

BEST PRACTICES

TURKEY

IŞIK TARIM

Institutional information

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Summary

Explain your case in one or two sentences

With over 30 years of experience in growing, processing and exporting Organic / Natural Products, we are a leading processor, packer and exporter of Organic / Natural dried fruits & nuts and frozen fruits in Turkey. ISIK Tarım A.S. exports +20,000 MT (35 million lbs) of products to over 40 countries each and every year.

We are proud to be the 'First Turkish Company' to start its own organic project called 'Happy Village'. We are holding DEMETER (Bio-dynamic), BIO SUISSE (Switzerland), JAS (Japan), NOP (USA), EU Organic and BRC Grade A Food Safety certifications.

IŞIK TARIM A.Ş. has grown from a small company into one of the largest suppliers of organic / natural dried fruits, nuts and frozen fruits in Turkey. Today, company has over 4,000 registered organic farmers in more than 150 different villages, covering 12,000 hectares of land all over the country. We are proud to be the 'First Turkish Company' to start its own organic project called 'Happy Village'.

Background information: How was the situation previous to your actions?

We are an agricultural family. We had our own vineyards, peach and cherry orchards. The beginning of Işık Tarım Ürünleri was in 1974. In our own town, Ören Kemalpaşa, I was buying dried fruit products and selling them in the stock market. We founded the company with a partner. In 1984, I opened my first product

processing facility. I worked in the domestic market for 3 years and only dealt with seedless raisins. I started exporting in 1987. Apricot, fig and hazelnut were also added to my products. In 1990 I started organic agriculture. We first started organic agriculture on our own land. The business, which started on 5-100 decares, then spread to the farmers in my region and then to a wider area. The infrastructure was strong, so our work accelerated. Moreover, we were the first company to create projects about organic agriculture independently and in a short time we started to export the products of our own organization to European countries.

What were the needs you identified?

In the years when we started organic agriculture, we first encountered the need for qualified human resources who knew organic agriculture and practices. In addition to this need, we have seen that the necessary systems should be prepared to combat pests.

What solution you found to cover those needs?

*First of all, finding human resources who can speak foreign languages and who can transfer information and practices related to organic agriculture from international community;
In the next step, we worked on organizing the procurement of organic pesticides from abroad to combat pests.*

What actions did you take to reach the solution?

*We worked with employees who speak foreign languages, made our plans about what kind of infrastructure we could establish and put them into practice.
We determined our needs in the fight against pests and provided these needs from abroad.*

If any, which partners or other organizations did you involve during the process?

N/A

What were the main problems or difficulties you had to face?

- In organic agriculture, the integrity of the lands and the implementation of organic agriculture as a whole are very important in terms of environmental contamination. In Turkey, many lands are divided into many parts due to inheritance. This was the primary difficulty we faced.*
- The absence of sufficient knowledge and equipment in farmers that are interested in organic farming (even the technical staff and universities were lacking) was one of the difficulties we experienced in the beginning.*
- It took a long time to travel from village to village to ensure the integrity of the land and to ensure the organic farming philosophy is adopted by our farmers.*

What is the situation now, after your actions?

- Awareness about organic agriculture has increased and it has been adopted as a philosophy.*
- We / our farmers have much better knowledge and equipment in organic pest control.*

Main lessons learned along the way? *

- *We realized that we cannot handle organic agriculture at the micro level and that this philosophy should be handled and adopted together with all our farmers/ us / employees at the macro level and should be synchronized. It is the most important factor in the villages we visit that the whole village adopts and believes in this philosophy, not only on an individual basis.*

Annex:

Max 3 Images

Other related resources

