



# BALSU SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2020

## GAP Audits by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

GAP Audits by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry- As Balsu, we implemented the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) program since it was first kicked off in 2016 by the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Through this program that Balsu ran in nine different townships of Duzce and Sakarya provinces, hazelnut farmers received direct cash premiums as an incentive of GAP production. The farmers who were part of this group, organized in collaboration with the Chamber of Agriculture of Golyaka township, were audited by the relevant provincial and district directorate of agriculture offices during the month of the December 2020. The audit that was completed successfully focused on the farmers compliance in terms of their standards for the fertilizer and storage areas, occupational health and safety issues, general certification requirements etc.



## Regular and Correct Pruning will Increase the Harvest

We advise farmers on regular pruning activities which is very critical to increase the harvest. Farmers start pruning as the plant enters the dormant state thus half of the hazelnut leaves fall off up until the month of March. Our farmers, who increased the useful effect of plant feeding and strengthening gardens against pests and diseases by doing a good pruning and grass removal in their gardens, also contributed to the increase of yield and quality in hazelnuts. Balsu agricultural engineers informed the hazelnut farmers about the correct pruning techniques, differences between maintenance pruning and renewal pruning and the best use of equipment for pruning throughout the month of the December.

Hazelnut farmers can also apply Bordeaux mix -100% organic application- in hazelnut gardens right after the pruning to fight against fungal diseases. As Balsu, we continue to share information on agricultural practices in accordance to the hazelnut agriculture calendar with the farmers on our social media accounts.



## Hazelnut and the Environment

When we examine the climate demands of the hazelnut plant, the need for minimum 700 mm annual rainfall and the regular distribution of this precipitation on monthly basis are very important for a healthy crop. Due to the rainfall irregularities in our region, only half of the precipitation that should fall during November has occurred. Also, in these months, the temperature value was about 1.5 ° C above season norms. While this affects the plant nutrient solubility in the soil, it may also cause early blooming of female flowers in hazelnuts. Water stress, climate data and plant phenology are closely followed by our agricultural engineers with the support of our farmers.

## Workers' Intermediaries Certification and the Trainings

We continue to support workers' intermediaries and hazelnut workers by aligning our "origin" activity that we have carried out since 2018 with the COVID-19 pandemic process. In this program, we work with workers' intermediaries who play a very critical role in preventing child labour as well as improving the working and living conditions of seasonal agricultural workers. We reach out workers' intermediaries in their hometowns during the winter period to support them in fulfilling their responsibilities such as registration, contracts with workers and reporting activities to the national employment agencies etc. Within the scope of the "Harvesting the Future" project, our cooperation with the Fair Labour Association continues this year. Mobile training teams will take responsibility in four provinces in the east and south east region Of Turkey -Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Mardin and Şırnak and visit workers' intermediaries to provide training and consultancy services.

