

Review of actions for 2015

“Captain Vassilis” Foundation



Actions concluded in 2015



Introduction

All throughout 2015, the “Captain Vassilis” Foundation aimed at establishing itself as a major factor in the area’s agricultural development. For that reason, it focused on repeating the actions that were met with success, the open events, and the direct approach of the producers, in addition to introducing new initiatives based on the area’s needs. Despite the difficult year, due to the volatile and difficult political and financial circumstances, the Foundation continued to establish its presence in the area, earning the trust of organizations and producers alike, through its dedication and the implementation of actions that support sustainable agricultural development in Messinia.

Section 1: Agricultural sector development

SUBSECTION A: Improvement of competitiveness

1. Agricultural development workshop – Presentation of the results of the clinical research on oleocanthal, and other events of the Foundation

Participants: 170 producers

Description: The “Captain Vassilis” Foundation organized an open workshop titled “Prospects of the Agricultural Sector

in Messinia 2015,” which took place on Friday, November 6, in Kalamata. The “Captain Vassilis” Foundation presented the results of its actions and collaborations, and provided the opportunity to the producers and professionals of the Messinian rural economy to exchange useful knowledge and information regarding the developments and new prospects in the agricultural sector. More specifically, the seminar presented the results of the clinical research carried out on American citizens regarding the beneficial properties of Messinian olive oil on cardiovascular health, as it is rich in oleocanthal and oleacein. Part of the seminar was Mr. Dimitris Bilalis’ presentation of the advantages of Messinian local varieties, as well as their promotion potential. Mr. Sotiris Koutsomitros, of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, laid down the guidelines for the new Common Agricultural Policy, and Mr. Ioannis Kyriakopoulos, together with Mr. Antonis Paraskevopoulos, analyzed the expansion of “P.D.O. Kalamata.” The seminar concluded with the presentation of the Virtual Museum of the Messinian Diet by Mr. Xenophon Kappas and Ms. Maria Mavrogeni, as well as Mr. Vassilis Dimopoulos and Ms. Ioanna Milioni’s presentation of the results of the collaboration between the “Captain Vassilis” Foundation and the Technological Educational Institute (T.E.I.) of Peloponnese’s Olive Oil Tasting Laboratory.

Improvement of competitiveness



2. Collaboration with the Agricultural University of Athens, local varieties, phase 2

Collaborators: Agricultural University of Athens, Costa Navarino, local producers

Description: After the completion of the first phase, which included recording information on Messinian local varieties and collecting seeds, the study entered its second phase. In order for some of those varieties to be put to commercial use, they had to be produced at a larger scale, and their commercial qualities had to be recorded. More specifically, the experimental phase began with producers from Messinian Mani, who sought out local fava bean varieties. The two varieties examined were the *Vicia fabaminor* and the *Vicia fabamacro*. After that, the most suitable area was selected, and the two varieties were sown. By the end of May, the plants had concluded their biological cycle, and it was time for harvest. From the next growing season, the seeds will be available to local producers for mass production, and to Costa Navarino, to be utilized, initially, within the unit's restaurants.

3. Collaboration with the National Kapodistrian University of Athens on the analysis of the metabolites present in black currants

Collaborators: National Kapodistrian University of Athens, "Kalamata Papadimitriou" company

Description: It has been proven that Corinthian (black) currants are rich in polyphenols, and may have antioxidant properties. In order to promote the value and uniqueness of the black currant, a study was carried out on the secondary metabolites it contains, given that many of them are especially beneficial for people. Corinthian currants are almost exclusively produced in the Peloponnese and the Ionian islands. Other types of currant that are widely consumed all over the world are the Turkish sultanina, as well as the currants produced in California. Previous phytochemical studies indicate the presence of anthocyanins, flavonoids and phenolic acids. The purpose of this study was to make a comparative phytochemical analysis of the three currant types. The results regarding the high nutritional value of Corinthian currants are encouraging, and a new research cycle will commence, in order to consolidate this knowledge.

Support & improvement of human resources

SUBSECTION B: Support & improvement of human resources

1. Professional practice for university students

The “Captain Vassilis” Foundation welcomed the two students of the Agricultural University of Athens, who are working on a program for the cultivation and reproduction of Messinian seeds, aiming towards the commercial utilization of some of those varieties.

2. Agricultural meetings

Participants: 120

Description: As part of the Foundation’s main goals to help Messinian producers keep up with the latest developments, a cycle of open presentations has been initiated in more areas of Messinia, which are purely agricultural. During a meeting, the guest scientist presents specific practical topics (quality improvement, protection of the produce, olive tree diseases etc.), and then the producers and the audience have the opportunity to hold discussions and ask questions. The aim of these educational agricultural meetings is to provide information to professional and new agriculturalists, agricultural product processors, and other professionals in this field. Five meetings have taken place so far, in Diavolitsi,

Koroni, and Gargaliani, with the participation of approximately 120 producers and agricultural professionals.

3. Acquisition of equipment for the “Dimitra” Greek Agricultural Organization in Kyparissia

Collaborators: “Dimitra” Greek Agricultural Organization

Description: With the reconstitution of the public “Dimitra” Greek Agricultural Organization, a noticeable effort has taken place to improve the agricultural education center in Trifylia. This center, located in Kyparissia, is very active, and it is the only one in Greece that meets all specifications, as it has been certified to international standards. Costs were covered for the purchase of 12 computers, which was deemed necessary both for the center’s certification and for the training of Messinian producers. More than 1,300 people participated in educational programs in 2015. Indicative of the center’s importance is the fact that it trained and certified 50% of all producers from all over Greece in the use of plant protection products.

3. “Books on Wheels” (mobile libraries by “Pyrna”)

Collaborators: “Pyrna”

Description: The “Pyrna” organization carried out the “Books on Wheels” program across Messinia’s elementary schools. The program comprises three parts, “Gardens, vegetable gardens and orchards,” “Messinian diet,” and “Peloponnese, nature and culture.” The program also ran during the 2015-2016 school year. “Books on Wheels” reached 16 schools in the Prefecture of Messinia, and 5 schools in the Prefecture of Ilia. Moreover, approximately 800 students became acquainted with the pleasure of reading, and got to know their own land better.

Agricultural meeting in Diavolitsi



Support & improvement of human resources

From the program “Extra virgin olive oil: the art of blending,” at the Dutch Embassy’s Orange Grove



4. Funding of the program “Extra virgin multi-varietal olive oil: the art of blending”

Collaborators: Technological Educational Institute (T.E.I.) of Peloponnese’s Olive Oil Tasting Laboratory

Description: The program “Extra virgin multi-varietal olive oil: the art of blending” included an analysis of the flavor and aromatic features of Greek varieties, with the aim of creating new flavors and aromas in multi-varietal olive oils, as well as steadily reproducing them in every olive-growing season. The program’s instructors were internationally acclaimed specialist multi-varietal olive oil tasters. The two-day program took place in three cities, Kalamata, Chania, and Athens, in an effort to promote the Kalamata Olive Oil Tasting Laboratory. More than 60 company executives, producers, and tasting group members participated.

5. Funding of conference titled “Complete plant protection of olive groves”

Collaborators: Technological Educational Institute (T.E.I.) of Peloponnese

Description: The Technological Educational Institute of Peloponnese organized the 7th international conference on complete olive grove plant protection in Kalamata. The presence

of experts from all over the world took the services provided to a higher level, establishing Kalamata as a significant research center. Sixty-four expert scientists from 11 countries participated: Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Croatia, Iran, Tunisia, and the USA. The participants expressed great interest, since the meeting provided an opportunity for the promotion and diffusion of the most recent research data on olive plant protection, and also for fruitful communication and exchange of opinions, which strengthened their collaboration on their respective research fields.

6. Continuation of the Olive Tasting Educational Program for students in Messinia

Participants: 220 students (2015)

Description: The educational program aimed at schools, centering on the production of quality olive oil and its recognition through tasting practices, continues. Already possessing the necessary material from school year 2013-2014, when the program ran, as well as the experience gained from it in 2014-2015, the program continues for the school year 2015-2016.

Sustainable management of natural resources

At the moment, training takes place in Pylos and Kalamata, with the aim of reaching as many schools as possible. More than 250 students from all over Messinia have participated this year.

SUBSECTION C: Sustainable management of natural resources

1. Beach & creek clean-ups in the wider Messinia area

Collaborators: Municipality of Pylos-Nestor, Pylos Association of Enterprises for Tourism Development, Maritime Athletic Pylos Association “Nestor,” Pylos Nautical Sports’ Club.

Description: In June, people of all ages gathered in various areas of the Municipal Unit of Pylos, and cleaned the main square, the area around the Indoor Sports Center of Pylos, the monuments at Navarino Bay, and Divari beach. The activity was placed under the auspices of the Municipality of Pylos-Nestor, and was co-organized by the “Captain Vassilis” Foundation, the Pylos Association of Enterprises for Tourism Development, the Maritime Athletic Pylos Association “Nestor,” and the Pylos Nautical Sports’ Club. The activity was carried out with the participation of volunteers from the Kalamata Youth Center and the 6th Air Scouts System of Kalamata, who helped clean the area around Divari.

Beach clean-up at Divari



Section 2: FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

SUBSECTION: Working on market outreach and presence

1. Gastronomy seminars 2015

Participants: 150 food service professionals

Collaborators: Messinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Description: The “Captain Vassilis” Foundation has organized the “Messinian Gastronomy Seminars” for the third consecutive year, aimed at food service professionals. The three-day event took place in Costa Navarino on 20, 21 & 22 May 2015, with the aim of promoting and establishing the culinary tradition of Messinia, as well as supporting local products. More than 150 food service professionals participated, and they had the opportunity to meet other established professionals in the field, such as Lefteris Lazarou (Varoulko Seaside), Dimitris Melemenis (Costa Navarino), and Yiorgos Papaioannou (Armyra, Navarino Dunes & Papaioannou in Piraeus), exchanging valuable experiences and knowledge. The participants cooked alongside the three awarded chefs, and learned new ways to utilize local products, as a way of enhancing Messinian cuisine.

Working on market outreach and presence

One of the traditional recipes you can find at
www.messiniandiet.gr



2. Virtual Museum of the Messinian Diet

Description: In August, the Virtual Museum of the Messinian Diet, an endeavor of the “Captain Vassilis” Foundation, became available to the public. Its aim is to record, study, preserve and present the culinary heritage of the region. The museum gives the public the opportunity to learn more about the nutritional benefits of the Messinian diet, as well as the tradition that connects it with the modern way of life. Within this framework, the museum presents Messinian products, as well as products used in the preparation of Messinian recipes. Product selection is based on nutritional and historical criteria, given the fact that they are a fundamental part of the Messinian diet and the various traditional recipes, whereas many of them can be found on their own, or as part of other varieties, in other parts of the Mediterranean. The traditional recipes presented in the Virtual Museum of the Messinian Diet have been passed down from generation to generation, and constitute an integral part of Messinian tradition. The full content of the Virtual Museum of the Messinian Diet has already been translated; very soon, it will be available in English, and possibly another language. During the first six months of its operation, the Museum received more than 6,000 visitors.

3. Funding of the European program “Biotourism and the promotion of olive culture in Messinia”

Description: The Biopolitics International Organization organized the European program “Biotourism and the promotion of olive

culture in Messinia.” The aim of the program was to promote the comparative benefits of the Messinian land, more specifically the Municipalities of Kalamata, Trifilia, Pylos-Nestor, and Messini, and to create promotional material. All its activities (educational programs, seminars, publications, etc.), as well as all printed and digital material produced by this project (maps, informative cds, etc.) is available for free.



Working on market outreach and presence



4. Recording of age long olive trees

Collaborators: Technological Educational Institute (T.E.I.) of Peloponnese, Environmental Education Center of Messinia, Mataroa

Description: The aim of this activity is to create a systematical record of olive trees and the stories connected with them, where applicable, and also to design routes that will include stops, visits to olive mills, etc. There is an archive available, from a program of the Environmental Education Center of Kalamata, where age long olive trees have been recorded, together with the traditions and legends connected with them. Since the end of 2015, a team of volunteers has started supplementing the archive with new entries.

Section 3: OLIVE GROWING

SUBSECTION: Processing & standardization

1. Clinical research on the properties of oleacein & oleocanthal

Collaborators: National Kapodistrian University of Athens, University of California, Davis

Description: The “Captain Vassilis” Foundation supported the clinical research that was carried out in collaboration with researchers from the National Kapodistrian University of Athens and UC Davis. The study centered on the effects of Messinian olive oil on American citizens, and the promotion of the properties of specific substances on human health. More specifically, the study was carried out at UC Davis’ Department of Nutrition and the Human Nutrition Research Center of the USDA, and was funded by the “Captain Vassilis” Foundation and the company “Gaea.” Part of the study comprised the tasting of olive oil varieties selected after the analysis of hundreds of samples by the Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Athens; the varieties’ composition was verified by the UC Davies Olive Center. Trials on people, which took place for the first time, showed that quality Greek extra virgin olive oil, rich in oleocanthal, protects the cardiovascular system. These results justify the view that the quality of extra virgin olive oil is in direct proportion to its benefits on health.

The castle of Koroni



B. SOCIAL ACTIONS

Through the Administrative Committee, the Foundation handled 80 new requests in 2015, which were related to social and other issues. In addition, the Foundation coordinated and supported an initiative for the collection of items to be donated to charities and welfare organizations.

“Captain Vassilis” Foundation

www.cvf.gr