



## The B2B event – “Innovations for grazed woodlands” sets the framework for a long-term constructive cooperation

With the aim of supporting farmers, entrepreneurs, local administrators, researchers, private companies, policy makers and stakeholders in Lebanon interested in agroforestry issues, especially in the field of grazed woodlands, the [Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute \(LARI\)](#) held the **B2B event “Innovations for grazed woodlands”**, at the Hotel Le Royal Dbayeh in Beirut, Lebanon. This event was organized in collaboration with the Forest Agency for Land and Environment of Sardinia ([FoReSTAS](#)) and planned in the framework of the project “Cross Border Living Laboratories for Agroforestry - LIVINGAGRO”, co-funded by the European Union through the ENI CBC Med Programme.

This one-day business-to-business event aimed at supporting education, research and development, innovation, technology transfer as well as publishing and marketing of research results, offering a major opportunity for farmers, entrepreneurs, local administrators, researchers, private companies and policy makers interested in agroforestry issues, especially in the field of grazed woodlands in Lebanon, to set the framework for a long-term constructive cooperation among stakeholders.

In a meeting on the sidelines of the workshop, the manager of the LIVINGAGRO project on behalf of LARI, agricultural engineer Dr. Peter Moubarak, stated that work on this project has been underway for three years, with one more year left to complete the phase related to the Middle East region and Southern Europe. Dr. Moubarak pointed out to the existing cooperation between stakeholders aiming to design and implement state-of-the-art innovations as well as technology transfer, and publishing and marketing of research results, which includes agroforestry issues especially in the field of grazed woodlands alongside matters related to the olive cultivation as an essential part of the project.

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Regarding cooperation prospects with interested stakeholders, Dr. Moubarak confirmed the collaboration with related ministries and research centers, highlighting several agreements signed with private universities, including the Saint Joseph University, LIU University and the Lebanese University as part of the project, in addition to cooperation with the municipalities. Dr. Moubarak concluded by stressing on the fact that the main goal of the project is to create a network of stakeholders interested in agroforestry sector which would strengthen cooperation frameworks with foreign parties as well as improve production, inviting farmers and stakeholders to visit the site of the project, where they can benefit from shared insights and experiences on different topics and innovations related to agroforestry that contribute to the development of the sector. Dr. Moubarak confirmed that preparations are in progress for a third workshop that will be organized soon.

Agricultural engineer Georges Hassoun, a specialist in food processing, also praised the importance of this project especially in terms of classification and production quality, hoping to achieve positive outcomes.

Agricultural engineer Imad Hamza, a former professor at the American University, emphasized the importance of the workshop in tackling the topic of grazed woodlands and agroforestry, which is rarely raised despite its great significance, and aspired for the implementation of practical research.

Mr. Rony Francis, President of the Bchaaleh Agricultural Cooperative, expressed his appreciation of the workshop's organization in general, underscoring the importance of the topics raised, especially regarding the ways Lebanese farmers can benefit from the expertise of their European counterparts. Mr. Francis also stated that the anticipated results depend on the personal diligence of each farmer.

Stressing on the importance of collective work to develop agriculture and protect forests and grazed woodlands in Lebanon, agricultural engineer Sophie Mansour, a specialist in agroforestry, regarded the exchange of knowledge and research between the participating countries as an advantage for their mutual sustainable development.

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Also commenting on the conference, Italian agricultural engineer Dr. Antonello Franca highlighted the importance of exchanging experiences and sharing insights among the participants to benefit from their mutual experiences in order to develop their agricultural work, especially since they come from different countries and environments. "It's an opportunity for us to study how climate change is affecting grazed woodlands, and we also need to further develop our work to face the decrease of the agroforestry fields", he added. Dr. Franca emphasized that the advantage of the conference is to organize and benefit from mutual experiences, in addition to identify new innovations that can be implemented to improve agriculture in grazed woodlands. Dr. Franca is a researcher at the National Research Council in Italy and a member at the Institute for [Institute for Animal Production System in Mediterranean Environment ISPAAM](#) in Sardinia, he works as well for the LIVINGAGRO project studying the impact of grazing on the grazed woodlands in the Mediterranean region.

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