

# Writing a story of change in the rural





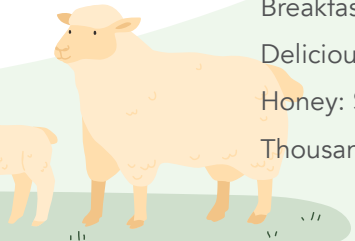


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Achieving historical breakthroughs, reforms and development leaps in every single sphere, our country reinforces its position as a regional and global power, and moves towards its 2023 goals with firm steps. Through forceful and resolute policies in its fields of activity, dynamic processes, efficient works, and a human-oriented approach, our Ministry makes great contributions to our country's journey towards its goals. Having critical impact on many arenas from economy to social make-up, from agricultural production to environment, rural development is among the fields which we emphasize strongly, and support through various policies and practices.

As examples from all around the world indicate, works towards rural development speed up countries' development processes, and ensure that the level of welfare increases in a manner encompassing all segments of society. With this awareness, our Ministry has designed numerous national programs for efficient and sustainable rural development, and completed many successful projects in collaboration with international programs, mainly IPARD. The National Rural Network (NRN) fulfills quite significant functions in the said efforts. Based on the principles of mutual learning, solidarity, trust and experience exchange, NRN brings together all central and local stakeholders that can contribute to the process of rural development, and provides communication and a cooperation network between them. Thanks to the works conducted with an inclusive perspective, rural development policies can be implemented and monitored more efficiently, and the number of good practices increases by the day. Every single success story written with labor, resolution, determination, cooperation and solidarity is a source of pride for our people, institutions and country.

This valuable work projects the transformation in the rural through good practices, and includes inspiring success stories. I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who put an effort in this work.

# Blending the power and abundance of the rural



# Forces joined for sustainable rural development

## NRN

Rural development is the process in which the welfare level of the individuals and societies in the rural increases, and traditional methods give way to technologies that both lower costs and boost profitability. To render rural development sustainable through on-point policies and good practices, it is important to enhance awareness, ameliorate infrastructures and systems, and to cooperate with an inclusive approach every step of the way.

One of the most important pillars of sustainable rural development in Turkey, and carrying out works that extend to the entire country to this end, the National Rural Network (NRN) Project is conducted by the European Union Structural Adjustment Managing Authority Department of the General Directorate of Agrarian Reform within the scope of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD) Program funded by the European Union (EU). NRN is a constituent of the European Rural Development Network, an important component of the EU's agriculture policies.

The LEADER approach is central to the efforts of the NRN, which carries out its activities with the aims

of ensuring rapport and coordination between the actors of local, regional and national rural development as well as providing information about rural development programs and funds, and facilitating the efficient implementation and assessment of the said programs. Encouraging local inclusion and partnerships in the formulation of sustainable rural development strategies, the LEADER approach envisions the citizens in the rural to not just shape transformation, but also become part of it. To this end, Local Action Groups, which prepare and implement their own local development strategies, were formed.

Moving forward with an extensive stakeholder base encompassing public institutions, local administrations, academics, universities, research centers, producers' organizations, regional development agencies, producing sectors, NGO's, farmers, women's associations and cooperatives as well as Local Action Groups, NRN implements projects with a bottom to top approach, and makes significant progress in terms of sustainable rural development on the basis of the principles of mutual learning, cooperation and trust.

# State of the art technology brings high yield



# Afyonkarahisar

It is one of the few living things that does not require sunlight to produce energy for itself. Over seventy types of it glow in the dark as a result of a process called bioluminescence. It is seen on Egyptian hieroglyphs dating back to over 4 thousand 600 years, and is called the “plant of immortality”. Some giant companies use its stalks to produce biodegradable packaging material. When mixed with solvent, its juice can produce almost any color of the rainbow... All of these properties are that of mushroom, which became quite popular recently with its different types. Quite rich in B12 and a staple of healthy nutrition with its low carbohydrate and fat content, mushroom is also abundant in water and protein.

Mushroom businesses are offered various funds within the scope of rural development supports, and extensive studies are conducted to ensure an increase in production diversity and yield. Having benefitted from the said supports and expanded the scope and efficiency of its activities thanks to IPARD Program funds, Emir Mushroom can produce 2 thousand tons

of mushroom on an annual basis. Having enhanced its cultivated mushroom facility’s production and efficiency and raised the number of its employees to 70 with an almost two-fold increase thanks to the funds, Emir Mushroom is listed among the top five facilities in its field. The mushroom waste of the facility, thanks to its suitable chemical structure, is used as fertilizer, and contributions are made to various areas, namely landscaping. Having also developed a solar energy project within the scope of the funds received, the representatives make efficient use of this technology. Stating that they contribute to regional and national development, Emir Mushroom Director-General Mustafa Özdikmen says, “Our goals are profit, production and employment. How is our country to develop if we do not produce, if others do not produce? We shall continue to produce as long as we are supported.”

Continuing its activities with 20 production rooms of 60 ton capacity, Emir Mushroom’s primary goal is to increase the number of production rooms to over 50 and enhance productivity by 200-250 percent.

# A life transformed by beekeeping

## Ağrı

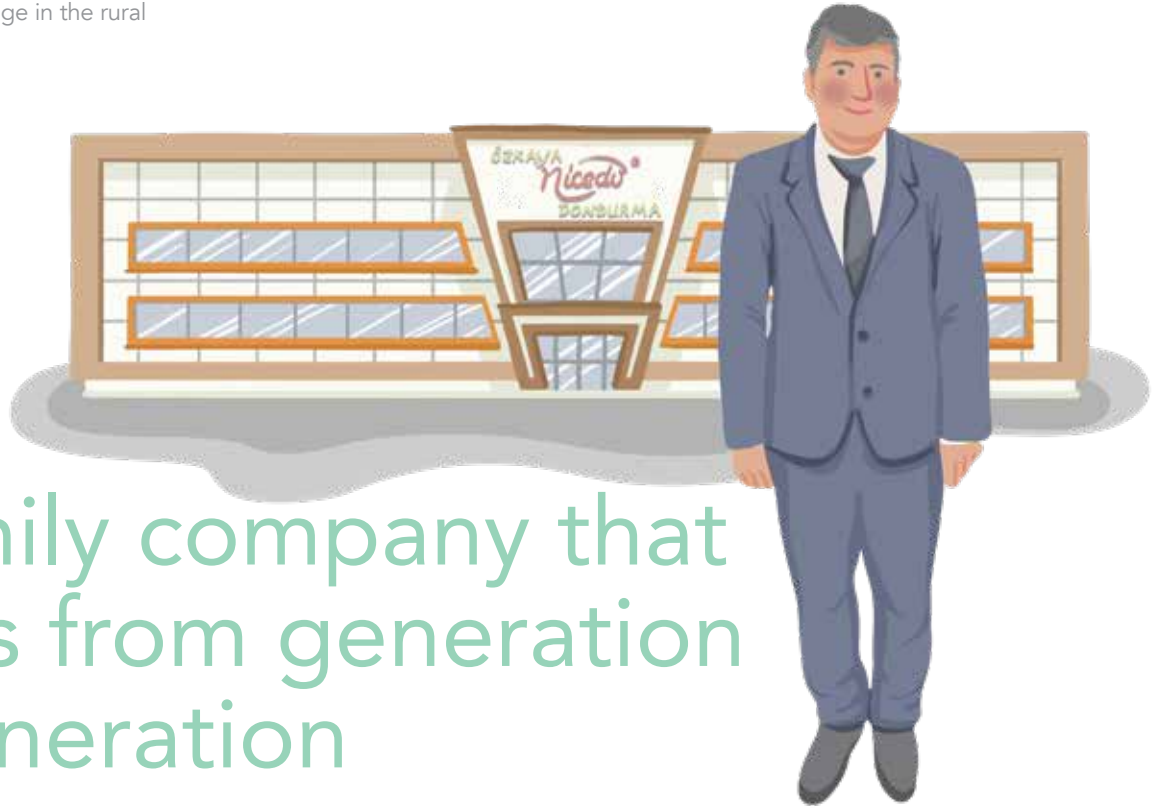


They say you are never too old to learn. One can learn new things, develop skills, and start working in a field of interest at the age of 7 or 70 alike. When you are willing, undeterred and determined, there is no obstacle you cannot overcome, no goal you cannot reach. The success story of Melike Sarı of Ağrı is one of the most wonderful examples of this fact.

A city in the Eastern Anatolian Region, Ağrı has a beekeeping-favorable climate with its highlands, rich flora and endemic flowers. Melike Sarı has already made a name for herself as one of Ağrı's numbered beekeepers. Her introduction to the sector has the potential to set an example to many. A primary school graduate housewife and mother of four, Sarı obtained her beekeeping certificate as part of the Ministry of National Education's "Lifelong Learning Project". Having thus opened a completely new page in her life, the entrepreneur applied to Agriculture and Rural Development Support Institution (ARDSI) within the scope

of the IPARD I program in 2013, right after she obtained her certificate. An agreement was signed in 2014 for the "Melike Sarı Beekeeping" project, after which Sarı bought machines and equipment including a tractor, 60 beehives and one trailer. Melike Sarı comments, "Thanks to the project, I had the opportunity to transition from the life of a housewife to business life. My goal was to annually produce 19 kilos of honey per beehive using modern production techniques. With the profit I made, I could contribute to the economic development of my family."

Representatives of Melike Arı Beekeeping state that they are planning to continue their activities by increasing average annual honey production. Indicating that they produce organic honey and are gaining great experience thanks to the project, Turan Sarı says they are content with the interest and support of their partners in the process.



# A family company that grows from generation to generation

## Aksaray

A favorite of all seasons, ice cream is essential especially during the months of summer. Appealing to children and adults alike, the ice cream sector is rapidly growing in Turkey as it does in the entire world. A district of Niğde deemed “the land of apples”, Çamardı is famous for both its high levels of apple production as well as its renowned ice cream. A local industrial ice cream producer, Özkaya Ice Cream originates from this beautiful district.

Conducting its activities with a team of partners comprising food engineers, veterinarians, and vet-

erans that gained experience from their fathers and grandfathers, the company's story goes back to almost half a century. Grandfather Sergeant Ali (Er) and his son Master Nazmi (Er) started making ice cream with the snow they would collect from Demirkazık and Aladağlar – located at the heights of the Taurus Mountains – and then store. At Çamardı in 1965, father and son started to make ice cream in barrels with their own hands, and continued to do so for around ten years, and later started machine production in 1975. The uncle Master Osman (Özkaya), on

the other hand, opened a small ice cream shop in Sakarya in 1994. The shop rapidly gained fame and its ice cream became a hit. Moreover, the shop paved the way for many ice cream shops in various parts of Turkey, namely the Marmara Region. Today, Çamardı locals produce and sell ice cream at over 1,000 spots.

Food engineer Servet Özkaya puts an effort into carrying the family company to the future in the best possible way. Stating that they received funds with the "Özkaya Ice Cream Production Facility" project, Özkaya says, "We are engaged in state of the art production in our 15,500 square meter – 2,000 of which closed – facility at the Aksaray Organized Industrial Site. Our facility has a daily capacity of 10 tons of milk processing in the forms of ice cream mix and ice cream. Thanks to the project, more and more people know about us, we have expanded our market and increased our export capacity. Our company offers employment especially in the field of dairy processing, and it also contributes to increasing both the milk production of the farms in the region as well as the quality of the products; such positive developments make us happy."

Carrying out its activities with a young and dynamic team, Özkaya Ice Cream is ready to multiply its success. One of the most highlighted goals is to increase the number of export countries. Stating, "We are moving forward with the vision of becoming an international company. So far, we have exported to Azerbaijan and Russia. We continue to work on new domestic and international markets. In the near future, we plan to make investments for capacity enhancement, automation and modernization," Servet

Özkaya gives the following advice to those thinking of making investments through funds: "During the process of building an industrial and modern facility, we paid visits to facilities that operate both domestically and internationally and tried to benefit from their experience. In Italy in particular, we visited both fairs and some facilities. I would advise those who will apply for an investment and grant funding for their own projects to visit as many domestic and international facilities as possible, as well as to receive consultancy services from someone experienced in such investments and facility management on all processes from production to distribution."

Acting with the principle of maintaining high quality in the procurement, production and distribution chain, Özkaya Ice Cream successfully continues its delicious journey, which began on the snow-covered heights of the Taurus many years ago.



# Be healthy with bee products Amasya



“Health comes first...” Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we went through a phase in which we heard and said this sentence perhaps more than ever, and more importantly, came to grasp its meaning fully. During this process, which forced us to change our habits, ways of doing business and means of communication, we started to pay more attention to nutrition and tried to strengthen our immune system so as to be strong against the face of the virus. To this end, we appealed to bee products including honey, bee pollen, propolis, apilarnil, bee milk and perga. Halit Çelebi of Amasya is one of the people to bring highly healthy bee products to consumers. His goal is to enhance natural beekeeping and transfer it to future generations.

Coming from a family that has been engaged in beekeeping for over 100 years, Halit Çelebi has implemented the “Honey Production Facility with 200 Hives” project in Amasya. Thanks to the project, which received funds, Çelebi now produces

2.5 tons of honey per year with 250 hives and has increased the number of his products to 7, which was 1 pre-IPARD funds. The success of the project has been crowned with international awards. Çelebi became third in the “Polyfloral Flower Honey” category at the 45<sup>th</sup> Apimondia International Beekeeping Congress organized in İstanbul in 2017. At the 46<sup>th</sup> Apimondia International Beekeeping Congress organized in Canada in 2019, on the other hand, he became world champion in the “Karakovan Honey” category and third in the “Crystallized Honey” category.

Saying, “Beekeeping has been my passion since the age of 20,” Halit Çelebi states that his business grew rapidly thanks to the project, and that he can now offer Harşena products in domestic as well as international markets. Advising future entrepreneurs to never lose faith in themselves, Çelebi adds, “If you have a certain amount of capital and the belief ‘I can do this’, you can make it happen.”

# From the nature straight to the table through modern production Ardahan



Local products are favored not only due to their unparalleled taste but also because they are additive-free and natural. Putting a smile on the faces of those who prioritize healthy living and tasty food, these products play an important role in the promotion of the cities and regions where they find life. The Eastern Anatolian Region, for instance, where husbandry is a primary means of living, is famous for its dairy products. Among these products, cheese stands apart. Many types of cheese from kaşar to gravyer, from tulum to çeçil adorn tables and add unique flavors to breakfast. Ardahan is a Southern Anatolia Region city that attracts attention with its cheese and other dairy products. Göle kaşar is among the most popular delicacies of Ardahan. Having built a facility thanks to ARDSI funds in the district of Göle, where this cheese is produced, Yılmazlar Dairy offers various products from cheese to butter to consumers.

Certainly, every implemented project has favorable results for not only its direct interlocutors but for the

economy of the region and the country, as well. The European Union standard-compliant facility in Göle, which has a daily production capacity of 10 tons, makes significant contributions to the economy of the region by procuring from local farmers and companies various products and materials from milk to waxed paper, from hazelnut shells to salt, from hemp to yeast. Moreover, the facility creates awareness and sets an example in Ardahan in terms of ARDSI-supported projects that have significant results in terms of rural development.

Yılmazlar Dairy executive Özdemir Yılmaz indicates that they decided to design this project after they attended the presentation by Ardahan Provincial Coordination in their district and says, "Thankfully, we have made it." Yılmaz states that they are planning to expand the size of trade through new ventures in the near future.

# From the seed to the fork: Women's labor and solidarity Ankara



Success stories are written thanks to planned and right steps. During this process, enthusiasm brings about positive results as much as resolution and determination do. In fact, “enthusiasm” can sometimes take on a primary role in the decision to implement a project – just like the it was the case for project carried out in the Afşar village of Ankara’s Bala district.

Chemical engineer Figen Ar, PhD stresses the enthusiasm of local women when telling the story of how the “Afşar Bala’m Products from Afşar People with Minimum Carbon Footprint” project and says, “One day, I received a call from the Bala Provincial Director of Agriculture, who knew about my social responsibility

projects and asked me, ‘Mrs Figen, there is this Afşar village here, and the women of the village are very skilled and hard-working. Will you design a project for them?’ I said to him, ‘Of course I will design a project for Anatolian women’ and started working right away. I went to the Afşar village to talk about the project, and met the women there. I told them about the project idea I had and asked them, ‘You will be a part of economic life, you will participate in social life, this will be your project. Can we do it together?’ I saw they were enthusiastic. When enthusiasm is there, it happens. When I saw how enthusiastic they were, I worked day and night and designed the project.”

Supported and implemented by the Ankara Development Agency within the scope of “Financial Support for Local Product Commercialization Program,” the project is remarkable in terms of its features such as gifting a women’s cooperative to the region, ensuring that female labor in the rural is integrated with economic life, being environmentally-friendly during production processes, contributing to employment, and offering Afşar Bala’m products to customers.

Stating that they founded the Afşar Balam Women’s Initiative Production and Processing Cooperative as part of the project, Figen Ar, PhD goes on to add, “In our facility, where we obtain electricity from solar energy, we produce local products such as erişte, tarhana, tomato paste, jam, vinegar and bulgur with minimum carbon footprint and the principle of zero waste. These are all completely natural. We have a registered brand. We make worm castings out of our waste and re-use them in agriculture.” President of the Cooperative Ar indicates that they have contributed to the rural awareness on renewable energy use, carbon footprint, efficiency and waste management.

The success of the activities, carried out with the motto “Environmentally-friendly labor of women from the field to the table,” have been crowned with awards. Ensuring 10 kilowatts of carbon dioxide saving annually, the project took home the “Low Carbon Hero Award” at the VI. Carbon Summit. Figen Ar, PhD remarks that the project animated the social lives of the women in the region, and says, “We went to İstanbul all together to receive our Low Carbon Hero Award. These women got on a plane and a ship for the very first time, visited another city for the very first time, saw

the sea for the very first time. We also went to İzmir together, attended fairs in Antalya, and were guests in television shows. All of these are lovely memories for us.”

Having made significant progress until today, the project moves forward with many different goals, including coming up with innovative products, gifting the region with geographically marked products such as Afşar purple garlic, expanding the team and the market network, and making use of waste water as grey water.

The “Afşar Bala’m Products from Afşar People with Minimum Carbon Footprint” project, of which the Association for Maintaining the Culture of Afşar Village and Social Solidarity is a beneficiary alongside the Cooperative, indicates that rural development is possible through the empowerment of the women there. Moreover, it asserts that women’s cooperatives are an important tool in integrating the labor of the women in the rural with the economy.



# A delicious union: Fig meets chocolate Aydın



Having embraced numerous civilizations throughout the ages, Anatolia is unique not only in terms of its natural beauty and historical and cultural assets, but its fertile lands, as well. Quite generous to humankind with many produce from grains to legumes, from fruits to vegetables, these lands are also the most important center of the world in terms of fig production. Turkey, the homeland of fig, ranks first among the countries of the world in both dry and table fig production. This cultivated fruit, which goes as far back as the history of humankind, and offers various health benefits, has been identified with Aydın in our country. "Land of the efe" Aydın has made a name for itself with not only its nature,

culture, cuisine and tourism but with its agricultural produce, namely fig, as well. Described by the renowned traveler Evliya Çelebi as having "Oil-dripping mountains, and honey-flowing plains," Aydın ranks first in Turkey in terms of fig production. According to Turkish Statistical Institute's 2019 data, 61 percent of the fig in Turkey is produced in Aydın.

Born to farmers from Aydın, Nail Nuri Ağaçcı unites fig – a unique delicacy – with consumers. Aydın has started a business with the aim the organic production of fig, which is produced widely in Aydın, as well as the enhancement of processes such as organic production, processing and packaging, and

increasing fig demand. Stating that they operate in a 2,000 square meter closed area standing on a field of 5 decares, Ağaacı says the following on his project entitled “A Delicious Meeting of Figs and Chocolate,” which he implemented with investment and funding support: “The support of our state made us feel stronger, and ensured we gained momentum as a business. In essence, we joined forces; it was like taking a walking child by the hand and helping them run. If we hadn’t felt this power, perhaps our willingness to export would have remained a dream. Right now, we constantly send products abroad through micro-export. In the long run, our aim is to send products to more countries by exporting on a larger scale. At this point, we have managed to highlight the Aydın fig through various products; we take the lead in this sense, anyway. In the near future, we want to further increase our visibility and recognition, and to show what different products can be created with the Aydın fig. As a business, we are happy with our activities and will continue to grow steadily.”

Indicating that they have successfully completed the project, Nail Nuri Ağaacı comments, “The support and interest from our partners were quite nice. My advice to people with an idea is to apply to the relevant authorities with self-confidence and the belief that they will succeed.”

Expanding his own business by the day with an innovative perspective, determined and resolved steps

as well as leaps towards increasing the number of products, Ağaacı is getting prepared to release new organic products starring the fig. It seems that the only thing consumers have to do now is to enjoy these delicacies.



# Healing olive vinegar of fertile lands **Balıkesir**

Vinegar is a treasured product that is a staple in our homes and is used in various fields. Made from many different produce from apple to grape, from lemon to apricot, from honey to olive, vinegar offers numerous health benefits. Funda Filiz Çetin is an entrepreneur who has implemented the olive vinegar project in Balıkesir, a leading province in our country in terms of olive and olive oil production. Produced in the facility in the Dereören village of the Havran district, which is favorable to all sorts of agricultural activity thanks to its fertile lands, olive vinegar encompasses all the benefits of olive juice (oleuropein) and olive oil. This miraculous product is good for both preparing delicious meals and staying healthy.

This is how entrepreneur Çetin recounts the emergence of the project: "I am actually an accountant. We had been keeping an eye on the food sector for years. Later, we made our way into this sector by planting small fruit gardens. As locals of Gaziantep, we have been making our own vinegar for years be-



cause that's what we saw our family do as children. Based on this experience, we started making vinegar. When we had the notion of professionalizing our production and building a facility, we applied to ARDSI. We are thankful to them, for they helped us a great deal and with the funds we received for the Havranó Natural Food Funda Filiz Çetin Olive Vinegar Project, we established our facility and started making natural fermented vinegar. We were initially making olive vinegar, and then starting making other kinds of vinegar, too."

Funda Filiz Çetin indicates that their near future goals include reaching out further to the domestic target audience, becoming the highest quality vinegar brand, and transforming into a global olive vinegar brand through export. Saying, "Making fermented products has to come from the heart," Çetin is planning to implement new projects for healthy and natural nutrition aficionados.

# Pretty like lavender, good like sage

## Burdur



Lavender, sage, thyme, bay, linden, fennel, rosehip... These are just a few of medicinal and aromatic plants. Our country, which enjoys more biological diversity than the European continent combined, is quite rich in terms of medicinal and aromatic plants, which are used in many fields from agriculture to food, from health to cosmetics. One such city to enjoy this diversity is Burdur. Veterinarian Öztürk Sarıca conducts exemplary works in terms of medicinal and aromatic plants with the Lisinia Nature project.

Having lost five members of his family to cancer, Sarıca laid the foundations of the Lisinia Nature project in 2005 with the aim of honoring their memory and raising awareness about the disease. Comprised of free of charge nature camps, lavender gardens and ecological fields, the project attributes special importance to the popularization of medicinal and aromatic plants in our country – namely lavender, thyme and sage – and to awareness-oriented efforts related to dry farming. Until today, around 1,000 sub-projects

were completed under 9 project headings. Currently, 20 projects are actively carried out.

The success of the project, which emerged from the idea of raising awareness about the rapid decay in the nature as well as about cancer, was crowned with awards. The Lisinia Garden Project won third prize and the “Sustainability Special Award” at the 2016 Antalya EXPO, and represented Turkey at the 2018 Taiwan EXPO. Yet another aspect of the Lisinia Nature project that should be highlighted is that it is officially one of Turkey’s first wild life rehabilitation centers.

Öztürk Sarıca states that the distillation, extraction, dehumidification and granulation systems established with the Lisinia-ARDSI collaboration will not only help with the production of herbal products, but also contribute to the production of high value-added end products that will be sold on global markets.

# Comfort of the city and peace of the great outdoors combined Bursa



It always feels good to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city; it brings peace and happiness to become one with the blue and the green even if for a few hours, sometimes for a few days... Situated right next to the Gököz Pond in Bursa, the Gököz Natural Park is ideal for those who feel the same way.

Business owner Arif Dođru says that he spent his childhood at the region where the facility is located and the idea for the project started to take shape when he was in university. Indicating, "My goal was to offer people a healthy, safe, clean and high-quality vacation alternative where they could find the comfort of the city inside nature, and engage in various activities," Dođru goes on to add that his goals for bringing Gököz Natural Park to life included contributing to the economic and cultural development of mountain villages of mainly Gököz neighborhood and environs as well as of Keles, Orhaneli, Harmancık and Büyükorhan districts, creating prestigious em-

ployment opportunities in the rural to lower migration, and promoting the region's cuisine as well as cultural and natural wonders.

Within the scope of the ARDSI-supported projects, 10 wooden houses (bungalows) as well as a restaurant, gazebo, village oven, security booth, outhouse and children's playground was built. The facility, which features hobby gardens, offers many activities from mountain biking to archery, from paintball to horseback riding.

Stating that they hosted a total of 8,571 overnight and 105,000 day-trip visitors between 2016-2019, Arif Dođru says that the lack of foreign tourists during Covid-19 created problems but as a preferred concept, they hosted many national tourists during the process.

Gököz Natural Park aims to expand its service areas in the near future and continue its successful journey.

# Sustainable development at the shores of the Black Sea

## Cide LAG



Putting a spell on its visitors with its nature uniting the blue and the green as well as its beaches, sandbanks and bays by the shore of the Black Sea, Cide is also famous for its local attire, namely sarı yazma, handicrafts from the sultan's caique models to coffee mill, from wooden spoons to dowry chests, and its cuisine, the star of which is walnut halva. This beautiful district of Kastamonu is also valuable since it is the birthplace of Rifat Ilgaz, author of *Hababam Sınıfı*. The Cide Local Action Group Association conducts its activities in the LAG region including Kastamonu's Şenpazar and Pınarbaşı districts in addition to Cide.

The Cide Local Action Group Association was established in late 2016. A stakeholder analysis as well as a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis were conducted the same year. In 2017, the Local Development Strategy Technical Funding Project was prepared. In 2018, the Local Development Strategy (LDS) was prepared in the

light of various promotional activities, focus group and sub-group meetings, analyses and needs. In late 2019, the LDS project was handed in and in 2020, a contract was signed following the approval of the project.

Cide Local Action Group Association President Serdar Kaplan indicates that their vision is to integrate the region's natural wonders with tourism to enhance rural economy, and to eliminate any setbacks and problems in the rural that could hinder local development. Kaplan goes on to add that their aim is to have by 2023 a LAG area that has made significant economic gain through the region's tourism potential as well as value-added products in the fields of handicrafts, fishery and beekeeping, and has thus prevented the young population from migrating to cities.

# Miraculous olive oil perfected by skilled hands Çanakkale



Olive oil is a staple in the kitchen. It is almost impossible to conceive of a table without it. This miraculous product, which is used in areas other than food as well, has numerous health benefits. Turkey is among the numbered countries when it comes to the production and export of olive oil. Çanakkale is one of the most important centers of olive tree farming and olive oil production in Turkey, home of the olive tree, which defies time with an average lifespan of 300-400 years.

Gamze Taş, an olive oil producer in Çanakkale, decided to make her way into business life as a housewife. She chose a sector in which her husband and family are experienced to work in and prepared the Tahiroğlu Olive Oil Production Facility Project. With the project, a continuous olive oil facility, which processes 40 tons of olives per day and produces 8 tons of olive oil, was established in the Yalova village of the Eceabat district. Realized with ARDSI funds as part of the IPARD Program, the facility offers the olive farmers of the re-

gion the opportunity to rapidly process their produce without any yield loss. The facility, which can run in line with European Union standards, has almost become one of the leading businesses of the region. The farmers in the environs greatly appreciate the meticulous, attentive and hygienic production process.

Gamze Taş comments, "In the near future, our goal is to increase our processing capacity as well as our market share. In the short run, we want to reach a daily olive processing capacity of 100 tons, and in the medium run, we want to open a factory shop. In the long run, on the other hand, we are planning to come up with our own olive oil brand and to establish a bottling facility." The entrepreneur gives the following advice to those considering applying for investment and grant funds: "They should implement their project ideas without fear and losing time, so that they do not have any regrets later on."

# Taking the lead in goose breeding

## Çankırı



As life flows in its usual course, there are moments when one is forced to make new decisions. Although it is not always possible to see where these decisions will lead, they certainly open “new pages”. The story of Sadık Yüceloğlu of Çankırı is laden with great decisions written down on many new pages.

After his retirement, Sadık Yüceloğlu started to raise fowl such as goose, chicken and duck as a hobby. The goose he ordered in a restaurant in İstanbul changed his life. Back then, goose was quite expensive compared to lamb. Once back in Şabanözü, his hometown, Yüceloğlu started to attribute more time and effort to goose breeding. In 2015, he decided to professionalize and applied to ARDSI with the project he prepared. Thanks to the funds he was given as part of the IPARD Program, he set up a European Union standard-compatible goose farm over his 17-decare field in Şabanözü’s Gümerdiğin neighborhood.

Moreover, he set up a laniary and hatchery, as well. As a result of all these developments, he started to send goose meat to various places including the restaurant in İstanbul where he ate years ago.

Sadık Yüceloğlu indicates that following his lead, many people started to breed goose in Şabanözü and the region has reached a considerable position within Turkey in this field. On the subject of goose meat, this is what Yüceloğlu has to say: “Goose meat is so much better and more delicious than red meat. If you haven’t eaten goose meat, you just cannot say ‘I know all about meat.’”

# A childhood dream come true

## Denizli

Betrothals, engagements, henna nights and weddings... On their journey to live happily ever after, couples get together with their families and loved ones on these special days, and take steps towards a new life with best wishes from them. Although marriage customs change from region to region, betrothal, engagement and wedding bundles are essential. One of the must-haves of these bundles prepared meticulously for such lovely days is towels. Towels called nişanlılık ("for engagements") and düğünlük ("for weddings") are quite important in the textile sector. In our country, the first city to spring to mind when textile products such as towels and bathrobes are in question is Denizli. Export figures reveal that this is true not just for Turkey, but for the entire world, as well.

Habip Özlen produces nişanlılık and düğünlük towels that are unique to Denizli. Continuing his father's profession and having established a textile atelier in



his hometown of Buldan in 2014, Özlen has a history in the sector that goes way back. Having been employed as worker at different positions in a major company for 13 years, Özlen is now an employer in his life's work. Enjoying the bliss of having his own atelier, which he says was his "childhood dream," Özlen says the following about the process of his application to ARDSI: "I had considerable reservations at first but I went on with it thanks to the motivating approach of ARDSI personnel. I applied to ARDSI at two different calls. After my first application, I bought machines and equipment and started İşmeli Textile. With my second project, I increased atelier capacity by purchasing new machines and equipment."

Indicating that they have a maximum daily towel production capacity of 13 thousand, Habip Özlen states that they plan to purchase a linen and bedding machine in addition to the towel machine, and that they are willing to start exporting in a few years.

# Kastamonu's attraction center Devrekani LAG



Devrekani is a district where agriculture and husbandry are widespread, and it has many landmarks such as Akdoğan Waterfall and Cave, Yaralıgöz Recreational Area, Sisli and Gizemli Caves at Alçılar village, Beyler Dam, Ice Cave at Saraydurak village and Balıklı Göl at Belovacık village. Not only offering many tasty local delicacies from cırık dessert to düğün böreği, from banduma to samsı, Devrekani is also rich in terms of history. Numerous Hittite metal vessels unearthed during Kınık excavations are among the indicators of this richness. Devrekani Local Action Group Association conducts its activities in this lovely district of Kastamonu.

Established in December 2019, Devrakani LAG brings life to the district with its efforts encompassing 592 square meters and a population of 13 thousand 500. The said efforts carry the LEADER approach – which considers rural societies to be agents of rural development – from bottom to top, and renders local ac-

tors part of the decision-making processes. Thus, a story of change is being written in the region through cooperation and solidarity, mutual trust, experience exchange and joint action.

Devrekani Local Action Group Association Chairwoman of the Board Gül Banu Çiçek Bideci indicates that they aim for the district to become an attraction center through its tourism potential. Stating that their objective is to engage in works that aim to increase women's and disadvantaged groups' social inclusion, to come up with activities for the youth, to organize festivals where local products that have been transformed to value added products are sold, and to enhance employment and production opportunities, Bideci says creating rural development awareness in the region is among their top priorities.

# Local desserts you just cannot get enough of **Diyarbakır**



Soups, meat and vegetable dishes, pastries, desserts... Unique in terms of both variety and taste, Turkish cuisine has made a name for itself with local delicacies specific to the different cities and regions of our country. Diyarbakır, for instance, adds to the richness of Turkish cuisine with many foods from liver kebab to meftune, from duvaklı pilav to kaburga dolması. Desserts, which sometimes put the cherry on top of a delicious meal and sometimes accompany delightful chats together with tea or coffee, have a special place in Diyarbakır cuisine. As a family company that has been operating in this city for over 100 years, Hacı Levent Kadayıfçısı has played an important role in carrying over local desserts to future generations.

Company representatives state that they applied to ARDSI with the "Hacı Levent Kadayıf Project" and were given funds, and that they started their facility at the Diyarbakır Organized Industrial Site in 2016. Stating that they have enterprises in Diyarbakır and they aim to introduce Diyarbakır's kadayıf and baklava to

the world by opening branches abroad in the future, Zekai Altunhan indicates that once this goal is met, they can both use production capacity to the fullest and increase employment, which currently stands at 144 thanks to the project.

The project has already yielded many positive results, including the operation of activities in a modern production facility, the acceleration of R&D activities, the increase in the variety of products, and the production of cold baklava and purple baklava. Additionally, the praise the facility gets makes the company representatives proud.

Without doubt, one road to success is to love what one does. Saying, "We are just enamored with Diyarbakır. The kadayıf sector is quite important for this city. We are proud to contribute to both Diyarbakır and the sector with our production facility," Zekai Altunhan underlines that loving what you do and moving forward despite challenges will surely bring success.

# Forces joined for healthy milk Erzincan



For most of us, milk is a staple in the kitchen. We add milk – introduced to us as children and deemed an essential – to desserts and soups alike, creating wonderful consistency. A source of lactose, which helps with the development of brain and nerve cells, and also rich in calcium and protein, milk is one of the most highly produced and consumed products in our country.

It is quite important to properly analyze and store milk so that one can enjoy its health benefits. Representatives of the Erzincan Cattle Breeders Association turned to ARDSI funds to healthily and efficiently process the milk they collect from their stakeholders, and have initiated extensive modernization works at the Association's Milk Collection and Cooling Center and Milk Analysis Laboratory. Thanks to the 5 ton-capacity milk cooling tank obtained within the scope of the project, capacity increased and the plastic tanks of milk collection vehicles were replaced with healthier chrome ones.

Saying, "As the Association, the greatest source of our strength is the projects we develop. It is not possible to implement those projects without funding," Erzincan Cattle Breeders Association Founder and Chairman of the Board Yaşar Faruk Günay goes on to add, "Right now, our farmers in the field have 200, 300 and 500-liter milk cooling tanks. We distributed these tanks even to the remotest locations. Not only does the milk we collect not go sour, but our costs have decreased, as well. Farmers now make more profit."

Stating that their objective is to increase the volume of the milk collected by increasing the number of milk cooling tanks, Günay points out that they will continue to contribute to the already widespread agriculture and husbandry activities in Erzincan and says, "Agriculture and husbandry are activities that will never end."

# Centuries-old tradition of ancient lands

## Elazığ



Harput, where settlement is believed to have started around 2000 BC, has hosted many important civilizations such as the Hittites, Urartians, Romans and Byzantines before it became a Turkish land. Each and every one of these civilizations have left their marks on Harput, endowing the ancient city with idiosyncratic gifts. Urartians gave the city the Harput Castle – a complex structure with waterways and tunnels – the Romans rock tombs, and the Syriac community – one of the many communities of the region – the Virgin Mary Church. Although Harput varies in terms of the civilizations that emerged and flourished on its lands as well as

the marks left by various states and beliefs, there is one thing they have all made and used: Pottery. Made by humankind for both easier eating and as decorative objects, pottery is a centuries-old tradition of Harput.

Knowing full well that the soil in the region, especially the clay beds of the Keban Dam basin is quite suitable for pottery-making, Özcan Aydınlioğlu continues this ancient tradition by combining it with modern production techniques. Having started pottery-making by renovating an old plastics factory thanks to IPARD funds, Aydınlioğlu makes

many different artifacts including thermal-shock resistant ones.

Remarking, “We got to know the friendly face of the state during the realization of this investment,” Özcan Aydınlioğlu says the following about his experience: “We saw that success is sure to come when you work with certain principles and in a disciplined manner. We felt we were disciplined by ARDSI’s supervision mechanism.”

Advising investors to be brave and underlining that it would be beneficial to get support when building the technical infrastructure in particular, Aydınlioğlu reminds of the importance of feasibility studies, as well.

When implementing the project, Özcan Aydınlioğlu set out with the goal of integrating the region’s raw material beds with the economy. Indicating that his efforts to this end has yielded results both at home and abroad, the entrepreneur says, “We had national and local media coverage. Many people from İstanbul, Ankara and abroad called us to order products.” Adding that he was able to join new milieus and now receives more collaboration offers than ever thanks to the project, Aydınlioğlu says his future plans include conducting joint efforts with a major company that exports to China and Europe. Among the products of the business, thermal shock-resistant ones come to the fore. Here’s how Özcan Aydınlioğlu breaks down the secret of his thermal shock-resistant products – a hit at the

international fairs he has attended: “The most important advantage of our region is that its mining site is quite rich. The 7-8 different raw materials required for pottery can be found in this region. We developed a recipe with them. At the point we have reached, no one in Turkey does it better than we do; we have come to such an assertive point.”

Making the assessment that people now prefer natural products more than ever and that this tendency grew even stronger during the Covid-19 pandemic, Özcan Aydınlioğlu says they want to continue the increase in sales they have been experiencing in this period. Aydınlioğlu’s future goals include increasing employment, enhancing facility capacity, and expanding production volume.



# Fish at its freshest Erzurum



Erzurum is one of those rare cities where nature, history and culture are intertwined. Bearing the traces of the civilizations it has hosted for centuries, the city is home to many cultural assets from the Erzurum Castle to the Clock Tower, from the Double Minaret Madrasah to Üç Kümbetler. Built on the skirts of Mount Palandöken, Erzurum also offers unique experiences through its nature. Encompassing natural wonders such as Tortum Waterfalls, İspir Yedigöller, Gökkuşığı Hills and Balıklı Village, Erzurum is a place where you can both ski on snow-covered mountains and go trekking in the company of beautiful flowers. The city offers many other natural wonders including lakes, fairy chimneys, floating islands and a canyon.

Uniting Erzurum's gorgeous nature with the fresh fish experience, İbrahim Alkan is the founder and manager of Emir Trout Restaurant. Offering fish – rich in vitamins A, D, E, B2 and B12, and a complete source of protein – to his customers in the best way possible,

Alkan enhanced his production farm and restaurant thanks to the funds he received from ARDSI. Stating that this is how he not only increased facility capacity but also got to know more people, Alkan says that he personally took care of each and every phase of the project. Formerly sitting 10, Alkan's restaurant has now reached a 100-person capacity. Alkan, who says he employed 3 university students to meet the increasing business demand, reveals his faith in the youth with the words, "Once our project was implemented, I sat down with youngsters. I brought them magazines from ARDSI. I gave them ideas. I want everyone in our region to be busy with something."

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has set things back a little, İbrahim Alkan continues to make plans for the future and states that he will continue trout production in Erdek, where he says has great potential.

# A little bit goes a long way: Healthy hazelnut Giresun



World leader in hazelnut production, Turkey sends its produce to all corners of the world. Meeting around 70 percent of global hazelnut production, our country's hazelnuts can be found inside a delicious cake in a European café, on a freshly baked loaf of bread in a Canadian bakery, or inside a Chinese student's lunchbox. The regional hazelnut production leader in Turkey – the hazelnut giant – is of course the Black Sea Region. One of the many successful businesses in the region is Altun Gıda, which enhanced its facility capacity and standards thanks to Rural Development Support Program funds.

Producing hazelnuts, Altun Gıda has a daily capacity of 3.5-4 tons. Having expanded its machine park and modernized its production technologies thanks to project funds, Altun Gıda's production capacity and product quality has increased by 80 percent, whereas its unit cost has decreased by 30 percent.

Stating, "We produce regionally in Giresun's Tirebolu district. This is a first in the world. Allah has created this

region so that the climate, soil structure and air features required for hazelnut to be delicious are all very suitable," Altun Gıda Chairman of the Board Halil Paltun states they have started to collaborate with Turkey's biggest hazelnut exporter. Remarking that natural and hygienically-produced products have leverage in the eyes of consumers, Paltun adds that their near future goals are to increase product variety as well as the rate of digitalization.

Here's what Paltun has to say to those considering applying for agricultural development funds: "Such funds discipline you; you focus on a certain thing, and the institution supervises you. We always made commitments, and completed the works before our foreseen dates. My mission is not just to receive funds to my name. This is what I say to everyone: Right now, if you really have a unique project for Turkey and you believe it will be successful, develop that project. The state gives you funds. You just work hard."

# Contributing to regional welfare with bottom to top approach

## Güdül YEG



Güdül is a scotch pine and fir-covered district standing over the fertile lands of the Kirmir Creek Valley. The first "cittaslow" in Central Anatolia, Güdül holds many treasures with its centuries-old stone inscriptions, rock caves, Roman bath, and intricate wooden houses. Determined by an international association for municipalities, citta slows are cities where quality of life and social harmonization are high, and environment policies are prioritized. One of the most important qualities of these cities is that they keep the spirit of cooperation and solidarity alive, as envisioned by the LEADER approach that is central to the efforts of the National Rural Network.

Having set out with the aim of unearthing Güdül's potential and contributing to the welfare of the locals, Güdül Local Action Group's sphere of activity encompassing 19 kilometer squares is home to a population of 10,800. Saying, "We attributed major importance to the principle of inclusion during the establishment process. We hosted various events to attract people's attention," Güdül LAG Director Mustafa Hikmet Kalaycioğlu under-

lines that the private sector-NGO balance was maintained when creating the board of the association.

Güdül LAG continues its works in line with the LEADER approach, which envisions local participation and partnership in the preparation of rural strategies to ensure efficient and sustainable rural development. Targeting for local actors to personally shape rural transformation, LEADER indicates a bottom to top approach. To this end, Güdül LAG's fields of activity encompass many themes from the preservation of handicrafts to the enhancement of rural tourism, from the endorsement of women's associations to education on the IPARD Program.

Saying, "Acting together and asking people for their opinions is quite important for us," Mustafa Hikmet Kalaycioğlu remarks their objectives include ensuring the welfare of the people in the region, increasing the level of income, and encouraging on-point investments to the region.

# Family business goes global Hatay

What does it take to achieve dreams? Firstly, to shape that dream, schedule it if needed, and set touchstones. To conduct extensive research so as to move forward not blindly, but preparedly. Surely to work hard and never lose courage and zest in the face of challenges. To believe in yourself and at the same time to arm yourself with the support of those who also believe in you, to join forces with fellow dreamers when moving towards the goal. Having established Meriç Olive Oil Factory in Hatay's Altınözü district thanks to IPARD funds, Serra Nalçabasmaz has completed each and every one of these steps, and reached her dreams. Processing in her family facility the yield of around 100,000 olive trees on a land of 3,500 decares, Nalçabasmaz increased facility capacity and enhanced technical infrastructure thanks to the grants she has received.

Pointing out that agriculture is her family business and the tradition is continued with this facility, Serra Nalçabasmaz says, "We were not really experienced in project design but from day one, we were very clear



about the kind of work we wanted to do. Our main goal is to promote the olive varieties of our region to the world because this place has gone down in history as the 'homeland of olive'. We needed a facility that could differentiate more specifically and process in higher quality." Underlining that the project has created awareness in the region and that farmers show great interest in it, Nalçabasmaz adds that they aim to grow the facility even bigger by increasing the number of stakeholders.

Stating that they have started sending products to national and international competitions thanks to the variety and turnout increase of Meriç Olive Oil Factory, Serra Nalçabasmaz comments, "Since our objective is to ensure our varieties and the olive of our region is well-known in the world, this has been quite beneficial to us. We now want our olive oil to go global with all its varieties. One of the things we want to do is make sure people can find Hatay Saurani or Hatay Karamani olive oil in a restaurant abroad."

# The lovely scent that surrounds Turkey Isparta



If we were to ask which flower has been painted the most in the history of humankind and can be found everywhere in many branches of art from literature to cinema, without doubt rose would be the first to spring to mind for many. A namesake of novels, an inspiration for poems, a magic touch for paintings, and a popular image for textiles from clothing to drapery, rose sometimes shines bright on a slice of warm bread. Just like rose is the first to come to mind when flowers are in question, when rose is in question, Isparta is the first to come to mind. A unique flower with its layered petals, wonderful smell and sweet pink color, Isparta rose is a staple of cosmetics and personal care products.

At the İksir Cosmetics and Rose Products Production Center, which operates at the Isparta Süleyman Demirel Organized Industrial Site, high-quality products with high added value and export potential are developed from the oils and waters of the medicinal and aromatic plants in the region, namely rose. İksir Cosmetics Chairman of the Board Barış Gümüş is an industrial engineer

with over twenty years of experience in the sector. Indicating that they started out with the goal of establishing a facility of international standards to both increase production capacity and to work with greater partners, Gümüş says, "The main idea of our project was to sell our products to major buyers, to multiple-store entities, and to reach the capacity to meet their demands. After this facility was built, all of these roads were cleared." Commenting, "IPARD funds and ARDSI have made us business people," Barış Gümüş goes on to add, "To put it figuratively, we used to cook in a pot and eat from its lid. Once the project was realized, our interlocutors, buyers, and institutions with which we trade, changed. This not only ensures we sell products at a high volume, but also carries us further in the institutional sense."

Already exporting to various countries including America and Germany, İksir Cosmetics' future plans include increasing the number and type of products for basic cosmetics needs, and to expand its share in both domestic and international markets.

A jolly  
delicacy for  
all seasons

# Kahramanmaraş



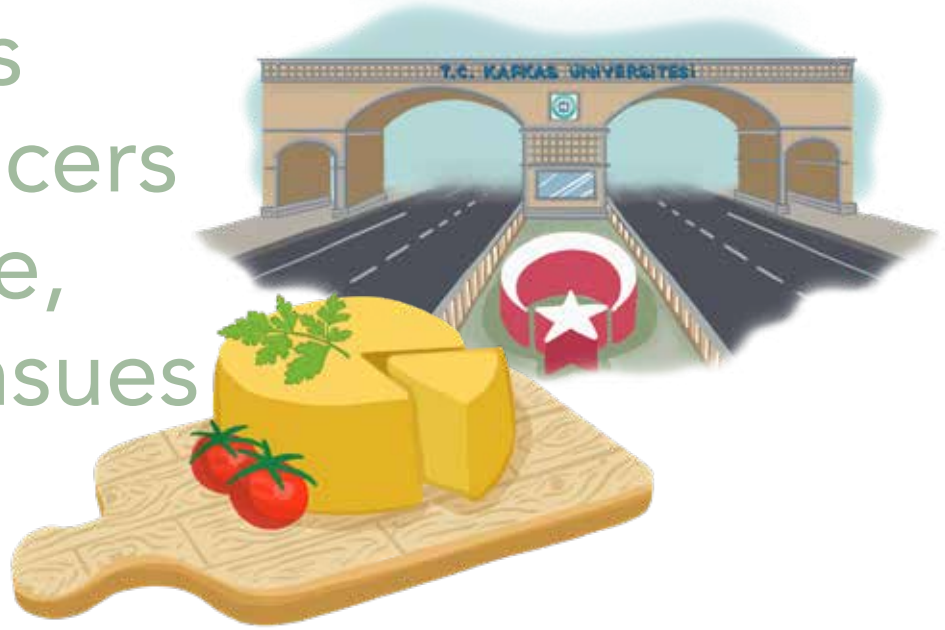
Sometimes the greatest companion to a nice cup of tea, sometimes a small treat at the end of a hard day's work. Some say they cannot live without it, some save their appetite for special days. Desserts make children smile, bring delight to neighbors' visits, and brighten up a dull day.

Yet another feature of desserts is that they are the specialty of Akdo Ice Cream. Make no mistake: Akdo Ice Cream produces not only ice cream but all sorts of desserts and cakes, as well. Still, its pride and joy is the Maraş ice cream – a unique delicacy of not just its namesake city, but our country. Having applied for IPARD funds when their facility became insufficient, Akdo Ice Cream representatives established a new production base and increased their business volume thanks to the project grants they received. The grant's effects were multilateral: The facility now has a daily production capacity of 20 tons, the number of Akdo Ice Cream-affiliated cafés has increased to 12, and the company started selling wholesale ice cream.

Akdo Ice Cream Chairman of the Board Ahmet Davarcioğlu says business offers increased after the implementation of the project and comments, "As for me, I have good opportunities for promoting Maraş ice cream. Right now, as Akdo Ice Cream, we rank among the top three in Maraş. Demand is pretty high. We sell 7-8 tons of our ice cream in Maraş. Our visibility and of course profit has increased." Indicating that Maraş ice cream can be more easily promoted through alternative packaging, Davarcioğlu says, "We first have to make Maraş ice cream more visible, more accessible in Turkey. Export will then follow."

# Academics and producers collaborate, success ensues

## Kars



One of the first foods to spring to mind when talking about dairy, cheese is essential to the kitchen for most of us. A must-have for breakfast, we also use cheese in pastries, and even make desserts with it. Each cheese has its own unique aroma, and also differs in terms of criteria such as acidity, saltiness and sharpness. With its sharp aroma and lasting taste, Kars kaşar, on the other hand, has its own place among the cheese produced in our country. There are many factors that contribute to the idiosyncratic taste of Kars kaşar. That Kars enjoys great meadows thanks to its geographical features and the positive impact this has on husbandry as well as the minimum level of chemical fertilizers and insecticides take the lead among the said factors.

Moreover, home to the Karasu-Aras and Büyük Ağrı basins – both unique in terms of their properties – Kars has a rich and multi-layered soil structure, vegetation and precipitation pattern. All of these factors combine and give Kars kaşar its unparalleled taste. Surely, those who want to enhance and continue Kars kaşar production also contribute greatly to that wonderful taste.

Prepared by Kafkas University academics and implemented in collaboration with Kars kaşar producers, the “Geographical Marking of Traditional Kaşar Cheese of Kars” project was developed by people working to this end. Kafkas University Faculty of Veterinary Science Lecturer Prof. Mitat Şahin states that the project

centering on Kars kaşar was prepared in line with producers' demands for enhancing the means of production and their markets, and recounts the beginning of the process as follows: "Our producers talked about struggling to sell and find markets for traditional Kars kaşar under the conditions of the time, and mentioned that their market was narrowing by the day; they said people were no longer interested in Kars kaşar. When we were discussing what could be done, one of us said, 'We must maintain geographical marking for Kars kaşar.' We then prepared the 'Geographical Marking of Traditional Kaşar Cheese of Kars' project."

Thanks to the project, which is supported by Serhat Development Agency, the geographical marking registration registration was obtained in 2015, and then the efforts gained momentum. Following extensive works including educational meetings, promotional activities and work visits, producers' visibility increased, employment was enhanced, migration was prevented, and a contribution was made to the economy. Moreover, the project found larger audience thanks to a logo competition.

Indicating that they set out with the aim of protecting the production method of Kars kaşar and increasing its market share, Prof. Mitat Şahin says, "This is what we had thought at the beginning: We will obtain the geographical marking registration, and the citizens will make use of it. That's not how it works. In the rural in particular, one project leads to another" to state that

the process continues to grow. Pointing out that he has prepared and completed many projects until now, Şahin says the Kars kaşar project has had the highest impact among them. Saying, "This project has had direct effect on producers, consumers and the public, which has made me very happy," Şahin adds that they will accelerate efforts for branding and increasing market share in the near future.



# A woman's will is what it takes to change it all Kastamonu



Criteria such as women's position in social life and inclusion in the workforce are considered to be direct indicators of well-being and development. Societies, where traditional roles are blended with new fields of activity and professions for women, both make significant progress in terms of gender equality and raise women who can depend on themselves, make money, and work eagerly. These women change not only their own lives, but also those of their families and of other women who they inspire and encourage. In turn, women, whose lives change for the better, change entire societies...

Projects designed for women hold a special place among rural development funds. The ARDSI-funded restaurant project by Fatma Duman of Kastamonu is a success story that both enhances the tourism potential of Subaşı village – Duman's place of birth and residence – and a reminder to women to never stop chasing their dreams. A mother of two, Duman opened Seracılar Restaurant, which she runs with her mother,

in 2015 and soon started running an oven alongside the restaurant. Saying that her mother supported her greatly during the project design process but there were those who were skeptical of the venture, Duman goes on to add, "My mother and I stood shoulder to shoulder for this project. Other members of the family would tell us things like, 'You cannot do it', 'Why would you do something like that?' or 'Who runs a restaurant in a village?'"

Underlining that she never gave up on her dream despite not being encouraged initially and experiencing various setbacks, Duman says, "I am a primary school graduate. I achieved something from scratch, without knowing anything at all." Pointing out that she successfully runs her restaurant thanks to the project funds, Duman says "Seracılar" – her family's nickname in the village – has now become a brand in the region. The next dream to achieve for Fatma Duman is to merge the restaurant with a boutique hotel and unlock the tourism potential of Kastamonu's natural wonders.

# Finest crop in the cradle of civilization Konya

The soil blossoms with fertility all around Anatolia, the cradle of civilization. Agriculturally favorable lands, on which hundreds of produce grow, are among Turkey's most valuable natural assets. The untiring people of this country constantly search for new ways to cultivate the land, to grow new produce from the face of the earth, and to process them in the best possible way. Derebucak Pulses Sorting and Packaging Enterprise was established, renewed and upgraded to this end.

Indicating that the idea of the project originated when irrigated farming began in the region, Derebucak District Director for Agriculture and Forestry Aybars Yiğit says, "We wanted to start things with sugar bean, which has been produced in our region for a long time. We increased the rate of cultivated lands from around 50 decares to 10 thousand decares." Derebucak Pulses Sorting and Packaging Enterprise, which has an annual production value of 35,000,000 liras, processes, stores and markets many produce, mainly sugar bean.



Aybars Yiğit says they are now in a position to determine sugar bean prices on a national scale thanks to the leaps taken with the funds received, and adds, "With this project, we both made economical contributions and increased the visibility of our district. Moreover, our district was granted an asset; these are great gains for a small district like us." Aybars Yiğit highlights that the enterprise's brand value has increased.

Having made it to the top in terms of sugar bean production in addition to facilitating its partners' production and processing phases, Derebucak Pulses Selection and Packing Enterprise's short term goals include fortifying sustainable production, accelerating marketing activities, and increasing market share.

# All thanks to a dream Kütahya

Nobel Prize winner author Anatole France once said, “To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream, not only plan, but also believe.” Indeed, when we look at what humankind has achieved, we see that in the beginning there is always a dream and the belief in that dream – a dream and a belief that are not abandoned no matter what people say and despite the obstacles faced. It is this determination that transforms plans into reality, and makes the un-conceivable happen.

The story of Mehmet and Emine Aslan of Kütahya also began with such determination. Locals of Şaphane, Kütahya, the couple make a living by selling the fruit and vegetable they produce in the neighborhood market, which is an activity they cannot continue in the winter. Willing to work harder and seeking new fields, the couple started looking for alternative produce, at which point the oyster mushroom they saw their friends handle drew their attention and they came to realize that their search for produce to sell in winter was over. What is more, they were not completely un-



familiar with this mushroom that grew on their fields back when they were kids. As they were looking for ways to realize their ideas, they came across rural development funds. Although not experienced at all, they never gave up and eliminated all obstacles.

Emine Aslan says that they were both supported and criticized during the process, and that people would frequently ask them questions such as, “Is that mushroom worth all that money; are you looking for an adventure?” Still, the couple did not back down and established a facility that operates at a 12.5-ton capacity per year. Now, they not only contribute to their own economy but have also introduced new fields of activity in the region, where the common occupation is fruit-growing.

Finding strength in their success and setting new goals for themselves, the couple is now dreaming of first increasing production capacity through new greenhouses and then sending their products abroad, which means that the road ahead has many amazing achievements to offer...

# The secret is in the story Malatya

Ice cream is a favorite for children and children at heart. Although it is not quite possible to know how or where it was first made, we see traces of it throughout history. It is said, for instance, that Alexander the Great enjoyed eating ice with honey, nuts and fruit. It has been noted that around 500 BC in the Persian Empire, the meticulously collected snow would be blended with honey, syrup, cream and various spices. Records indicate that in the 200s BC, on the other hand, the Chinese would mix rice with milk, freeze it in snow and then consume it. It has been rumored that the famous traveler Marco Polo brought along frozen desserts made of honey and milk during his 13<sup>th</sup> century visit from China to Europe. Having changed throughout the ages to find its current taste, ice cream tells an impressive success story.

Chemical engineer Mustafa Büyükkapancı indicates that constant renewal dominates the success of Karda Ice Cream, a delicacy of Malatya. Saying that the company, which has been in business since 2005,



has currently reached a daily production capacity of 40 tons thanks to the IPARD funds they started to receive in 2014, Büyükkapancı underlines that they partnered with a well-equipped and experienced consultant to benefit from funds in a realistic and most efficient manner. Büyükkapancı adds that they are proud to have created employment opportunities for both milk producers and the people in the region thanks to these funds. Stressing that Karda Ice Cream – which expanded its production facility and increased both production quality and capacity through new machines acquired thanks to the funds received – is taking firm steps towards becoming an established brand first in Turkey and then in Europe, Turkic republics and even Central Asia, Büyükkapancı states that those who constantly renew themselves, attribute importance to innovation and move forward with their eyes on the target will successfully overcome any obstacle. Karda Ice Cream's rising performance attests to this fact.

# A time gate museum in the bosom of nature Manisa

What major healing it brings to remind of their roots and journey to the solitary communities and individuals of a world that is more and more digitalized by the day, further alienated from its own historical patterns and values due to technological leaps... The story of Obasya is the story of a three-dimensional mirror that shows how and whence humankind reached present day, and which values it has turned its back to, and is now living in a state of anxious rush.

Mustafa Pala, the mastermind of the Obasya culture and tourism project that was realized in Mount Yunt in Manisa's Yunusemre district, has been engaged in



cooperative activities for 45 years. Having showed the courage to chase new and novel ideas and thus achieved success in his career, Pala set out with the dream of integrating folkloric and ethnographic components back to life in harmony with the nature. With the motto of "Each project creates its own resources," he found 110 fellow dreamers. Willing to contribute to the implementation of a nice project in Manisa and acting with no profit in mind, these partners joined forces and bought a 88 hectare field on Mount Yunt. Having received funds from Zafer Development Agency as well as IPARD, they man-

aged to erect a time gate museum on this field. They united the tent-shelters called yurt – used by our ancestors in Central Asia and made of felt and wood – with comfort and started to offer them as accommodation. It was then time to build mud houses – one of the main components of the transition to settled life. Stone houses with flat earth tops were also added to Obasya’s time gate museum.

The ancient city of Aigai, where excavation is still underway, is nearby and thus a natural part of the museum. Türkmen Waterfall, the biggest in the Aegean Region, adds value to the project as the cascade that mirrors the passage of time. The project combines nature, culture and history and offers them all to visitors. This is how the Obasya project was transformed into a center of tourism where hard-working producers get to sell their products.

A blend of nature and cultural history, Obasya comes to the fore as a center that offers the traditional sports of archery and horse-breeding/riding, and is also used by cyclists. Lavender is cultivated on a field of four hectares and now festivals are held when it is harvest time. Mustafa Pala indicates that these festivals increased locals’ interest in lavender cultivation, and steered them towards growing lavender in their own fields. Pala mentions that people from all around Turkey consider Obasya to be a successful example of cultural tourism and visit it, and ask for information to implement similar projects in their hometowns. Underlining that this fact brings

about considerable social satisfaction, Pala says that as someone who has studied at state boarding schools, he is content to give back to society by sharing know-how as well as contributing to the development of the region.

A firm believer in the power of research and importance of chasing new and novel ideas, Mustafa Pala recommends people who want to make their dreams come true – just like Pala himself did – to benefit from grants such as the IPARD Program. Pala makes a special appeal to pensioners: “Definitely do something new. Do not just retreat into a corner because you are retired. Say, ‘I’ve got things to do’ and get on with new projects.”



# From a tiny basement to a huge factory Mardin



The story of textile goes as far back as the history of humankind. After all, clothing is the sole means of being protected against outer conditions: Sometimes to keep warm, sometimes to keep cool. Textile production, which has been ongoing in Anatolia since the Hittite and Assyrian periods, is a profession on the rise today in Mardin.

Owners of ENS Textile Sewing Project Ayşe and Yusuf Kaya have been in the textile sector for many years. Having met and married when working at a dim and stuffy basement of sixty square meters, the couple never gave up on their dreams of starting their own business.

The couple's lives changed the day they applied to ARDSI Provincial Coordinatorship for consultancy. Having learned about IPARD funds, they started to prepare their project with great enthusiasm. Once their project was approved, the Kayas took action and established their company, which stands over 1,500 square meters of closed space at the Mardin Organized Industrial Site. Entrepreneur Ayşe Kaya has the following to say about

the process: "When we heard about the funds granted by the Agriculture and Rural Development Support Institution, we made our way to the Mardin Provincial Coordinatorship with the hopes that we might be awarded grants, as well. After the interest they showed in us, we designed our project and presented it to the institution, and at the end, started our factory with my husband. If it wasn't for the efforts of the friends working at the Mardin Provincial Coordinatorship, this facility couldn't have been built and we would have continued to work in that basement. I would like to thank them."

Yusuf Kaya, the co-founder of the facility which exports to Europe today, on the other hand, says their long-term goals include reaching the level of 100-150 people in terms of both employment and production. Kaya's advice to those considering applying for IPARD grants is as follows: "Know what you want really well, plan properly, do not revise once you have completed your project, because revisions can be draining in both the psychological and material sense."

# A success story featuring milk and dairy products

## Mersin



Rich in vitamins and a source of calcium, milk has been an integral part of people's lives for thousands of years. Dairy products such as cheese, yoghurt and butter, on the other hand, have been bringing both taste and health to tables since centuries. Ramazan Öz is a successful business manager who has been safely delivering milk and dairy products – our must-haves – to our homes.

Öz comes from a family who has been making a living by husbandry for generations, and has been working in the field of milk and dairy products for 28 years. Having started out with a small business, Öz has now happily made his dream of owning a production facility at the Mersin Organized Industrial Site true thanks to his own capital as well as IPARD funds. A holder of the BRC certificate with his facility standing over 12,500 square meters of closed space, and an exporter since 7-8 years, Öz reveals the secret to his success as such: "As SMEs, we are our country's carriers, so to speak. We have serious

responsibilities. We have to act with this awareness. We must definitely take action in line with the direction where our country and the world are headed. We must present our own vision within the framework of our esteemed President's vision for 2023 and 2050 so that we can make progress."

Indicating that in the facility, they comply with the 70 ton capacity limit within the scope of the project, Ramazan Öz says that they have designed capacity in a manner that could be later increased, and that they aim to reach a level of 250-300 ton capacity in the future. Advising entrepreneurs to benefit from grant programs such as IPARD, Öz heeds a warning: "We have to act with the awareness that this money is not given to us so that we can change cars, buy new houses, and acquire properties. We are carrying out pioneering works. They award us grants so that we can create new employment opportunities."

# From the hive to the table: The sweetest journey

## Muş



Research proves that the first humans benefitted from the honey of bees living inside tree or rock dents. Produced by bees, which play a prominent role in the continuity of the ecological system, and a staple in terms of both health and taste, honey has been consumed since the Stone Age. Turkey is among the numbered countries of the world in terms of honey production. Honey varies greatly especially in the eastern parts of our country.

A father of four, Firat Pekbay has been engaged with mobile beekeeping – the family business – since the ages of 10-11. Having established a company with the aim of selling their honey, which they have been producing for years, in the domestic market, Pekbay has obtained certificates for his products compliant with the Turkish Food Codex, and introduced them to consumers in major cities such as İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa and Ankara. Having established his facility at the Korkut province of Muş thanks to the funds he received for the Muş Karlıyayla Honey Packaging Enterprise Project, Pekbay is also the president of the Muş Bee Breeders Association.

Firat Pekbay indicates that before the facility was established, they had to take the honey outside the city for packaging, and now that the facility is up and running, this is no longer the case and they can complete packaging in a hygienic environment. Stating that they have eliminated producers' transportation costs, the entrepreneur is happy to have created considerable direct and indirect employment opportunities. Selling the products, which now last longer thanks to hygienic potting processes, under the brand of ARIŞ Organik, Pekbay says their future goals are to increase both production capacity and employment by extending their activities in Muş and neighboring cities to the entire country, and to introduce a modern packaging concept to producers in terms of both honey production and packaging.

Pointing out that he is grateful to the ARDSI Provincial Coordinatorship, which has been active in the city of Muş since 2012, and his expert teammates, Pekbay says, "We would like to thank them for leading and helping us in every single matter."

# A dream come true Nevşehir



Pottery is the name given to products such as pots, jugs and vases that are made by turning hardpan into mud and shaping it in the potter's wheel. Archeological findings date pottery-making in Anatolia to 8,000 years ago, and the traces of wheel pottery to around 5,000 years ago. Today, pottery is a craft that is actively carried out.

Halim Bülent Sönmez has been engaged in pottery since the age of 10. Having taken over the atelier, where he worked for many years, from his master in 2002 and established his own business under the name of Sönmez Pottery, the entrepreneur has moved forward by always aiming for the better. For instance, he never gave up on his dream of owning his own pottery factory – a dream he has had since the age of 16 – and having applied to ARDSI for machinery, equipment and construction funds in 2013, he opened an atelier of 600 square meters. In 2017, he erected an additional building of 500 square meters of closed space with his own capital. Ignoring his friends' comments such as, "Do

not carry on with this project; they will take it away from you" when he was first designing a project to submit to ARDSI, Sönmez now happily exports his products to various countries of Europe.

Stating that they could have only one person working with them when their atelier was small, Sönmez says that thanks to the funds they received, they can employ 11-12 people today, and collaborate with other pottery masters in Avanos to meet high international demand. Sönmez thus proudly contributes to both employment and the economy of the region. Indicating that they experienced some challenges when designing their first project but are now implementing their current project smoothly without any problems, the entrepreneur says they aim to expand their business to 10,000 square meters of closed space and employ 60-70 people by 2023. To those willing to submit their projects, Sönmez says, "Do not be shy. We are ready to help you with anything."

# Women's labor heralds societal development Ordu



Further inclusion of women in the workforce is quite an important factor in terms of both ameliorating their individual living conditions and ensuring societal well-being and economical development. For this reason, leading countries of the world prioritize preparing roadmaps that include various programs developed to increase women's employment rates.

Implemented in the Kabakdağ neighborhood of Ordu's Fatsa district, the "Women Broke a Sweat and the Fruits Did Not Go Bad" project was realized thanks to entrepreneurs who are aware of the importance of the power of women in the workforce. The project was supported as part of the Women in Rural Areas Project of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's

Department of Publications in 2017. Project coordinator for the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry, Zekeriya Atasever has the following to say about the pilot region of their project: "The distinguishing feature of the Kabakdağ neighborhood is that it is a place where people are heavily engaged in organic farming. This is an important criteria for us, for there is something more different, more valuable about organic farming. In hazelnut gardens, where people are engaged in organic farming, there are single fruit trees. Although the fruit of these trees are organic produce, no one collects them to sell them in markets. That is to say, they have no economic value and are usually left to rot."

Pointing out that they set out with the goal of drying, processing and utilizing the fruit left to rot in Kabakdağ and environs, Atasever says, “We wanted to somehow put them to use; dry the more solid and hard ones, and to make molasses, roll-ups and jams from the softer ones. This was our starting point.”

Making the assessment, “We have made an investment that was much needed in this region,” Zekeriya Atasever says 55 female farmers in the region were trained thanks to their project, which was included in the investment program of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry’s Department of Publications in 2017. Moreover, the idle community clinic was renovated, machine equipment was bought, and the building was transformed into a food production facility. The 2 drying ovens in the facility, which stands over an area of 80-90 square meters, can dry 100 kilograms of fruit at one go. Indicating that they make use of 20 tons of fruit in season, Atasever says that the fruits that was

once left to rot have been integrated into the economy as value-added products, and that the products are sold at commercial enterprises of the Fatsa Chamber of Agriculture as well as its partnering local markets.

Stating that their project received an award in the “Products Adding Value to Agriculture” category in 2017, and that they set up a both where they presented their products and recounted their project at the World Women Farmers Program organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in 2019, Zekeriya Atasever says they receive great interest from many national companies and they have signed production agreements with them. Asserting that they are proud of the great results they have achieved, Atasever goes on to add that increasing the number of similar projects, which involve women in the production process, is included among their institutional goals, and that their project-specific objective is to become a specialized brand and enhance quality.



# Skilled hands is what is needed to knead this delicacy

## Samsun

Bafra pide, a Geographical Marking Registration-holder delicacy unique to Samsun, is made of thin dough, is cooked in wood fire, and has a crisp taste. A must-have for the weddings, funerals, soldier sending-off ceremonies and Sunday breakfasts in the region, Bafra pide has been shaped by skilled masters and heartily enjoyed for over a century.

Born in Bafra, Samsun, Niyazi Kesim is a business owner who has been working in the restaurant sector for many years. Kesim got to know about the IPARD Program thanks to ARDSI Samsun Provincial Coordinator Bülent Turan, who once visited his restaurant. Having twice received ARDSI funds previously, Kesim now has a total of five enterprises: Bafra, Batı Park and Dereköy branches in Samsun as well as his restaurants in Ankara. With his third IPARD project, Kesim's aim is to build a facility over an area of 1,500 square meters of closed space he purchased at the Bafra Organized Industrial Site, and to produce the



local delicacy of Bafra pide there. Calling his first project cooperation with ARDSI an “apprenticeship”, the second “undermastership” and the third “mastership,” Niyazi Kesim is happy to have provided direct and indirect employment opportunities to a total of 178 people. Saying that IPARD has increased the value of his company, Kesim reminds entrepreneurs, who want to receive grants, of the importance of having capital before the project is implemented, and advises them to use the grant they receive wisely.

Niyazi Kesim asserts that their aim with the project, where they will produce Bafra pide in frozen form, is to increase the number of enterprises as well as employment, and then to export their products. “We never make any short-term plans. We always think of our companions and the works we will accomplish in the long-term sense. We will lead the production of frozen Bafra pide in Turkey; Allah willing, it will be good,” says Kesim.

Sounds of  
the local  
heard better  
together



# Samsun OMYEGDER

Samsun's Ondokuz Mayıs district is a shining star of our country with its cultural mosaic, historical artifacts and natural wonders. Home to unique natural wonders such as the Nebiyan Tourism Center, Sarıgazel Nature Park, Kızılırmak Delta Bird Paradise, Galerîç Subasar Forest as well as its beach and coast, the district's Yörükler, Dağköy and Köfteroğlu Tumuli dating back to the ancient period as well as architectural works such as Yörükler and Fındıklı stone bridges and Yörükler Hammam shed light on our history.

The district of Ondokuz Mayıs is one of the 25 pilot districts to be supported within the scope of the LEADER Approach, a joint effort by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the European Union. The district encompasses an area of 263 square kilometers and is home to a population of under 25,000. In 2016, the Ondokuz Mayıs Local Action Group Association (OMYEGDER) was established under the Law for Associations in the district, which came to know about the LEADER philosophy thanks to the meetings held

in Samsun. Included in the small Local Action Groups category due to the population figures and the fact that it is active in a single district, the association conducted sector- and neighborhood-oriented meetings as well as surveys, determined the wishes, expectations and problems of the people in the region, and with the support of the stakeholders in the district, prepared the Local Development Strategy (LDS), which adopts a bottom to top local administration concept.

OMYEGDER Chairman of the Board Tolga Erel says, "This is a beautiful district. It is quite rich in terms of its nature, culture and society. We have a vision, a conceptualization of the future to protect and enhance our district's assets." Erel adds that the Strategy – prepared with the objectives of developing local administration, and increasing the capacity of women, youth and disadvantaged groups as well as NGO's in district administration – ranked first among the LAGs, and they are quite happy about it.

# Science and technology investments are key Sivas



Balanced nutrition is what it takes for a healthy body. And what balanced nutrition takes is dietary habits that include meat, milk and dairy. The unsung heroes of this equation is the professional experts who process animal products in hygienic conditions and deliver them to consumers.

Hüseyin Erdem Muçuoğlu is a business owner who lives and works in the Ortaklar village of Sivas' Yıldızeli district. Muçuoğlu prepared a project for a facility under the name of "Semi-Open Enterprise Project for Dairy Cattle with a Capacity of 100 Milk Cows" in 2012 and received funds. The entrepreneur, who implemented and realized the project the same year, designed yet another project to meet the needs of the facility, which started running in 2013, and managed to receive funds a second time. Muçuoğlu slaughters, processes and sells the livestock in his facility in line with EU standards. The entrepreneur also opened a modern

company store in Ankara's Turan Güneş Boulevard in 2018 with the aim of directly taking the products to consumers.

Hüseyin Erdem Muçuoğlu says he meets the roughage needs of the animals in his facility through the land he owns and the fields he has rented. Thus making a contribution to the region's economy, the business owner has 6 permanent employees, including a veterinarian. Muçuoğlu also continues his activities with a team of 3 consultants specialized in ration preparation and animal feeding, birth and breeding, project design and vegetative production. Stating that he believes in the power of science and technology, the entrepreneur says, "The team we have put together is the greatest indicator of this fact." Muçuoğlu asserts that their objectives include increasing facility capacity to reduce costs and increase profits and competitive strength.

# This success tastes lovelier than pistachio Şanlıurfa

Pistachio is a delicacy that one just cannot get enough of, adds flavor to desserts, and is enjoyed by the young and the elderly alike. High in calories, this nut is rich in group A and B vitamins as well as protein, potassium and phosphor. The major production center of this shelled fruit in our country is Şanlıurfa.

Mustafa Gülhan prepared a project with the aim of starting a modern and high-capacity pistachio processing facility at the Şanlıurfa Organized Industrial Site. Once his project was approved as part of the IPARD Program, in the sunny Şanlıurfa, Gülhan also planned to benefit from solar energy in his facility, which he wanted to build with the goal of extracting, roasting, packaging and selling pistachio. Setting up the most modern pistachio processing facility of the region thanks to the funds he received, Gülhan also comes to the fore as the owner of the first facility that conducts packaging activities in the region. The products of the company, which employs 50-60 people, are sold under the brand of Gülhanbey. Gülhan says, "The



industrialization concerning pistachio is very weak in our region. When I first undertook this project, there were very few companies, and most of them were not even professionals; they were interested in only a single aspect of the business. When we started to engage in this, it set an example and we saw that the number of companies increased. We were the first to package pistachio in Şanlıurfa. At least 10 companies embarked on ventures after us."

Advising all entrepreneurs with a solid project to benefit from ARDSI grants, Mustafa Gülhan makes this additional recommendation: "Definitely keep your goals as accurate and major as possible. Be very mindful of the steps you take. Wrong decisions can lead to negative results. But always keep an open and receptive mind."

Aiming to promote his Gülhanbey products first in Turkish and then international markets, Gülhan comments, "The main objective of our company is to brand, increase the number of our brands, and to promote ourselves in Turkey and in the world through our brands."

# Breakfast equals happiness Trabzon



Breakfast is the favorite meal of the day for most of us. Sunday breakfasts, where the entire family gathers or friends come together, are even more special. The taste of the butter that gets more and more transparent when spread on toasted bread, the visual feast of all sorts of cheese, the allure of many foods from eggs to olives, and tea – an essential for breakfast – are things most of us just cannot give up.

Kahvaltı Dünyası Chairman of the Board Hüseyin Tüysüz is an entrepreneur who brings these delicious breakfast tables into our homes. Having previously established two facilities in Trabzon's Üzümlü village and at the Bayburt Organized Industrial Site thanks to two projects approved as part of the IPARD Program, Tüysüz has met the advanced ma-

chinery and material needs of these facilities with a third project, and increased his annual turnover to 70-90 million liras. The company produces around 250-300 tons of butter and around 100-150 tons of cheese per month. Products are sent to many cities such as Trabzon, Rize, İstanbul, Ankara, Erzurum, İzmir and Sakarya. Products exported to Israel and the Palestinian region, on the other hand, are distributed to Lebanon and Jordan from there.

This is how Hüseyin Tüysüz recounts that the Kahvaltı Dünyası adventure was a childhood dream: "What we are doing right now was actually a dream me and my friends had during our secondary school and high school years. Since it was my grandfather's profession, I was quite familiar with cheese making.

We had a charcuterie where we sold village products. We would buy cheese and butter from villages and highlands to sell but had no production activities of our own. Me and my friends made plans to this end, in fact, this is why I chose the department of chemical engineering, where I graduated from.”

Indicating that they set out with a rented facility in 2000 and started establishing their own facility in 2007, Tüysüz says, “We were in no rush, we thought we would slowly get things done. We wanted to create employment opportunities in our region, and to run our own business. Thanks to ARDSI, we were able to speed up the process, which would otherwise take perhaps 5-6 years.”

Here’s what Hüseyin Tüysüz advises to those who want to benefit from funds by institutions such as ARDSI: “One must first transform what they want to do into a project. Do not just read what attracts your attention and get on with a project, since there are many details to it. You have to learn the procedure well in particular. I say this to encourage fellow entrepreneurs: Until a certain threshold, everything seems obstructed. You face challenges each time you knock on a door until you establish an institutional order. However, the tables turn after a certain point. After that, things start to run on their own. You get to learn about the system together with ARDSI or other supporting institutions. Once you learn about the system, the results drastically

change at once. You rapidly speed up. And then people around you who at first didn’t believe in you or buy from you start to have faith in you and try to be there for you.”

Indicating that they have met their short- and long-term goals, Hüseyin Tüysüz adds, “Our goal is to be happy. We do what we love. We want to give back to people in terms of employment; our only long-term goal we are still to meet has to do with employment. We care about employment and export. We have around 80 personnel right now, all of whom are from the rural. We set no limits for ourselves when it comes to employment and export.”



# Deliciousness in a can Uşak



There was a time when French commander Napoleon Bonaparte started looking for ways to eliminate the nutrition problem his army would experience during campaigns, and even declared that there would be a monetary prize for the one to solve the problem. It was Nicolas François Appert who came up with the remedy by bottling food and removing the air inside. Moreover, thanks to this answer to Napoleon's quest, he became the inventor of the very first form of canned foods. Enjoyed all around the world today, this is how canned foods' story of emergence went down in history. A lifesaver for many ever since, canned food is also indispensable in our country.

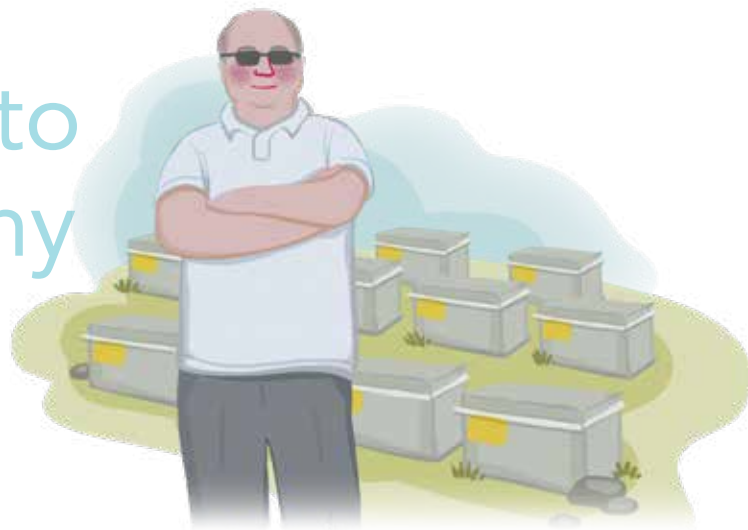
Aydın Yıldırım's company produces ready-to-eat food cans and exports its products all around the world. As a result of incoming demands, Yıldırım bought land in Eşme, Uşak under the name of Eşme Canned Food with the purposes of increasing production and making new investments, and started to build a new company there. Thanks to the funding he received as

part of the IPARD Program, he opened a new factory with a closed area of 4,000 square meters and an open area of 40 thousand square meters. As a company that produces a hundred percent locally and is engaged only in export, Eşme Canned Food makes great contribution to the region's economy and sends its products to many parts of the world, namely United Arab Emirates, Israel, Jordan, America, Canada, France, England and Germany.

Aydın Yıldırım says their short-term goal for their new factory is to begin trial productions, and to increase capacity in the medium-term and to diversify products in the long-term. Here's Yıldırım's advice to new entrepreneurs: "First of all, look very well into feasibility, for unexpected costs and works sometimes force you to think, and at times even bring you to the point of giving up. So, apply after you conduct feasibility studies properly, draw a roadmap in line with it, and decide whether or not it can be done."

# Honey: Sweet to the soul, healthy for the body

## Yozgat



The main goal of those engaged in beekeeping is certainly to obtain high-quality honey, which is why they prefer fields surrounded by plants and trees that produce nectar and pollen aplenty. Plants such as clover, trefoil, thyme, sage and linden as well as apple, almond, acacia, citrus and pine trees are natural treasures in this sense.

Murat Doğan is an entrepreneur who makes a living by beekeeping. He learned about IPARD funds thanks to advertisements and promotional meetings. Once his project was approved and given grants, he bought 240 polystyrene pollen trap hives, a 2 kW-solar energy system and a caravan for a field of 7 hectares in the Toprakpinar village of Yozgat's Sarıkaya district. Having started to produce around 2 tons of honey and 150 kilograms of pollen per year, Doğan also planted various flowers and trees on both his own land and on the surrounding settlements for the bees. Aiming to contribute to the country's economy as well, the entrepreneur bought

all Turkish made machines and equipment for his business.

Murat Doğan states that he faced various obstacles when implementing his project but the employees and officials of the IPARD Program helped him with great dedication, and would like to thank them. His advice for those considering applying for grants is this: "First of all, know what you want really well and find yourself a good consultant, for you will lead your consultant, and your consultant will show you the way."

Murat Doğan says his next priority target is to remedy the deficiencies he has determined in his business. Moreover, he plans to add honey milk and propolis production to his activities, diversify his products and increase profit. "We want to gather our products under a brand and market them efficiently in the national market," asserts Doğan.

# Thousands of years old occupation meets modern technology

## Van



One of the many results of the Agricultural Revolution, which fully changed the course of the history of humankind, is that it led to the emergence of more skilled and more equipped farmers and breeders. As economic and social life were transformed, knowledge on animals and plants also expanded, broadening the scope of what humankind is capable of to an unparalleled level. So much so that a 2018 study reveals that the shepherds of Mongolian steppes were able to “conquer all of Asia and Europe” thanks to dairy farming. The research indicates that through cultural contact, Central Asian dairy farming expand-

ed to a wide area known as the Eurasian Steppes encompassing Romania, Ukraine, East Turkistan and Manchuria.

It is not possible to know where and how dairy farming began – just like it is the case with agriculture and husbandry. That being said, it would be wrong to ignore the fact that Anatolia, which is not that far from Central Asia, has played a leading and central role in these activities. These occupations, which help to maintain and shape life, are still continued in Van, where the history of settlement goes back to 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. Thousands of years ago, humankind strived

for a more prosperous life, and tried to increase the yield of the technology at hand. The same determination still lives on, and shows itself in the efforts of those trying to give their best to what they do.

Established in 1966, Dönerdere Agricultural Development Cooperative is a successful example of the said efforts. Named after a village in Van's Özalp district, the cooperative's aims included making more efficient use of the milk produced by its partners. Collaboration – one of the main principles of cooperative work – was in place right from the start and the partners acted in solidarity towards common interests but as Dönerdere Agricultural Development Cooperative President Turgay Özbek puts it, they were always looking for something. This quest was for ameliorating the means of the facility, increasing the quality and standards of production, and enhancing market share. Özbek puts the state back then as, "We would either cease all activity or set up a new facility through funds." When the Cooperative got to know about agricultural and rural development funds, the quest was over. Thanks to the funds received from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the facility was renewed in European Union standards, and activities did not cease but on the contrary, grew stronger than before and increased.

Although the Cooperative had not implemented any similar projects beforehand, they completed all phases successfully, and the funds received did not only enhance the quality and yield of production but also enabled collaborations – formerly hindered due to technological setbacks – and brought about an

economic boom in the region. Cooperative President Turgay Özbek's words attest to the expansive impact of the funds: "If it wasn't for this funding, we could not have made this investment, many of our employees would have been out of jobs, and it would not have been possible for us to create this added value we now create."

Having met one of its greatest goals, the Dönerdere Agricultural Development Cooperative is moving forward with new targets. The Cooperative's roadmap includes the completion of the branding process and the designing of projects to ensure Van's solar energy potential is put to use.









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