



Science For A Better Life

Increased yield
through close cooperation
in tackling late blight disease



food chain partnership



How it all started

The potato, which was introduced to Romania in the second half of the 18th century, is now the country's second most important crop after wheat, and is often referred to as "the Romanians' second bread". The average per capita consumption of potatoes is around 100 kg a year. The most suitable areas for growing potatoes are the Harghita, Covasna, Brasov, Neamat, Suceava and Sibiu districts in the center of the country. Locally specialized agricultural systems and specific climatic and soil conditions allow the cultivation of potatoes for three different purposes: extra-early varieties, seed production and general consumption.

Potato farmers in Romania have to meet the following challenges:

- Continuity in delivery
- Consistently high quality
- Competitive prices
- Winter storage of potatoes in warehouses

The initial contact between Agrico-M, one of Romania's top ten potato producers, and Bayer CropScience was established in 2008 when Agrico-M hosted the Bayer AgroArena event. The following year, the weather conditions proved to be extremely favorable for the appearance of late blight disease in potatoes. Since Agrico-M is one of the few local producers delivering potatoes directly to supermarkets, the company was under particular pressure to maintain the quality and continuity of their supplies. That was when Bayer CropScience got involved.

What we aim to achieve

The main goals of this Food Chain Partnership project are to improve protection against late blight disease and to produce high-quality potatoes for consumers, thorough residue management and excellent results. In the climatic conditions prevalent in central Romania, measures to protect potatoes against late blight add up to around half the total ongoing investment in a potato crop. These two goals of crop protection and health have to be achieved in a market situation characterized by a number of key parameters: limited storage capacities (for many farmers), huge harvests and the need to ensure constant supplies of a highly commercialized crop.



Who is involved

S.C. Agrico-M SRL, one of Romania's leading potato producers is located in the central part of the country, named Covasna, and grows potatoes for seed production and consumption. The seeds are supplied to other potato farmers and the produce is exported to European retailers.

Bayer CropScience Romania not only supplies Agrico-M with plant protection products, but also with technical advice regarding customized crop solutions, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and environmental safety.



The sustainable solution

The project began with identifying the needs and interests of Agrico-M in order to jointly develop a crop protection program that was focused on the main problems of Romanian potatoes. The developed treatment schedule was designed to control severe pests, such as the colorado beetle, and diseases, such as early blight, and, in particular, late blight. Following a worst case scenario, the spraying calendar comprised highly efficient products to tackle the likely infestations, such as Prestige®, Sencor®, Consento®, Infinito®, and Calypso®.

In ongoing discussions with Agrico-M application doses, timing and intervals have been agreed upon. Current exchange between Bayer CropScience and Agrico-M as well as continuous monitoring of the application in the field during the growing season, enabled the adaption of the crop protection program to the actual conditions. Communication and flexibility were fundamental for establishing optimal operational networks in this Food Chain Partnership project.



What we achieved

The concrete outcome of the project was a 6% increase in yield and an improvement in the crop's commercial potential. This success was based on a direct approach to any difficulties that arose and good collaboration between the project partners. Agrico-M was very satisfied with the cooperation with Bayer CropScience, resulting in a constant delivery agreement with a major European retailer. Mihail Mucsi, General Manager of Agrico-M, acknowledged the collaboration: "The Food Chain Partnership project helped me to get access to new markets."

Next steps

The success of this Food Chain Partnership project means that Agrico-M and Bayer CropScience will intensify and continue the established collaboration in 2012 for the benefit of all involved partners and consumers.



left:
Sorin Laurentiu Petrache
Crop Manager - Grapes and Fruits
and Food Chain Manager
of Bayer CropScience Romania

right:
Mucsi Mihail
General Manager of Agrico-M

food chain partnership



Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food Chain Partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. Bayer CropScience has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.



Bayer CropScience

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