Carob flour in Crete's mountain landscapes

Moving in Crete
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Establishing a community around carob flour in Crete

The MOVING project in Crete demonstrated that the cultivation of carob trees is important for practitioners and citizens, as it is connected to the cyclic economy of the agro-silvo pastoral way of life that has been part the mountainous landscapes of the island. Carob in the form of flour was a staple food in times of famine due to its nutritional quality. Nevertheless, carob flour's association with famine and its poorer economic competitiveness with major commodities such as olives rendered it a forgotten tree, crop, and food product.

Our research showed that the recent focus on health food and nutraceuticals has created a resurgence in the use of carob flour and a burgeoning research interest in its importance in preserving biodiversity and its use in the bakery, confectionery and biofuel industries. Traditional practices such as accommodating grazing of livestock in olive and carob groves, using mill and food industry waste for compost and animal feed, and collective communal harvesting and transport efforts create opportunities for farmers. Moreover, traditional food production methods are more readily used to conserve biodiversity, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and bolster farmers' incomes and mountainous areas sustainability.

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