A Helping Hand for Bulgaria’s Youth

Esseterre is also dedicated to involving the youth of Bulgaria. Through donations from dōTERRA Healing Hands™, Esseterre is supporting an innovative Bulgarian non-profit organisation known as The Social Teahouse. In Bulgaria, a disproportionate number of orphans need more resources than are available. Many are forgotten by the State at a young age, never gaining access to the necessary opportunities to avoid lives of despair and hardship.

The Social Teahouse provides training and opportunity to youths who are leaving state care, providing a three-year mentorship programme that builds professional and personal skills. dōTERRA Healing Hands has funded the purchase and refurbishment of key infrastructure for the Social Teahouse’s new headquarters in Varna. dōTERRA Healing Hands is also funding programmes to help revitalise local orphanages in the Dobrich area through improvements to bathrooms and addressing other needs.

The Milk Canteen in Dobrich provides affordable meals for all children between the ages of 10 months and 3 years old. dōTERRA Healing Hands has helped the Milk Canteen with new and updated equipment, renovated employee bathrooms and a new vehicle so that they can provide home deliveries.

Esseterre and dōTERRA Healing Hands also work with and provide funding for other local organisations and projects in Dobrich and Bulgaria to ensure broader support in the local community.

Social Teahouse mentor working with an enrolled youth at a food and nutrition workshop.
A New and Different Chapter for Bulgaria

Bulgaria is a country rich with opportunity, but it has faced challenges in reaching its full potential. Bulgaria is part of the European Union (EU), but has one of the lowest GDP in the EU—with nearly a quarter of its population living at or below the global poverty line—and is presently experiencing the most severe population decline in the world. Sadly, each year emigration erases dozens of towns from Bulgaria’s map. High death and low birth rates are also significant factors in depopulation, but lack of opportunity is the primary driver for this migration away from the country. As the nation’s men and women search for jobs abroad, severe structural and industrial decay becomes increasingly common. Experts on distribution of EU funds cite the high concentration of investments and resources in certain regions, at the expense of others, as a contributing factor to lagging infrastructure and a diminishing population.

Before the fall of Communism, Bulgaria was not only an active industrial nation, it also had some of the world’s premier essential oil research, development and production. Organisations like the Rose Institute in Kazanlak were renowned for their sophistication and cutting-edge research. As a microcosm of the rise and fall of Bulgarian industry, the Rose Institute was once a model of development in Bulgaria.

The result is a Bulgarian company, established in 2005 called Esseterre EOOD. Esseterre is a farming and distilling operation with headquarters and a production centre in the agricultural heart of Bulgaria at Dobrich. Esseterre is now the largest distillery in Bulgaria and will continue to revitalise the essential oils industry through dōTERRA’s Co-Impact Sourcing® approach, becoming a significant force for facilitating sustainable, diversified development in Bulgaria.

There are, however, opportunities to help write a new and different chapter for Bulgaria. The country remains an agricultural haven for growing an abundance of aromatic plants and the people are rich in know-how. In particular, the Black Sea climate zone of Bulgaria produces some of the world’s best Lavender and Melissa. Its sunny, dry climate during harvest, coupled with dry, well-drained, sandy soil, is ideal for these aromatic plants. For these reasons, dōTERRA chose Eastern Bulgaria as the place to realise a vision of creating a world-class production centre for some of its most valued oils.

Reviving a Legacy

Esseterre’s distillery is not a company to just supply the raw materials, minimise risks and develop such high-quality oils possible. Melissa should not be transported over long distances post-harvest, since the plant is easily damaged and needs to be distilled shortly after harvesting. An essential oil distiller does not harvest Melissa that is grown more than 50 kilometres from the distillery. Lavender is also best distilled within one day of harvesting.

Esseterre’s main distillery with twelve of thirty-seven operating distillation units (above) is grown more than 50 kilometres from the distillery and needs to be distilled shortly after harvesting. Melissa is easily damaged post-harvest, since the plant is grown more than 50 kilometres from the distillery. Lavender is also best distilled within one day of harvesting. Esseterre’s first Melissa planting (above) is centrally located to the Lavender and Melissa farms supplying the raw materials, and a strategic choice. Esseterre’s distillery is strategically placed in the agricultural heart of Bulgaria, ensuring the highest quality essential oils possible. Melissa should not be transported over long distances post-harvest, since the plant is easily damaged and needs to be distilled shortly after harvesting. An essential oil distiller does not harvest Melissa that is grown more than 50 kilometres from the distillery. Lavender is also best distilled within one day of harvesting.

Strategically Placed

Basing operations in Dobrich was a strategic choice. Esseterre’s distillery is centrally located to the Lavender and Melissa farms supplying the raw materials, and a strategic choice. Esseterre’s distillery is strategically placed in the agricultural heart of Bulgaria, ensuring the highest quality essential oils possible. Melissa should not be transported over long distances post-harvest, since the plant is easily damaged and needs to be distilled shortly after harvesting. An essential oil distiller does not harvest Melissa that is grown more than 50 kilometres from the distillery. Lavender is also best distilled within one day of harvesting.

A Year-Round Industry

Esseterre has initially focused on Lavender and Melissa oil production, but the farmers are capable and anxious to do even more. The distillery operates year round in order to facilitate a more efficient and optimal use of Bulgaria’s abundant, high quality aromatic plants. Among the crops that Esseterre will assist with harvesting and Melissa oil production, Lavender and Melissa oil are distilled year-round. Although created and owned by dōTERRA, Esseterre is really a Bulgarian firm, built and managed by Bulgarians. Export managers, distillers, farmers and engineers make up the team. Along with impacting industry-related skills, the Esseterre team is characterised by a shared commitment to positively impact their own communities. Esseterre has brought new investment to the area and is partnering with dozens of local farmers, and there are many more who are eager to join forces with Esseterre’s mission and dōTERRA’s Co-Impact Sourcing® approach. Not only does Esseterre offer farmers a chance to increase their incomes through the production of higher value crops, but also on-time payments, long-term fair pricing, production harvesting support, and technical knowledge-sharing.

Revising a Legacy

Esseterre’s distillery is located on the outskirts of an industrial town surrounded by many empty fields and abandoned warehouses—legacies of Bulgaria’s past but not its future. Esseterre is not a company that simply aims to just grow and distill Lavender. Rather, its goals are to produce the highest quality essential oils possible, not only for the dōTERRA’s needs but for the country’s agricultural and industrial legacy, thus building a stronger today and tomorrow for farmers and their communities.