

Latraps: Grain and rapeseed producers' marketing initiative, Latvia

Anita Kalniņa, Sandra Šūmane, Tālis Tisenkopfs

General description:

- Aims: strengthen economic power of farmers & promote rapeseed in Latvia,
- Main activities:
 - marketing rapeseed and grain
 - supplying members with the raw materials
 - consulting farmers
 - storage and primary processing
- Starting year: 2000
- Actors involved: farmers
- Interesting aspect: creation of a new market for non-food/ energy products

State of art:

- Biggest agricultural service cooperative society in Latvia
- 400 members
- Farm size varies from 10 to 4000 hectares
- Oriented to export market - approximately 85% of produce
- The construction of rapeseed processing plant has started
- Two regional branches

Key enabling factors:

- Well-founded commercial and organizational strategy
- Human capital, particularly professional manager and marketing specialist
- Involvement in policy and professional networks
- Learning & educational activities



Latraps was initiated in Zemgale region, which historically is famous for its grain production (wheat, rye and barley) and was metaphorically called the grain barn of Latvia. The combination of cash crops, farming of scale and intensive agriculture created a "farmers' mentality" open to technological changes and market innovations. On some occasions the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of Zemgale farmers reshaped the traditional basis of regional agriculture, and that was exactly what happened with sugar beet production and rape – the first almost disappeared, the latter was introduced as new culture.

