

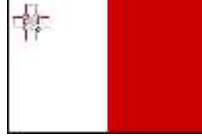


On-Farm Demonstration in Malta

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Topics of demonstration

- Reflect aims of organiser, tend to cover most aspects of respective sector
- **Animal Husbandry** (e.g. Milk Producers Coop.): animal health, nutrition, rearing systems, machinery, processing to food, antibiotics resistance, technologies, waste management
- **Crop Production** (e.g. Manikata Rural Coop.): biodiversity, climate change adaptation, pest management, alternative crops, processing to food, Pruning/ trellising, quality enhancement, soil/ water management
- Slight emphasis on single technologies

Providers and purpose of demonstration

Providers:

- Government (experimental farms)
- Cooperatives
- Producer organisations

Objectives:

- Increase farmers' income through better promotion, higher quality products & increased efficiency
- Promote environmental sustainability
- Promote farming profession to new generation (agribusiness students, school children)

History

- **Government Experimental Farm Gozo:** Set up during 1960s as plant nursery; demonstration activities commenced in 1990s, ceased during 2000s, restarted in 2012
- **Milk Producers Cooperative:** Farm visits with hands-on demonstration for students since 2009
- **Manikata Rural Cooperative:** Organise visits for school children, annual courses for farmer members since 2010

→ First on-farm demonstration in Malta could not be identified because there was no organisation that took a leadership role and no coordination among small dispersed initiatives.



Types of Demonstrations

- On-farm, hands-on demonstrations
- Indoor training sessions/ presentations

Access Issues

- No access issues related to geography due to the small size of Malta
- Male farmers dominant during demonstration activities for farmers (75-90% male)
- Older participants more common for activities aimed at farmers only (due to high prices of agricultural land, prospective young farmers struggle to get access to land or have no land ownership status)
- At events organised for schools and agribusiness students, participants are younger and more gender balanced

Other Issues

- SWOT analysis of Maltese farming sector highlighted "conservative mentality among mature farmers" and "individualism throughout the agricultural spectrum" as weaknesses
- Weak collaboration between farmers, no coordination of activities mentioned in interviews
- Tendency of Maltese farmers not wanting other farmers to observe their farms, therefore most demo activities take place off-farm; some cooperatives even organise farm visits abroad for members to inspire them with new ideas

Distinguishing Characteristics

- Farming in Malta characterised by small scale (average holding size 1.6 ha), fragmentation of agricultural land, high land prices
- Two thirds of agricultural land owned by the State
- On-farm demonstration not currently recognised as important element in supporting the agricultural sector; little investment and support from Department of Agriculture
- Expected to change under current Malta Rural Development Programme (2014-2020) which supports demonstration activities and information actions



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