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Heva: Elevating Volcanic Agriculture Across Europe

EU-Funded Heva Project Showcases Unique Products at Major Events Across Europe

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In recent months, the Heroes of Europe Volcanic Agriculture (Heva) project, funded by the European Union under measure 1144, has made significant strides in promoting the unique products that originate from volcanic soils. This ambitious initiative, which involves Italy and Greece, highlights the distinctiveness and quality of these agricultural products through a series of high-profile events and promotional activities.

Heva's consortium features notable Italian wine regions such as Soave and Lessini Durello, alongside the Greek Union of Santorini Cooperatives – Santo Wines, and the Veneto cheese consortium of Monte Veronese. Together, these partners have championed the cause of volcanic agriculture through an array of masterclasses and trade fairs across Europe.

The first six months of the year have seen Heva's presence in countries such as Spain, Germany, and Sweden. The project has actively participated in major European enogastronomic fairs, including ProWein, Oenorama in Greece, and Cibus in Parma. The reception has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees showing keen interest in the unique characteristics of volcanic products.

Pedro Ballesteros MW, who led a seminar in Valencia, Spain, remarked, "The interest in volcanic products exceeded all expectations." Asa Johansson, Heva's ambassador in Sweden, echoed this sentiment, noting the strong curiosity and enthusiasm for high-quality, elegant, and complex products that pair well with Swedish cuisine.

To deepen the understanding of the territories and production methods behind these volcanic wines and cheeses, a study tour was organized. This tour included sommeliers, wine educators, and journalists from participating countries such as Sweden, the Netherlands, and Germany. They embarked on an immersive journey from the Greek island of Santorini to the Italian regions of Lessinia and Soave. The Soave wine region, in particular, stands out as the only Italian wine area recognized as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) by the FAO.

Cristian Ridolfi, the newly elected president of the Soave Consortium, emphasized the unique opportunity this project presents. "It allows for a comprehensive understanding of different terroirs, even those separated by thousands of kilometers, that share a common dedication to quality based on similar pedoclimatic characteristics, geological

history, exposure, and altitude." These factors, combined with the meticulous work of local producers, contribute to some of the most historic and intriguing protected designations of origin in Europe.

The upcoming months will see Heva's promotional activities move to Germany and the Netherlands. Seminars and roundtables will be held, culminating in the participation in Espó Berlin, a prominent fair dedicated to promoting Italian enogastronomic products in November. This continued effort aims to enhance the visibility and appreciation of volcanic agriculture, fostering a deeper connection between consumers and these extraordinary products.

Heva's commitment to showcasing the exceptional qualities of volcanic agriculture is evident in its robust schedule of events and educational initiatives. By bridging the gap between producers and consumers, the project not only highlights the uniqueness of volcanic soils but also celebrates the rich agricultural heritage of Europe. As Heva moves forward, it will undoubtedly continue to elevate the profile of these remarkable products, cementing their place in the pantheon of high-quality European produce.