



## Fruit Farm Development Project - Bulgaria

### Main Objective

To further develop peach and apricot production  
and marketing in Bulgaria

May 2002 - April 2005

### Overall Objective

To work closely with selected apricot (Silistra region) and peach growers (Sliven region) to assist in improving overall yields and profitability

### Specific Objectives.

To trial new higher yielding peach and apricot varieties in Bulgaria•To improve linkages and relations between growers, processors and other buyers to promote continuity of raw materials

- To enable improved access by growers to appropriate chemicals, fertilisers, machinery and other inputs•To exploit appropriate credit lines for growers and their associations
- To stimulate the formation of growers associations
- To widely disseminate the experiences gained to growers, processors and other interested parties throughout Bulgaria

### Farmer Buyer Linkages.

Intermediary agents dominate purchases

- Relatively short season for apricots (1 month) and for peaches (3 months)
- Prices offered vary significantly between farms
- Buyer visits remain largely haphazard and uncoordinated
- There are few contracts established and little trust during the buying season between growers and buyers
- Sizes of farm are relatively small compared to an EU average and a large percentage of plantations are still relatively young trees
- There are significant price differentials between class A and processed fruit

## Farmer Buyer Linkages.

Practical technical assistance to growers is insufficient

- Overall fruit quantities still remain lower than market demand
- There remains a particular deficit in some particular fruit varieties (such as cling varieties)
- Information on buyer needs is low and there is little direct contact between the grower and the final buyer
- Late or early varieties do not necessarily guarantee a better price (as quantities are relatively low)
- Growers associations have little coordination or production/marketing strength and are not encouraged by buyers

**Project Hypothesis: Supplies of chemicals and fertilisers and provision of technical support in return for guaranteed fruit supply**

## Technical Assistance

- 100 growers
- Florina/BBB-Bovis/Fructis
- Regular visits to project growers across the regions for general monitoring of orchards, to ensure proper record keeping and to supply specific technical advice

## Technical Assistance

- Links with recognised research institutes
- Trialing 10 new varieties of apricot, 11 new varieties of peach and 5 new varieties of nectarine

Introduction of new growing approaches - planting, pruning and cultivation

- Study tours and links with Greek growers and processors
- Technical training and demonstrations (pruning, plant protection, farm management, irrigation, peach fruit varieties, marketing etc.)

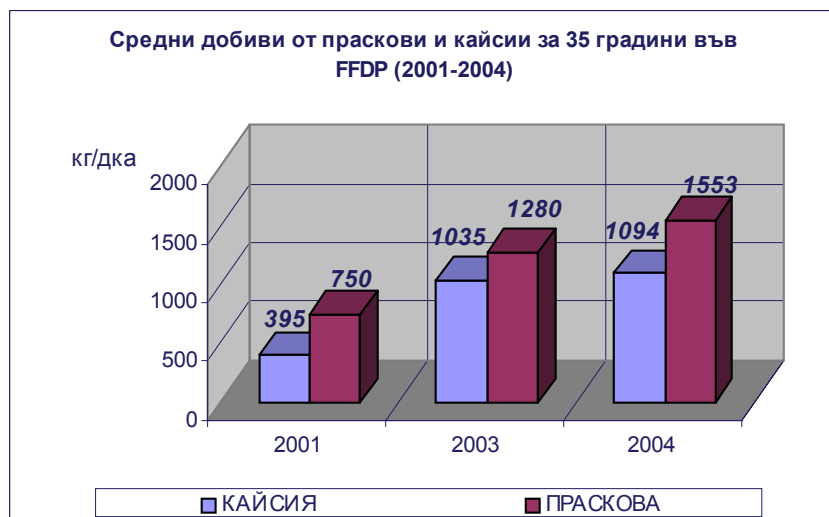
- Booklets and information

- ■ Open days

Grower association support

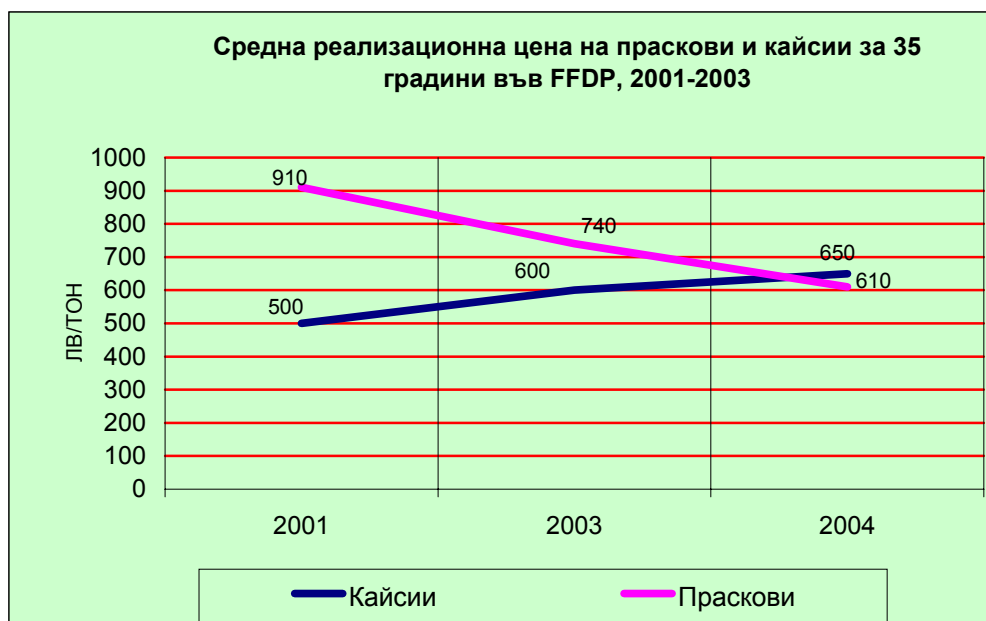
Between 2001 - 2004:

■ Apricot yields almost tripled from 0.4 tonne per dekar to 1.09 tonne per dekar. Yields doubled for peaches from 0.75 tonne per dekar to 1.55 tonne per dekar



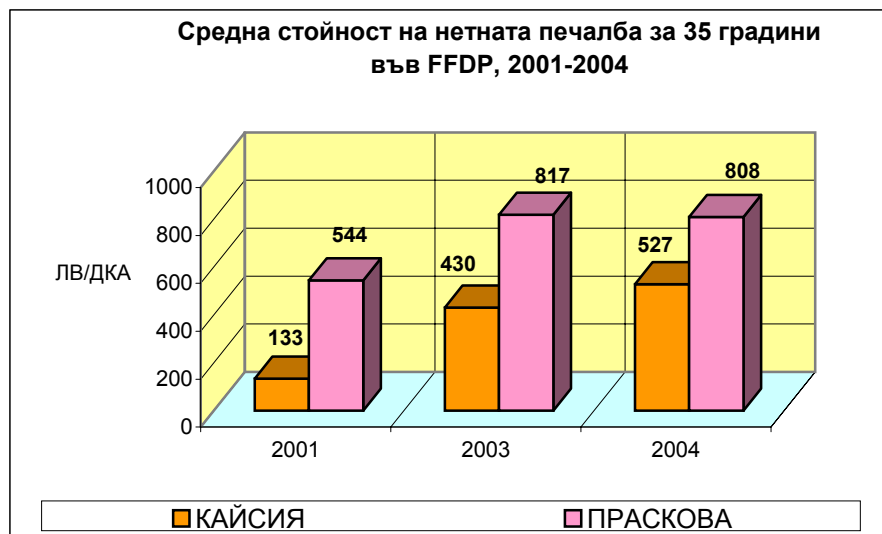
## Technical Result

Average prices increased for apricots by 30% from 500 BGL per tonne to 650 BGL per tonne. Average prices fell by 30% from 910 BGL per tonne to 610 BGL per tonne for peaches



## Technical Result

Net profit between 2001 -2004 increased by more than 50% for peaches from 544 BGL per dekar to 808 BGL per dekar and for apricots by more than 300% from 133 BGL per dekar to 527 BGL per dekar



- Quality of fruit improved in terms of lack of disease and visual characteristics
- Yields in particular vary widely and there are significant differences between farms
- Fruit is susceptible to adverse climatic conditions(frost, rain, hail etc.)

## Conclusions

- Fruit growing is a long-term investment
- Farmers tend towards low inputs/costs
- There is a need for greater professionalism in growing approaches
- Effective technical assistance can help to increase yields and profit
- Specialist agronomists/researchers need to spend more time with growers
- Farmers will pay for good technical advice
- Research has to be practical, applied and relevant
- Buyers can considerably assist agricultural development
- Honesty and trust (between farmers and farmers/buyers) is important for increasing productivity
- Buyers need to contract more agronomists
- Market opportunities exist although buyer needs differ
- New varieties can be introduced and targeted at specific markets•Regional brand images need to be developed
- Growers need more regular and productive meetings
- Producer organisations need to develop a more commercial focus
- Bulk input purchases can reduce costs
- Exchange of information/study tours and linkages can help to improve production practices

**THANK YOU!**

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