Dcoop bet for integration, rewarded with the award for Best Cooperative

The commitment and sustained effort for years which has been deploying for the Cooperative Group Dcoop **have been rewarded with the prize for Best Cooperative that annually grants** Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain**. The other awarded cooperatives have been** Coopoman**, in the category of Innovation, and** Coopego**, in Equal Opportunities.**

The choice of the winning cooperatives at every level has not been easy, due not only to the high turnout, but also the high level of applications submitted in each category, as highlighted Angel Villafranca, president of Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain, during the ceremony of the awards granted by this entity, held in the framework of the Ordinary General Assembly of the Organization. Minister of Agriculture, Isabel García Tejerina, was responsible for presenting the awards and the closing of the Assembly.

García Tejerina has urged cooperatives to continue investing in research and equal opportunities, as a philosophy for greater competitiveness, and has drawn attention to the fact that Dcoop has been the second union recognized as Priority Associative Entity (EAP) in Spain, of the three recognized so far. The minister hopes that more those who obtain this qualification in the coming months, seizing the moment in which the Ministry has launched the Cooperative State Integration Plan 2015-2020, worths 257 million euros.

In the case of Dcoop Group, the Jury has valued its work towards the integration of the production sector, which has become the largest agri-food cooperative in southern Spain and in the second Spanish cooperative to be recognized Associative Entity Priority (EAP) by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

Leading oil and wine

The Dcoop group consists of more than 150 cooperatives of Andalucia, Castilla-La Mancha, Basque Country and Extremadura and achieved a turnover of 935.9 million euros in the previous year. The jury took into account also Dcoop bet on internationalization and leadership in such important sectors for Spain as extra virgin olive oil and wine.

Meanwhile, the winner of the Agro-Food Cooperatives of Spain Award in the category of Innovation, Coopaman, is a 2nd degree cooperative formed by other six in the province of Cuenca. This year celebrates 30 anniversary of its founding and since its inception has clearly opted for R & D in their business strategy in order to defend the profitability and survival of emblematic culture of the region, the Ajo Morado de Las Pedroñeras, native variety of the area, and competitively differentiate this product in markets.

Therefore, Coopaman has been developing an extensive research for plant breeding bulbs and to obtain new varieties. The jury also assessed their participation and leadership in regional, national and international projects, including the ECOBUG, within the 7th Framework Programme, and registration of a patent in 2012, as a result of one of his many projects.

Agricultural Cooperative of Pego (Alicante), Coopego, has been chosen in the category of Equal Opportunities. This cooperative, dedicated to the production of fruits, especially citrus, maintained for years a firm commitment to achieving equality full opportunities between men and women and, in this sense, has been developing numerous awareness-raising and training on gender, both employees and the Governing Council. In that sense, it's been evaluated the presence of women on the Governing Board of the cooperative, in the direction and in two of the four directions of the department. Also, it has been taken into account Coopego involvement in the project INTEGRA-developed by Agri-food Cooperatives in recent years and the agreement with the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality to increase the presence of women in positions of management of cooperatives.

Especially, the jury took into consideration that Equal Opportunities is one of the pillars that should underpin the philosophy and values ??of the cooperative Coopego.

Source: Agri-Food Cooperatives of Spain