protection

programmes and for local forecasts. In the first phase of the project, Jõgeva PBI gave out some advice based on the types of field held by the participants, letting farmers know when to carry out their preparation and what kind of preparation they might need to protect their fields against potato blight, which helps farmers to know when to spray their crops.

With the help of the project there will be training for farmers to teach them how to use the programmes individually.

As a result of the project there is now the chance of carrying out regular monitoring on soil humidity levels. For example, in June 2011 the soil humidity levels varied by as much as double their original values, depending on the location of the observatory centre, these being the one at Jõgeva which produced a reading of 67mm, while Kohila produced 137mm, and Ingliste read 124mm. The soil humidity levels are measured with a sensor that is located 20cm under the ground.

The observatories share some highly useful information, but it is too difficult to understand and use by the average agricultural entrepreneur and it needs a lot of work. Using the programmes that deal with the information that the sensors record is quite common in foreign countries, but this is not yet the case in Estonia. Thanks to this, it has emerged that each and every country has its own special needs, and it is not possible to transmit the developed programmes and models. They need some improvements and adaptation in accordance with local circumstances, which is why working with science institutions is especially important for entrepreneurs.

### Project activities:

Implementing applied research in terms of protection against potato blight and the need for humidification based on the information collected via the internet from the automatic weather observatories.



## Training and information activities (RDP Measure 1.1)

The training and information activities are becoming more and more important for the development of the agricultural, food and forestry sectors. These activities help to improve and develop the competitiveness of the agricultural sector, as well as the capability of these businesses to be able to succeed and the levels of employment that they engender.

### General aim of Measure 1.1:

To improve the competitiveness of the agricultural, food and forestry sectors through the development of the human potential in those sectors, mostly by offering further education and retraining. The measure also facilitates an increase in the potential for active minds and sustainability in rural areas.

### Specific aims of Measure 1.1:

- To support in-service training, retraining, and the transfer of knowledge for those people who are being employed in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors with a view to improve their competitiveness on the employment market and to develop their enterprises.
- To support the transfer of knowledge through the dissemination of scientific information, scientific achievements and innovative practices amongst those people who are engaged in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors.

### Beneficiaries of Measure 1.1:

This measure is targeted at state and municipal institutions, private schools that have training licences, private-public legal entities (for the purposes of Section 2 of the Adult Education Act), and self-employed entrepreneurs. The beneficiaries are divided into three groups: public sector (state institutions), private sector, and third sector (non-governmental organisations). When calculating the number of applicants from the various sectors, the highest proportion of them came from the third sector, a total of 58.6% of all of them. The final beneficiary of the support aid is the agricultural producer, the private fo-

resty holder, an entrepreneur who is processing products from the agricultural or non-forestry sector, or the employee of an enterprise mentioned previously. A trainer, adviser or information specialist can be the final beneficiary only in cases involving information activities.

### Supported activities for Measure 1.1:

- Organising training activities (lasting for a number of days), including organising study-trips and participating in training programmes;
- Organising training activities (lasting for a single day), including organising a field-trip and participating in information days;
- Organising a conference and participating in that conference;
- Ordering the service instructor;
- Gaining an occupational qualification;
- Preparing, compiling, improving, designing, shaping, multiplying, printing and buying publications, including manuscripts;
- Developing a training programme and curriculum;
- Purchasing presentation equipment and software.

### Implementing Measure 1.1:

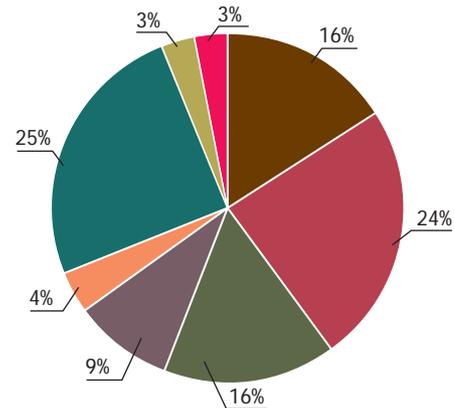
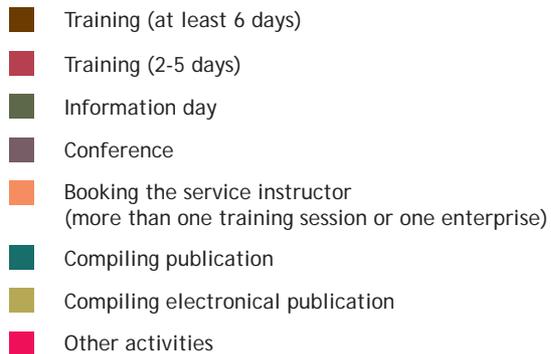
Measure 1.1 had five application calls in 2008-2012 which were divided in two based on their activities: national and regional activities. The total number of applications was 1,428 (of these 432 were national and 996 were regional), and 1,011 of these were approved (with 219 being national and 792 being regional). Support aid for training and information activities for the whole period amounts to 4.2 million euros. The last application call will be opened in January 2013.

The biggest slice of national activities support applications were about compiling publications (25%), while the smallest were for compiling electronic publications (3%), and other activities (3%). The biggest slice of regional activities applications were about organising information days (57%), while the smallest were about developing a training programme, purchasing presentation equipment and publications, and booking the service instructor.

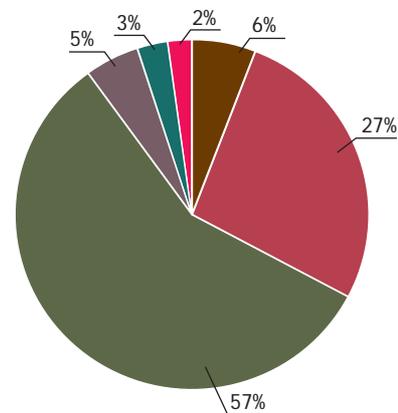
### The division of national support aid, based on the volume of support aid and activities in 2008-2012.

Activities	Assigned support aid, euros	Number of activities
Compiling publications	577 114	186
Training (2-5 days)	542 848	76
Information days	358 026	110
Training (at least 6 days)	357 962	25
Conferences	215 230	47
Booking the service instructor (more than one training session or one enterprise)	98 940	16
Other activities	76 007	31
Compiling electronic publications	68 957	20
<b>IN TOTAL</b>	<b>2 295 084</b>	<b>511</b>

### The division of national support aids in 2008-2012



### The division of regional support aids in 2008-2012



## Cooperation in the development of new products, processes and technologies in the sectors of agriculture, food and forestry (RDP Measure 1.7.1)

RDP Measure 1.7.1 facilitates those research and development activities which help to support cooperation between agricultural producers-processors and research and development institutions so that they are able to carry out applied and comparison research or benchmarking, and to aid in the marketing develop processes. In a situation in which competitiveness is growing in both the national and external markets, innovations in the agricultural, food and forestry sector are becoming more and more valuable. These innovations help to guarantee the usage and good quality of raw materials, and to market it with higher added value. The final aim of Measure 1.7.1 implementation is to help to raise the levels of competitiveness and sustainability of local entrepreneurs.

### General aim of Measure 1.7.1:

To improve the competitiveness of the agricultural, food and forestry sectors through the promotion of cooperation between raw materials producers in the agricultural and forestry sector, the processing industry, and/or third parties, and to attain a higher level of innovation in the given sector by doing this.

### Specific aims of Measure 1.7.1:

- To facilitate innovations, and research and development activities among entrepreneurs;
- To develop new products with a high sales potential and/or export potential and innovative processes and technologies, in order to improve the performance of the enterprises in the sector and to ensure the sustainability of the environment and energy savings;
- To improve the quality of products;
- To improve the quality of raw materials.

### Beneficiaries of Measure 1.7.1:

- Producers of raw materials in the agricultural and forestry sectors and those industrial enterprises that are active and which are registered in Estonia;

- Profit-making organisations that involve agricultural producers who have been acknowledged as a producer group and which are active and registered in Estonia.

Support can also be applied for by two or more applicants together.

### Activities of Measure 1.7.1:

Those cooperation projects that are supported are ones, which are directed at the improvement of general performance and sustainability, which covers the improvement of general economic indicators, a decrease in environmental load, and the growth of export potential. The project activities are related to the production and/or processing and marketing of the products provided in Annex I of the EC Treaty, or forestry products, or related products except wooden construction materials and furniture products, and tobacco.

### Cooperation projects for Measure 1.7.1 may include the following:

- Benchmarking conducted to assess the suitability of technologies, plant species and animal breeds, with the objective of gaining knowledge about the suitability of various existing technologies, plant species and animal breeds for the existing production conditions.
- Applied research and product development which are related to the sphere of production and processing in the agricultural and forestry sector (including bio-energy cultures and bio-fuel; food quality schemes, functional products or products that are meant for people with special needs; and also energy saving technologies).

### The current state of Measure 1.7.1:

Measure 1.7.1 was firstly implemented in 2010. There have been three application calls, but there will not be any application calls in this period. A total of 43 applications were nominated, worth a total of 9.4 million euros, and 26 of them have been approved, worth a total of 5.4 million euros. The projects are divided in two based on activities: product development (one project) and the realisation of applied research (25 projects).

### The approval of applications per year

Year	Budget, in euros	The total sum of assigned support aids, in euros	The number of beneficiaries
2010	5 240 755	1 143 436	5
2011	3 200 000	1 300 011	8
2012	4 000 000	2 979 902	13

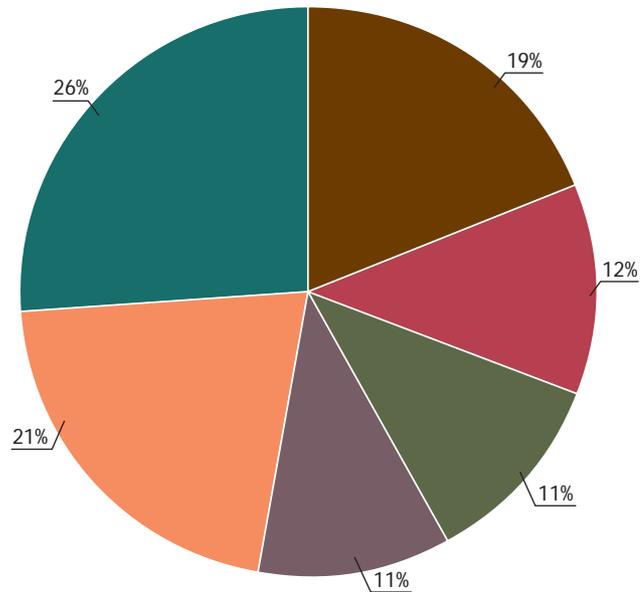
The approved projects were related to the following spheres:

- agricultural direct production
- forestry
- producing the processed product
- producing the technical product

### Support division by the domains of approved projects

Domain	The number of approved projects	Total amount of support aid, in euros
Fruit and vegetables	7	1 029 621
Meat	2	619 911
Milk	3	618 407
Forestry	2	614 668
Grain	5	1 153 640
Other	7	1 387 103

### Support division by the domains



There are National Rural Networks in every member state of the European Union. There is also a European Network for Rural Development on the level of European Union. The website address for the European Network for Rural Development is <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>

The tasks of the Estonian Rural Network Unit are realised by the Rural Network bureau at the Rural and Fisheries Department of the Rural Economy Research Centre. The Rural Network unit is located in Jäneda Tapa Municipality in Lääne-Viru County. The website address for the Rural Economy Research Centre is [www.maainfo.ee](http://www.maainfo.ee)

The aim of the Estonian Rural Network is to contribute to the implementation of the Estonian Rural Development Plan. To this end, we are networking with rural development stakeholders, supporting Leader Measure local action groups, promoting large-scale initiatives, communicating with the Rural Network Units of other European Union member states, and realising a large number of other activities that help to facilitate the development of Estonian rural areas.

One of the most important tasks of the Estonian Rural Network is to collect, analyse and disseminate projects and good practice in Estonia. The publication and the competition that has been organised under the "Notice the Innovative Agriculture" banner is one of the results of such activity.

In addition to this, we are busy collecting together various elements of good practice into the "RDP project examples database", which is available on our website, under the sub-section "Rural Network". The projects that are being supported by the Rural Development Plans of various European Union countries are available in the database of the European Network for Rural Development, which can be accessed via its website at [http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp\\_view/en/view\\_projects\\_en.cfm](http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_projects_en.cfm) (RDP Projects Database).

Dear readers, if you have spotted any worthy projects that have received support from the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013, please email all of the relevant information to us at [seminar@maainfo.ee](mailto:seminar@maainfo.ee). This will help us to improve our RDP project examples database. Thank you.

In reading this, I hope that you have been able to gain some great ideas of your own and have found the strength of will to carry on with your activities.

With all my respect  
Krista Kõiv  
Head of the Rural and Fisheries Network Department





*"If one member earns more, it does not mean that somebody else should make smaller profit."*

*Sulev Kuus, the chairman of the board of the Milk producers Cooperative of Tartu County*



*"Just start working - that's how you will start loving the things you do!"*

*Triinu Schneider,  
self-employed entrepreneur*



*"One project is not enough to improve the competitiveness of a small business. Developments are much more noticeable and much more long-term when they are continuous."*

*Kaire Mets,  
the head of the Foundation Development Centre of Põlva County*

  
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