

Labor Conditions in the 2022 Harvest

Within the framework of corporate social responsibility, Balsu has been working to improve the well-being of seasonal migrant agricultural workers and to live and work in decent conditions since 2014. In the 2022 harvest period, as of August 1, seasonal migrant agricultural workers in many different regions were visited by social workers in their accommodation areas. As of September 30, a total of 1866 seasonal migrant agricultural workers in 14 districts and 46 neighborhoods in Sakarya, Düzce, Ordu, Samsun and Giresun provinces were visited in their accommodation areas, and good social practices and occupational health and safety training modules were conveyed.

From which provinces do the workers come to the Western Black Sea Region?

Diyarbakır	—————→	%55
Şırnak	—————→	%24
Mardin	—————→	%13
Other	—————→	%8

From which provinces do the workers come to the Eastern Black Sea Region?

Şanlıurfa	—————→	%46
Diyarbakır	—————→	%27
Mardin	—————→	%18
Other	—————→	%9

In the light of risk assessment studies carried out since 2017, it has been revealed that there has been an increase in the number of high school and university students in incoming worker groups. It has been observed that the groups of workers coming to our supply chain this year, the same as last year, come from the Diyarbakır, Şırnak, and Mardin regions, respectively, and that there are more women and single workers.

Worker trainings continued in the Eastern Black Sea region in 2022. In line with the trainings, it has been determined that the “originating” provinces of the workers coming to the Eastern Black Sea Region are mostly Şanlıurfa. In all regions, an increase was observed in the number of seasonal agricultural employment contracts signed between migrant seasonal agricultural workers, agricultural labor intermediary and garden owner. Compared to the previous year, there has been a 20 percent increase in the number of contracts signed due to the increased awareness in the trainings and the increase in the bond of trust with the worker groups. We also managed to increase the number of certified agricultural labor intermediaries by 50 percent compared to last year. A total of 31 agricultural labor intermediaries were certified in 2022. During the harvest, 43 agricultural labor intermediaries were mapped for documentation.

Our child protection program, which has been ongoing since 2014, continued during the 2022 harvest. Accordingly, in the provinces of Sakarya, Düzce, Ordu, Samsun, and Giresun, children were directed to safe areas or to summer schools in the region. The first outputs of the monitoring and evaluation reports of the child protection program covering the target of reaching 3,500 children will be shared in the October bulletin.

According to the risk assessment we carried out last year, it was observed that the number of workers coming to the harvest area decreased due to the pandemic, while it was determined that the number of workers decreased this year due to the increase in transportation costs.

At the end of the training, personal protective equipment and hygiene kits were provided to 1866 workers. 123 seasonal migrant agricultural workers participated in our risk assessment study, which sheds light on our winter work in the regions of origin and discusses many important issues such as workers' living and working conditions and child labor.



Third Working Group Meeting of the “Sustainable Hazelnut Villages” Project

The first year of the Sustainable Hazelnut Villages Project, carried out in Ferizli district of Sakarya in cooperation with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and Rainforest Alliance, of which Balsu is the implementer, was completed with the third working group meeting held on 27.09.2022.

At the meeting, information was given on project activities such as improving the living and working conditions of seasonal migrant agricultural workers, combating child labour, establishing a working group in this context, training farmers and workers, encouraging the signing of agricultural employment contracts, and making improvements in the buildings-shelters where the workers are accommodated.

In line with the annual targets set at the beginning of the project, 167 hazelnut farmers and 266 seasonal agricultural workers were reached in the first year. Good social practices and occupational health and safety modules were transferred to seasonal mobile agricultural workers, and personal protective equipment and hygiene kits were provided.



Within the scope of the project, 83 children were identified by reaching 45 families in 5 different neighborhoods in Ferizli district, and 80 children with high working risk participated in the summer school opened in Bakırlı District with the cooperation of the local government. Both mental and physical development of children were supported by using lifelong learning modules affiliated to the Ministry of National Education.

On the other hand, in addition to the Sustainable Hazelnut Villages Project, through “In a Nutshell” Project carried out in cooperation with Balsu and Genç Hayat Foundation, a total of 300 children were reached in the Ferizli region with the summer schools and workshops opened in Abdürrezzak neighborhood.



Within the scope of the renovation activities in the accommodation areas of seasonal migrant agricultural workers, which is another goal of the project, renovation and improvement works were carried out in two different villages.



Post-Harvest Maintenance of Hazelnut Gardens

The Maintenance applications made in the autumn period;

- ✓ Soil Analysis
- ✓ Pruning
- ✓ Fertilization
- ✓ Disease and Pest Control

The applications to be made after the hazelnut harvest are among the issues that are given importance as they affect the next year's product. Autumn period is the most basic application period of hazelnut care.

Soil and leaf analysis should be done every year in order to determine the amount of plant nutrients in the soil, the structure of the soil and an effective fertilization program.

According to the results of the pre-harvest leaf analysis, one of the most effective methods to ensure pollen quality and to increase the formation of fruit buds and pollination in the next season is to apply foliar fertilizer.



A special fertilization program is created for the hazelnut farmer, whose soil and leaf analysis is performed, under Balsu experts' evaluation. In addition, organic fertilizer support was provided to farmers registered in Balsu certification programs in 2021.

In order to prevent the unconscious use of fertilizers and to reduce the costs in hazelnut production, fertilization is applied in the required amount, in an environmentally friendly form and in the appropriate period, according to the elements whose deficiency is determined.

The green outer husk of the hazelnut, which is a valuable organic substance in hazelnut cultivation, by making compost and applying it to the gardens reduces the increasing cost of fertilizer. In addition, as a natural fertilizer, it improves the physical, chemical and biological properties of the soil in hazelnut orchards and provides an increase in yield and quality. While we share how hazelnut husk should be converted to an organic fertilizer in our training modules, we care about carrying out joint activity with our program farmers in the field.

