

Why Snail Farming?

SnailVille

10/03/2021

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Project Number: **2020-1-UK01-KA204-079017**



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Author	Description	Action	Pages
1.0	10/02/2021	AKNOW	Creation	C	TBS

(*) Action: C = Creation, I = Insert, U = Update, R = Replace, D = Delete

REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

ID	Reference	Title
1	2020-1-UK01-KA204-079017	SnailVille Proposal
2		

APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS

ID	Reference	Title
1		
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Of all the agricultural practices to choose from, with such a wide variety of options across Europe, from vineyards to dairy farms and everything else in between, why might a person elect to focus on snails? In more specific terms, that is exactly what the Snailville project has chosen to do. It is a project, funded by the ERASMUS+ program, focusing on breaking down the barriers to successful snail farms across Europe. But the question remains: why choose such a particular agricultural product?

For a start, it is important to note that the rearing and eating of snails is not as niche everywhere as some people might think. Although snails are not a very large part of Scottish cuisine and culture (the culture that this writer is from!), they are a significantly more important product elsewhere. France, of course, is the stereotypical consumer of snails, in the form of Escargots, but are by no means the only ones. Studies suggest that other countries such as Portugal, Italy, Tunisia, and Bosnia are also significant consumers, with Spain and Morocco even surpassing France to reach the top spot. Furthermore, it is important to note that in these countries, heliciculture (the farming of snails) is not an especially recent phenomenon. Indeed, evidence suggests that snails have been a delicacy in a number of places across the world since the time of the Roman Empire two thousand years ago, and even before!

Aside from the geographic diversity of snail eating, they are also surprisingly good for you. Snails contain levels of protein similar to other meats such as beef, but without the fats that make too much beef bad for you. They're also a good source of iron, vitamin A, calcium, and Omega 3 – all nutrients that are important and easy to miss out on if you're not careful. Given that the level of awareness of healthy eating and balanced diets is only on the increase, snails could be a good solution when many are wondering about healthier replacements for meats that are getting an increasingly poor dietary reputation.

Finally, it is notable that snail farming has a considerably lower environmental impact than many other types of agriculture – again meat in particular. Some sources suggest that raising snails can take up to 45 times less land than raising a lamb. This of course means that the broader impact on the environment is considerably reduced, and at a time when the carbon footprint of our diets are very much under scrutiny, but it also means that snail farming is in many ways easier. You don't necessarily need the huge tracts of land that other animals often take, and one study suggested that one person alone, working full time could raise 200,000 snails! Indeed, with the right conditions, snails can even be raised indoors, making heliciculture in many ways an easier and more attractive startup opportunity,

In short, the reasons to highlight and support heliciculture in Europe are many. Snails are a product that are geographically and culturally versatile, healthy, environmentally friendly, and relatively easy to start raising. It is the hope of the Snailville Project to help remove some of the barriers that exist to snail farms both starting and becoming successful, and to help ensure that people can reap the resulting benefits.

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