

Albania. The promotion of “Raincoat Package”

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The “Raincoat package” implementation is arousing great interest in Albania, among national scientific research centres and governmental institutions. In the country, a continuous increase of vineyard and fruit trees areas is noted during the last years and the cultivation of organic products begins to be reality. Taking in consideration the negative effects of pesticide use, alternatives to traditional pest management have to be explored and the promotion of alternative pest management is a national priority.

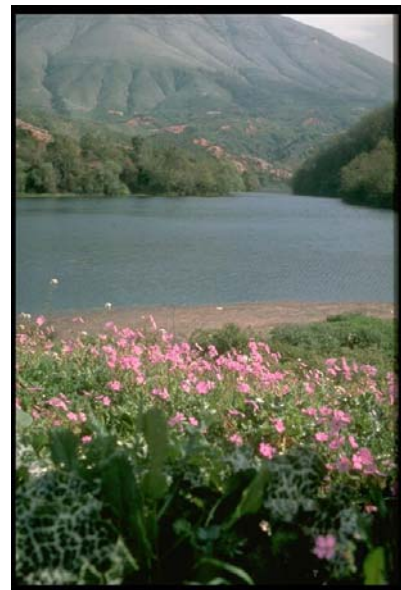


For this reason, many local and national authorities, as the Albanian Academy of Science (the IDEASS national partner) and the Plant Protection Institute of Dürres (an important Institution depending from the Albanian Ministry of Agriculture) estimate that the application in crop protection of botanicals like Neem products, that form the basis of the “Raincoat Package”, may offer an important option for the improvement of harvests that is compatible with the agreed principles of development policy.

Numerous contacts with the Indian Herbal Folklore Research Centre (HFRC), author of the innovation, and the NGO “COE”, that provided data over Neem’s adaptability in different countries, permitted to consider the possibility for the young Neem plants (no less than one year old) to grow in the Albanian climate, even though it’s different from the original, sub-tropical, one.

For this reason a number of six-month Neem plants, of different qualities, that should guarantee a good adaptability to the Albanian coastal climate, has been purchased in India, for IDEASS, by the HFRC. The young plants will be kept in care by HFRC and could be transferred to Albania after six months.

According with climatic, environmental and geological data provided by the Albanian institutions, the area between the two cities of Dürres and Vlora has been identified as the more appropriate to localize a Neem cultivation pilot project. In particular, the identification of three different zones, where to experiment different kind of cultivation, is ongoing, with the close collaboration of the above mentioned institutions and others, as the Fruit Tree Research Institute, of Vlore, and the Federation of Myzeqeja Farmers, in the area of Lushnje, that is highly competent in greenhouse vegetable production.



To define and organize the project, that will have as local referent the Local Development Agency of Vlora, an IDEASS mission to Albania of the Raincoat Package author, Dr.S.Vedavathy, President of HFRC, and of Neem expert Dr.M.P.Macchi of COE, will be realized from 19 to 25 of June 2005.



In the course of the mission, there will given also training in organic farming and the use of wild plants as pesticides beside Neem. This is a further innovative field where the Indian Institution represent the state-of-the-art and that may constitute, together with the Neem-project implementation, a significant support to the transfer to Albania of plant protection knowledge and technologies. The Albanian Organic Agriculture Association, funded in 1997, has also been involved in the project, as they are ready to produce seeds or plants that may be used for the production of plant extracts as plant protection products.

At the end of the “Raincoat Pakage” mission, a National Conference will be held in the Country, with the participation of the involved actors, national institutions and scientific research centres.