



COOMAP NEWS



We are almost reaching the end of our members' first passion fruit harvest. For the first year, we have realized that it was really worth it. But before we talk about the results, allow us to remind you, dear reader, how COOMAP got to the present stage:

COOMAP Fruit Project PASSION FRUIT

In 2021, COOMAP members were in an off year, that is, a year with lower production. However crops were really healthy and all of our members, were already looking forward to 2022, and to some of them, it could be a year of record in production. But unfortunately, we had the frost that devastated lots of crops and about 70% of our members were somehow affected by this event that hadn't happened in such a severe way for almost 20 years.

The above scenario was the background to launch an initiative to encourage our members not to rely only on coffee for their income. COOMAP hired fruit production specialists to determine what could be the alternatives for our members according to our region soil and weather conditions. According to the consultants, passion fruit would be a great option for the following reasons:

- 1 There would be no conflicts between coffee and passion fruit, since its harvest time is from January to May. Because of this, the labor necessary to take care of it is the same used in coffee.
- 2 There is a high demand for this product in the Brazilian market.
- 3 Since passion fruit trees are planted in lower areas and right after the harvest they are cut off, there is no risk that a frost may damage the crop.
- 4 Passion fruit crops have a higher added value, which allow growers to have profit out of a small area.
- 5 Most of the areas where passion fruit would be planted were the ones which had nothing being cultivated on them because of the frost risk.



After several field days, many meetings with the interested members, hundreds of technical assistance visits, we started seeing growers bring their production to COOMAP, so that it could be commercialized. Right now, as we approach the end of our first cycle, we have the following learnings:



- 1 COOMAP passion fruit farmers have potential to reach productivity levels higher than Brazilian average. Most of the areas where passion fruit would be planted were the ones which had nothing being cultivated on them because of the frost risk.
- 2 Commercialization, which we thought would be a challenge, was successful. This really encouraged our members.
- 3 Managing crops was something reasonable, that our members and technical department area able to take care of.

Most of growers decided to go ahead with the project and several of them are going to expand their crops and many more decided to join this project for next year. COOMAP is already doing investments to support this growth, something that we will cover on a future edition of our newsletter.



Our own experience has shown that income diversification is positive to everybody: growers have other income source and feel less insecure about making their living, the community around us has the possibility to consume different products, finally, the land is occupied in a more diverse way, and this makes our members more resilient to climate change.

With this nice initiative, COOMAP keeps up to its moto: **Cultivating work and Harvesting Results.**



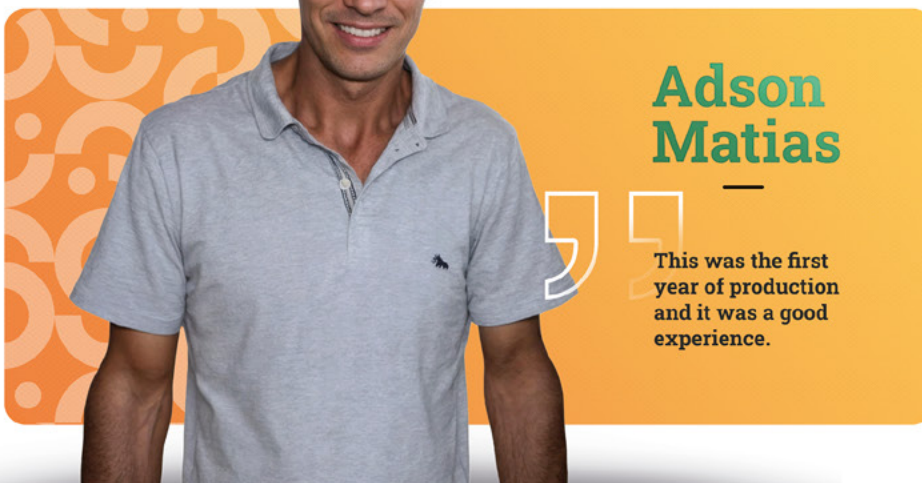
Everybody who deals with sustainability in the coffee business is really used to discussing about how income diversification is something important for farmers' prosperity. This month we'd like to bring you **Adson's story**. His crops were severely damaged by the frost in 2021 and this made him start dealing with fruits at his farm. He's our

► Because of this situation, and determined to not allow it to happen again, Adson decided to join COOMAP FRUIT PROJECT, that we discussed before in this edition of our newsletter. In 2022 he received the first blackberry seedlings, which nowadays are part of a crop with over a thousand trees. He believed so much in the project that he also planted 500 raspberry seedlings and 700 passion fruit seedlings. All of it in an area of less than one hectare. He also decided to rent part of the land so that soy and rice could be planted on it.

Grower



of the month



Adson Matias

This was the first year of production and it was a good experience.



Adson's new enterprise was so successful that he was invited to host at his farm the 1st COOMAP Field Day for Fruit Crops, which you also learned about in the previous article. When asked to describe his experience with crops diversification, he says: *"This was the first year of production and it was a good experience. For next crops, we are going to grow substantially. The positive thing about these fruit crops is that all of the work they demand has a different timing from coffee, so there is no "competition" between crops"*.

Adson Matias, a soft-spoken 48-year-old COOMAP member, was raised in a family of small milk producers. He has lived in the Macuco neighborhood, here in Paraguaçu, since he was 5 years old. At that time there was no electricity at their farm. Until some time ago they were still dedicated to milk production. In fact, this was one of the several activities that Adson had during his life. He was also, salesman at a store, industry worker, bricklayer and he also had garlic crops. Wow... he seems to be a multitask guy! Adson is now married and has one daughter.

his life. In 2021, the frost that hit the south of Minas Gerais, didn't spare Adson's farm. Unfortunately, it killed 6 thousand coffee trees, almost 55% of his crops! Just think of it, having more than half of your income disappear overnight! ►



He still lives and makes a decent living from his father's farm, that he shares with his brother, who, by the way, also lives there. After working a lot, in 2008 he got to have a crop with over 11 thousand coffee trees. And that's when we get to one of the worst moments of

It is really positive to see how confident growers are when they have another income source. This provides stability and a long-term point of view of their business. We do hope that more and more growers follow Adson's footsteps and have a diverse business within their farm – which contribute to their prosperity.



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