

## Case Study – **CENTENARIAN**, the healthy cream cheese

**Rodopa milk** ([www.mlechendom.com](http://www.mlechendom.com)) is a family dairy company situated in the beautiful Rodopi Mountain. Since 1994 it is collecting and processing the milk from the area of the river Gorna Arda and produces traditional dairy products from cow and sheep milk.



To stay competitive in the market the company is constantly developing the product line. Next to the traditional Bulgarian cheese it offers several types of West Europe cheese like Gruyère, Tilsiter, Emmental, Edammer. These products were introduced as a result of successful cooperation with Swiss cheese makers.

The business places great emphasis on securing high quality local milk as major factor for the good quality of their products. But still cheese is one of the most fragmented categories within packaged goods, with more than 60 companies competing on the Bulgarian market. The business owners believe that investing in healthy and innovative products development will help them to remain on the market. Their competitive advantage has been their interest in healthy and good quality products. In 2014 they were able to launch a new cream cheese **CENTENARIAN - (СТОЛЕТНИК in BG)**

The recipe for the **CENTENARIAN** has been developed more than 5 years and tested by a team of nutrition scientists together with company experts and recently it has been patented. It contains combination of natural products like white cheese, yogurt, onion, red pepper and others, combined in a way so that to guarantee the high count of active lactic bacteria in the cheese cream for at least 20 days. The regular consumption of the cheese would have positive effect on the consumers health due to the lactic bacteria.



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The innovative product is produced using local raw materials. The company supports the local farmers by using their products. The healthy product has a market price equal and even lower than the cream cheese offered in the market but offering health benefits to the consumers. The applied production technology is waste free. All these benefits contribute to sustainable and profitable production process.

The cream cheese **CENTENARIAN** has a short shelf life – around 20 days. The successful distribution of the product is through specialized stores for traditional Bulgarian food and healthy and organic products.

The shops are situated in the big cities in Bulgaria where are the major health and sustainability concerned consumers. Many of the shops have developed a system of preorder from the regular clients of the shops.

Important feature to sell the product is also internet.

We use our logo and labeling, which is known in the market from our traditional cheese products and



To get our healthy message out we use all possible means like internet, publications on the internet and in specialized food magazines and newspapers. We often organize visits and demonstrations to our family hotel located not far from the production premises.

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The 3 tips from the experience of Rodopa Milk to date:

1. Stay update with the latest technologies in food safety and food innovation even for traditional products
2. Stay in close collaboration with the local farmers and source the raw material locally
3. Family companies should take the advantage of being established in nice cenory and combine the production with development of alternative tourism to minimize the risk of the competition and capitalize on the company location