

From the bee to the kiwis: new activities for the farmers of the South-West of France

Haut-Mauco, the 29th of May 2024 In the Spring, the period of pollination of the fruits and plants is in full swing. While the bees are one of the factors impacting the agricultural yields, Maisadour offers to its members to start new activities with the kiwi production and the beekeeping, in order to provide new market opportunities for the farmers and to promote the crops diversification.

Agroecology: when the farmers become beekeepers

Since 2022, the Cooperative has been offering some training to its members and its customers, in partnership with Apinov, beekeeping research and training center, to install beehives on their farms and train them to be beekeepers. After two days of theoretical and practical training, the apprentice beekeepers are then followed by Le Rucher de Claron (40), which organizes some training days and feedback sessions over a year. Le Rucher is also under contract with the Group to harvest the honey at the beekeeper and to market it.

Launched by the Research & Innovation teams of Maisadour, this new activity fulfills 3 objectives:

- **Increasing the bee populations who play a key role in the development of the ecosystems and biodiversity around the farm;**
- **Developing a new activity with the production of French honey;**
- **Generating a new source of incomes for the farmers:** it is possible to install between 10 and 75 beehives on a farm and each of them has 50 to 60 thousand bees for a production between 15 to 50 kg/year.

Christophe Bonno, Executive Director of Maisadour: *“The honey consumption in France is around 40.000 tons, which represent around 600 g per person, while only 10 to 20 thousand tons are produced every year¹ depending on the weather. At Maisadour, we are providing our farmers with a full support until the marketing, for anyone who wants to start beekeeping. In addition to increase their crop production, our farmers take part in a regenerative agriculture project and thus become players of the French beekeeping chain, by producing a 100% South-West of France honey.”*

The training is a success and the farmers/beekeepers constitute a real community of meaning for a global agricultural vision. **18 farmers are following a training in 2024. The objective: installing 1.500 beehives by 2030 and involving 75 farmers** to develop distribution channels for the harvested honey through some network of shops (En Direct de Nos Producteurs, L'Amour du Terroir, etc.).

Maisadour also trained its teams internally and has an experimental station with thirty beehives in Benquet. The Research & Innovation teams of Maisadour are assessing some digital solutions (connected scales, temperature sensors) allowing to monitor the beehive activity and health, the weather conditions, the availability of the food resources in relations with some parameters such as the weather and the available resources.

¹ FranceAgriMer 2020 results



“We have personally been interested in bees for a long time, because without them there is no life. We wanted to discover a new activity. Having new ideas, taking initiatives, is the daily life of our profession. We need to always be curious. This is why we started the training program offered by Maïsadour which was very interesting and practical. We now have 10 beehives and who knows, maybe even more tomorrow. We are very excited to produce our own honey.”

Eric and Nathalie MOUSQUEZ, members for 35 years in Loubieng (64)

A new local kiwi chain to diversify the crops and promote the food sovereignty

In January 2024, Maïsadour announced the signing of a partnership with SIKIG, the international kiwi company of Gaves, in order to develop a kiwi chain with the members of the Cooperative.

While the food sovereignty plan dedicated to fruits and vegetables set by the government intends to reduce the imports to promote the French chains, Maïsadour connects the farmers from the Landes who want to start this new production with SIKIG, French leader of the premium kiwi. The kiwi production allows the farmers to diversify their activities and participates in the protection of the biodiversity through the establishment of beehives near the plots, essential to allow the pollination of the fruits or plants.

France is the 3rd producer of kiwi in Europe with a production of 49,000 tons, after Greece (300,000 tons) and Italy (170,000 tons). **With more than 20,000 tons harvested each year, 350 kiwi producers and 600 ha of productions, the Adour region is the 1st geographical area of kiwi production in France.** This king of the Adour Valley has several certifications (Red Label, PGI, organic).

Pollination, biodiversity, the virtuous circle of the bee with the kiwis

Installing some beehives near the plots is essential to allow the pollination of the fruits or plants. The bees are the best allies of the farmers to improve their yields: only an intense pollination guarantees a good harvest, the wind dispersion of the pollen is not enough. **This is why, the kiwi producers set some beehives in their orchards: in average 7 to 8 beehives per hectare.**

The kiwi production throughout the seasons:



SPRING

In March, the leaves come out of the buds. This is called the bud break. The flower buds appear in April, and their number defines the volume of harvest that will be obtained. The blooming happens in May. This is where the **pollination** comes to turn the flowers into berries and then fruit.

The blooming of the yellow kiwi starts at the end of April, and between May and June for the green kiwi. From May to June, the producer thins the plot: eliminate the non-compliant fruit to better develop the remaining fruit.



SUMMER

The summer is the time for "green pruning" (a pruning that takes place when the sap is still circulating and the trees are green, full of leaves) which is used to lighten the plot and improve the fruit magnification.



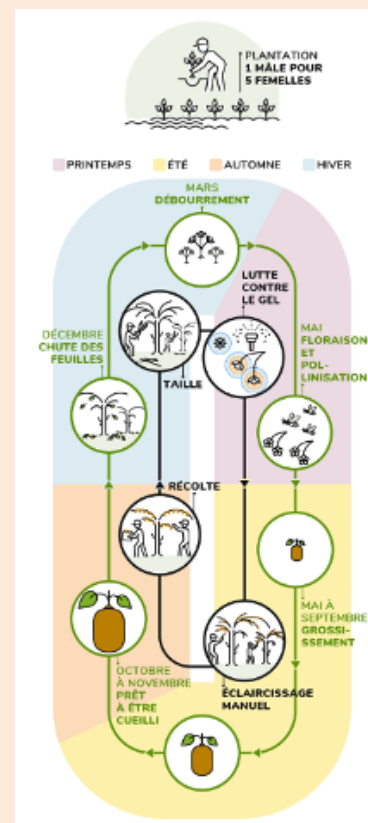
FALL

The kiwis are harvested before the 1st frost, in general from the beginning of October to November.



WINTER

This is the time when the leaves fall, the time to prune the orchards to promote the development of the future shoots.



The production cycle of the kiwi and the pollination

Since 1936 Maisadour has been a committed Cooperative from the South-West of France, with a CSR Committed label, placing Man and the Living at the center of its concerns, for a sustainable agriculture, food and society. Maisadour develops chains of excellence that meet the expectations of consumers to promote, in France and in 50 countries, the productions of its farmers. "At Maisadour, we are working together for the success of our members and are developing the future of our territories." The Group, structure around the Agricultural Activities, Seed and Food Business Lines, markets gourmet product under the brands Maison Delpeyrat and Comtesse du Barry and Red Label poultry under the brands St SEVER and Marie Hot. www.maisadour.com

Key information

Governance: Daniel Peyraube, President / Christophe Bonno Executive Director

Turnover for fiscal year 2022-2023: €1.475 billion/ 5,000 farmers and 4,300 employees

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