

BEST PRACTICES

***"Olive Oil Mills, marketing and standardization of olive oil with modern methods -
Olive groves under Integrated management in the shadow of Mt Olympus"***

Institutional information

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Name of institution: GRIMOURAS ASTERIOS L.P. / Olive Oil Mills, Production & Packaging of Olive Oil

Region and Country where the case study took place: Greece, Region of Central Macedonia, Prefecture/Regional Unit of Pieria, Local Community of Skotina

Website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEzztHyM9IQ>

Facebook:

Logo:

Summary

Explain your case in one or two sentences

GRIMOURAS ASTERIOS L.P. / Olive Oil Mills is a privately owned business, that had its basis in an old family Olive Mill, which was established in 1969 by Mr. Grimoura's father in different location, and today is being managed by Mr. Asterios Grimouras and located about 1,5 km north of in the Local Community of Skotina (Pieria, Greece). The business mainly deals with olive processing and oil production, but also provides standardization and packaging services, and selling oil products to individuals or supplying restaurants, as well. Furthermore the company produces and standardize secondary oil products such as: wort oil, natural cosmetics, beeswaxes-ointments, handmade soaps based on olive oil and other physical products. All the above are taking place in the, fully equipped with state-of-the-art machinery, new facilities, which makes GRIMOURAS ASTERIOS L.P. / Olive Oil Mills, one of the most innovative oil processing enterprises in the country.

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

As it was mentioned before, the first unit was established in 1969, inside the built up area of Skotina. Therefore, a space problem for the safely transfer of the olives to the Olive Mill, which was being done exclusively with transport animals, such as horses, mules and donkeys, started to show up, as the unit was running inside the village and very close to households. In addition to that, the lack of space constituted a risk for the clients/olive growers health, because of the crowding of many people on a few square meters, while an old machinery without any standards, was working on.

The old machinery, that was consisted only of two millstones, was responsible for the low output of the unit, which, despite the many working hours, amounted only to 300 kgr of oil / hr.

Another one problem that had to do with the holistic management of the unit, was that there wasn't enough knowledge to ascertain the quality of the incoming olives (e.g. acidity control), as the

concept of integrated management was still completely unknown, and that had a serious effect to the produced product.

Finally, there was no prediction for the Mill's wastes, which were disposing uncontrollably in the near water bodies, such as: rivers, streams etc.

What were the needs you identified?

The first need that Mr Grimouras identified, was the immediate need of company relocation in a larger and safer place, outside of the community of Skotina, ensuring in this way the whole processes safety. Also Mr. Grimouras decided that an increasing of the production must be achieved, with the simultaneously rising of the product quality. That was possible only by replacing the millstones, with new modern machinery and the putting of the company's services under strict certification, so that only the better production should enter in the productive procedure of the Olive Oil Mill.

Mr. Grimouras also found that that the only way for his business to become economically sustainable, is to produce oil and secondary oil products itself, derived from carefully selected and fine olives that the clients/ olive growers bring into the Mill.

Finally, as the environmental awareness had already started to become more and more intense year by year, and the environmental legislation started to put strong restrictions to any business activity, Mr. Grimouras had to face and solve the matter of unit's wastes.

What solution you found to cover those needs?

First of all, Mr Grimouras decided to move his Olive Oil Mill in new location, outside of the settlement of Skotina, in wide area of about 0,25 ha, solving the space problem both for the business and for the clients, as they can transfer their olives safely, at any quantity and with any suitable means of transport.

Secondly, he visited many olive oil mills in the country, almost one by one, to take ideas, to gain experiences and knowledge and to cover the know-how gap, in order to turn from classic to modern oil production.

In addition to that, he studied the new legislation and then he thoroughly search on the certification procedures, that he was obliged to follow for his company, in order to ensure the proper row of the processes and the high quality of the final product.

Finally, he attended many seminars, especially on products quality assessment, on the importance of integrated Olive & Oil management in future oil industry, and on the categories and the appropriateness of the modern machinery in his business, as well.

What actions did you take to reach the solution?

The main actions and measures that Mr Grimouras, took, in order to manage his exploitation in a proper, modern, profitable and, above all, a sustainable way, were:

- He proceeded in a bank lending procedure and he participated and finally included to co-funded EU and national programmes, as a beneficiary, in order to equip his business with modern machinery and therefore to increase his production.
- He manufactured waste management facilities connected to the unit, inside the area of 0,25 ha. In this way he collects all the Olive Oil Mill's wastes, in one point, in a safely and environmental

approved way without disposing them and causing water pollution or other environmental damages

- He introduced a specific process of olives quality assessment, thanks to the knowledge he obtained by watching seminars and being consulted to expertise agronomists. It is important to be mentioned that the assessment process starts in the stage of olive tree, and only the olive crops that pass this stage, are being entered (their olives) in the productive procedure.
- He was one of the founders of a big group of producers, who joined in an extensive unit of integrated management of olive oils, which numbered up to 300 members. The members/olive growers of this unit, cultivate their olive groves based on strict protocols and following exactly the instructions of accredited agriculture consultants and agronomists. Both the olives and the final oil products, are being tested constantly for their quality standards, from the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute, which is located in Chania, Crete. The olive oil that comes from the above members, is kept in a separate tank, and being sold, as a superior quality product.
- He gradually extended his efforts towards the direction of producing and selling olive oil and secondary oil products, in a specifically designed place inside the Olive Oil Mill, by selecting the finest and highest quality olive oil, from the incoming olives.
- He put the unit under certification in production and packaging of olive oil, and specifically under the ISO-HACCP 22000:2005 standards, and due to this the business is being audited every year for its provides services and for the hygiene conditions, as well
- Finally, he started to disseminate the new status and the additional services of the family business, by social media networking (e.g. google), by co-operating with travel agents, and by accepting in the facilities, groups of tourists from all over Europe.

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

- 1) Certification Agencies - EUROCERT
- 2) Enterprises providing electromechanical equipment maintenance services
- 3) Directorate of Agriculture - Regional Unit of Pieria
- 4) Mediterranean Agronomic Institute
- 5) Unit of integrated management of olive oils
- 6) Agricultural and Business Consultants

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

- 1) The main problem that Mr. Grimouras faced in his effort to expand and modernize his business, was that there wasn't enough fund, therefore he proceeded both in a lending procedure from banks and in participating and inclusion to co-funded EU and national programmes, as a beneficiary.
- 2) The productivity of olive crops, depends on climate conditions and mainly from the quantity and the frequency of precipitation, which differs year by year. So, there were years that the business turnover was quite limited
- 3) Bureaucracy in all the approving and licensing procedures
- 4) There weren't clear and sufficient regulations concerning the disposal and the environmental management of waste and/or residues.
- 6) Arguments, conflicts and non-compliance with the rules and protocols, between the members of the Unit of integrated management of olive oils

What is the situation now, after your actions?

Today, GRIMOURAS ASTERIOS L.P. / Olive Oil Mills is a profitable and sustainable business, which have managed, with the passage of time:

- *to increase greatly the production of standardized olive oil, which is now amounted up to 6-8 tn/hr*
- *to become an umbrella institution for the creation and the functioning of an extensive unit of integrated management of olive oils, consisted of a big group of producers*
- *to extend its operations, into producing, packaging and selling its own fine extra virgin olive oil and quality secondary oil products*
- *to produce all of its products and to provide its services, under certificated standards and technical specifications*
- *to serve and to assist a great number of oil growers, from all over Pieria County*
- *to develop efficient methods of controlling the oil quality, so that only well checked olives are passing through productive procedure*
- *to completely comply with laws and regulations regarding to waste management*

Main lessons learned along the way?*

- 1) *Patience, especially with demanding clients/olive growers*
- 2) *Images and experiences from many Olive Oil Mills in the country*
- 3) *Faith in his abilities*
- 4) *Practice and theory*
- 5) *Vineyard has become a life-choice and a life style*
- 6) *Knowledge and know-how*

Annex:

Max 3 Images

Other related resources

Photographic Documentation



Photo 1: Some of the products that Mr's Grimouras unit, produce and sell



Photo 2: The whole range of the produced products of the unit



Photo 3: Part of GRIMOURAS ASTERIOS L.P. / Olive Oil Mills modernized machinery



Photo 4: Mr. Grimouras during guided tour in the unit's facilities, to a group of tourists/visitors