



Farmer Interview

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Messini / Greece

Programme: Erasmus+ Bees and More

Roles:

- Georgia (Student 1 - Researcher)
- Lentio (Student 2 - Researcher)
- Elias Anagnostopoulos (Farmer)

Interview Transcript

Student 1: Hello, thank you very much for coming today. We would like to ask you some questions related to the programme we are working on, which focuses on bees. First, we would like you to tell us a few things about yourself.

Farmer: Hello and thank you very much for the invitation. I have been an organic farmer since 2002 and I mainly work with olive cultivation. I come from a mountainous area of Messinia and I am very happy to help you and inform you about the importance of bees in agriculture.

Student 1: How many years have you been involved in agriculture?

Farmer: I have been involved in agriculture for about thirty-five years. I have been an active farmer all these years.

Student 2: Is agriculture your main profession?

Farmer: Yes, it is my main profession.

Student 1: In which area do you operate?

Farmer: I operate in the wider area of Ancient Messene. My village is semi-mountainous and located in a mountainous zone.

Student 2: Apart from olive cultivation, are you involved in other crops as well?

Farmer: Yes. In addition to olives, I also cultivate figs and Kalamon table olives.

Student 1: What production system do you follow? Organic farming?



Farmer: Yes, I have been engaged in organic farming since 2002. It has been many years and it requires a lot of effort. Through this process we have understood what bees mean for our cultivation.

Student 2: Based on the farming method you follow, how important do you consider bees for agriculture?

Farmer: Bees are the alpha and omega of agriculture. Although olives are not directly affected to a great extent by bee pollination, we have a great responsibility to properly maintain the bee population. Our area is largely covered by olive groves, so we must be very careful, especially with weed control and spraying. Protecting bees is very important for us, even if we do not directly depend on them for our cultivation.

Student 1: Do you think bees help your cultivation? Have you noticed better production when bees are present in your fields?

Farmer: In olive cultivation they do not help so much directly through pollination. However, they contribute significantly to the biodiversity we want to have in our fields. From simple flowers to fruit trees such as pear and orange trees that exist in the area, the presence of bees contributes substantially to the enrichment of the ecosystem of the cultivation.

Student 2: Do you think bees are affected by environmental factors or by farming practices such as the use of chemicals?

Farmer: Certainly. They are affected very much, especially by the use of chemicals. Weed control and chemical spraying for disease control affect bees significantly. For this reason we are particularly careful when carrying out such interventions.

Student 1: In your fields, do you allow other plants to grow so that there is flowering for bees?

Farmer: Yes, of course. We allow plants and grasses to grow so that there is biodiversity, both in low vegetation and in trees, beyond the main cultivation.

Student 2: Over the years, have you noticed any changes in the activity or population of bees?

Farmer: I think the population has been affected somewhat compared to previous years. I believe this is due to incorrect cultivation practices, not only in our area but more generally. Unfortunately, this is something we have observed.

Student 1: Would you be interested in participating in programmes that combine agriculture and beekeeping?

Farmer: Of course, because these two sectors are directly connected. Since ancient times there has been a close relationship between them. We should not forget that if bees disappear from our lives, then our life will disappear as well.



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Student 1: Thank you very much.

Farmer: Thank you as well. All the best.