

## Sausage with herbs and reduced fat contents (Greece)

### Product developed in EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project

Consumers ask for light and healthy food products, with reduced fat and salt contents, devoid of artificial additives. In some product categories, such demands might become too challenging for producers – but not the innovative sausage developed in Greece! Based on the proposals put forward by older consumers, we have successfully managed to eliminate nitrites and nitrates, preserving the meat through the use of local plants and herbs. Centuries-old culinary traditions passed on by older generations became the source of inspiration for healthy and sustainable food.

To find out what kind of food products answer the needs of older consumers, the EIT Food project team invited older adults in Greece to participate in co-creation workshops. The participants developed an idea of an innovative product targeted at the older adults, which was introduced to the market by the company E.G. PASSIAS SA.

#### Innovative food product

The endogenous Greek herbs and spices are grown locally and widely used in home cuisine but largely unknown to international food producers. The local herb varieties differ from their foreign counterparts in flavours, fragrances and specific properties. For example, the Greek oregano (*gr. rigani*) is actually quite different from what global consumers know as the dried herb popular in the Italian cuisine. Accordingly, the Greek basil, capers or rock samphire are hardly known abroad, but were used as important condiments since the antiquity. Greek older consumers know the taste and smell of these ingredients from their childhood and many still cultivate these culinary traditions, using them in various home-made dishes. The cured meat industry did not benefit from their potential until the new, chicken-based sausage was introduced to the market in 2021, leveraging the tradition to make healthier products.

#### Good for health

The use of local herbs and spices enhanced the taste of the sausage and made it very attractive for older adults, but also offered tangible health benefits. The spices were used as natural preservatives, replacing nitrites and nitrates, usually added to sausages and other smoked meat products to strengthen colours, flavours, suppress microbial growth and inhibit the oxidation. Academic research confirms that some of the selected herbs contain specific antioxidants and antimicrobial compounds that support the development of cleaner label meat products. Older consumers benefit also from the healthy contents of the sausage, with as little as 3% of fat and significant reduction of salt.

#### Preferred by older adults / Designed by older adults for older adults

The product is based on a concept proposed by Greek consumers, who were inspired by nostalgic remembrances of flavours from the past and shared the collective wisdom of local ingredients and recipes. Importantly, the sausages have small portion sizes so that they could be easily eaten as parts of daily meals or snacks, without the need for cutting or unwrapping, with fully edible casing. Furthermore, the use of fragrant ingredients addresses the stepwise declines in chemosensory abilities of older adults, ensuring that they still experience the unique flavours and smells of the product.

### Different from existing products

E.G. PASSIAS SA succeeded in developing a product that stands out from its competitors, bringing the traditional Greek flavours to the mass-produced sausages, eliminating unhealthy nitrites and nitrates, reducing fat contents and offering consumers a healthy and delicious meat-based snack.

### Additional information about the project:

Λουκάνικο – sausage with Greek herbs and reduced fat contents is a product designed during the co-creation workshops, held as a part of the RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project. The project is coordinated by the University of Warsaw and financed by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), under the Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. The project's main aim is to address the needs of older consumers in the food and beverage market by applying novel methodology which engages consumers, stimulates their creativity, and fosters the acceptance of new products. The product concept was designed in 2020 in Greece during co-creation sessions which gathered older consumers, scientists from the Perrotis College of Agriculture, Environment & Life Sciences, the representatives of food producer E.G. PASSIAS SA and the start-up company Exoha. Following the co-creation process, the innovative product was developed and introduced to the market in 2021.

Find out more about the project at: <http://timo.wz.uw.edu.pl/cel>