

Full Length Research Paper

Atatürk forest farm's management and it's relationship with the cooperatives

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In the first years of the republic, in 1925, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk established a farm that is currently called Atatürk Forest Farm (AFF). Atatürk managed the AFF and all the other farms by himself in 1937; AFF adhered to Government Agricultural Management Association. In 1950, AFF was bounded to Government Production Farms and it reached its identity today. In 1998, Natural Resources Protection Committee's 5742 numbered decision declared AFF as a first degree protected area. The most important objectives of AFF are to carry the importance of agriculture according to Atatürk, his love to nature and agriculture plays an important role in development and employment to next generations. AFF's capital is 500.000 TL and is employing 430 employees workers. Around 31% of the farm land is used for agricultural activities, and barley, wheat, pasteurized milk, yoghurt, awhey, ice cream and cheese are being produced. AFF finances itself from the sources that are out of its main activities. AFF relationship with the cooperatives especially takes place during buying raw milk. 3% of the milk is produced by AFF and the rest as 'service support to villages associations' which are a part of the local governments and also from the development cooperatives which are managed by major milk dealers.

Key words: Atatürk forest farm's, management, cooperatives.

INTRODUCTION

In the developing countries, till the market conditions are formed and in order to be a model to the society, governments lead the countries in a wide range of fields. In the first years of the republic, many model enterprises in the industrial and agricultural fields were developed to set good examples to the society. Atatürk Forest Farm was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1925. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's aim in developing Atatürk Forest Farm was not only to be a model to the villagers but also creating public recreational areas. According to Atatürk, 'Agriculture was the basis of the national prosperity.' For this reason, Atatürk's 'desire and strength to overcome the difficulties' nature knew very well that the city of Ankara was not appropriate to implement agricultural techniques since the city was in the middle of a very dry steppe. However, he decided to construct a modern farm

in Ankara. In the spring of 1925, by inviting agriculturalists, Atatürk told them his decision and ordered them to find an appropriate land for the farm that had to be constructed around Ankara. However, agriculturalists could not find a very proper land during their investigation.

This condition was explained to Atatürk in detail and also the agriculturalists added that they could not find an appropriate land for a farm in Ankara. However, Atatürk by pointing out the Farm's current place said that:

'The place I want should be the place like that; close to Ankara, boggy, barren and a bad land. If we cannot improve such a place who would come improve?' (Anonymous, 1953; Memlük, 1989; Sözen and Arli, 1981; Çelik, 1988).

Ankara was very important for Atatürk since he sacrificed all his life in Ankara to form the Turkish republic. He worked incredibly hard to reach that goal. Another important

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goal of Atatürk was to construct a green farm which would be a healthy, relaxing and beautiful environment for the inhabitants of Ankara. However, this would not be easy since the land he chose was in very bad condition. Consequently, in order to be a modal to the country's agriculture, he ordered to start necessary preparations for the AFF. The 20 ha land which have the management center of the farm today, the zoo, the parks and the gardens was bought from Abidin Pasha's wife, Mrs. Faika. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk bought this land a lot more than it worthed; and this activated other land owners and these people also sold their lands which are very barren and boggy. Different sized group of lands that can be considered as farms; Balgat, Etimesgut, Çakırlar, Macun, Güvercinlik, Tahar, Yağmur and Baba were also bought (Anonymous, 1953; Gürocak, 1981). Thus, 'Atatürk Forest Farm' was built in 52 ha land which was an enough size for a big, modern agricultural enterprise.

In 5th May 1925, in the city of Çankiri, Orta district, 50 ha Aydos Plateau's usage rights were taken in order to feed the sheeps but this land title deed had never reformed in the name of the Atatürk Forest Farm. Since this land was not used by the farm and its inspection and maintenance were not made, in 18th September 1980 a report was written and its usage right was given to Ankara Forest Management. The farms and the lands that were granted to treasury by Atatürk are as follows:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1) Atatürk Forest Farm: | 5200 ha |
| 2) Yalova Baltacı Farm: | 1150 ha |
| 3) Tarsus Piloğlu Farm: | 850 ha |
| 4) Silifke-Tekir-Şövalye Farm: | 1200 ha |
| 5) Hatay-Dörtyol-Karabasamak and Turunçgiller Garden: | 1800 ha. |
| Total: | 10200 ha. |

Source (Anonymous, 2004b).

Atatürk managed all the farms by himself till 1937; and in 11th June 1937, as he declared in his testament letter, with all of his other assets, he bequeathed all these farms to the treasury; and as a result, in 13 January, 1937, 'Atatürk Forest Farm' was adhered to Government Agricultural Management Association. For 13 years till 28.02.1950, the farm was managed in this status and in 01 March, 1950, AFF was bounded to Government Production Farms. After a short period of time from that, by considering Atatürk's devotion to the farm and the unique features that the farm had and in accordance with Atatürk's testament letter in 24 March, 1950, with the act number 5659, Atatürk Forest Farm reached its status today (Anonymous, 1998). The farm is a corporate identity public association that is bounded to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. The farm was with the 02 June, 1992 date and number 2436 committee decision declared as natural and historical protected site.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk by bequeathing the farms that he financed personally to the treasury as a result to the public declared how the farms should be managed in his

testament letter saying that the farms improves the growing land and provides good food and recreation areas for the public. He also stated that these enterprises cause the development of agricultural techniques, increase the yield and development of villages by the help of government and he bequeathed the farms to government national funds by considering the aforementioned facts. Atatürk Forest Farm operates both in the food, agriculture, education, culture and service sectors (Açıksöz, 2001). Number 5659 Atatürk Forest Farm's formation law's tenth article 'Atatürk Forest Farm's lands and buildings was expropriation is depended on special permission and between 1945 to 1983, Turkish National Assembly gave 1876.7 ha by laws to different associations. Today left farm land of Atatürk Forest Farm's is 3348.7 ha. Even though all the difficulties that the farm faced, AFF serves Ankara and its surroundings with great efforts, suitable to Atatürk's dignity. The aims of the Atatürk Forest Farm are as follows:

- i) To afforest Ankara and its surroundings, to create areas where people can relax, rest, enjoy, do sport activities and have picnic.
- ii) To provide farmers who need seed and stud.
- iii) To foster the farmers by buying their products in their actual value.
- iv) To produce and sell clean and economical food products.
- v) To be in close contact with the internal and external markets.
- vi) To work in order to make sure that, the public can get and consume healthy and delicious food products.
- vii) To keep retaining different types of animals and exhibit them in an entertaining and educational way to the public.

Most importantly, to carry the importance of agriculture according to Atatürk, his nature love and agriculture's important role in development and employment to next generations (Anonymous, 2002). Moreover, the full copy of the house that Atatürk was born in Selanik that is, The House of Atatürk Museum is a part of the AFF. The lands of the farm that are still barren and boggy are planning to be transformed as parks and forests as soon as the farm can find source. In this research; AFF's importance and place in the Turkish agriculture will be investigated, moreover, AFF's economical and social relationships with the other agricultural associations, and cooperatives will be analysed. In this study the need to understand this modal farm's economical and managerial aspects was arisen. With this aim: 'In the first part; information about AFF's development period from the date of its establishment to present was given.

Moreover, the farm was analysed from a managerial aspect. Furthermore, by studying AFF's relationship with the cooperatives and associations, concrete solution suggestions in a macro sense were given.

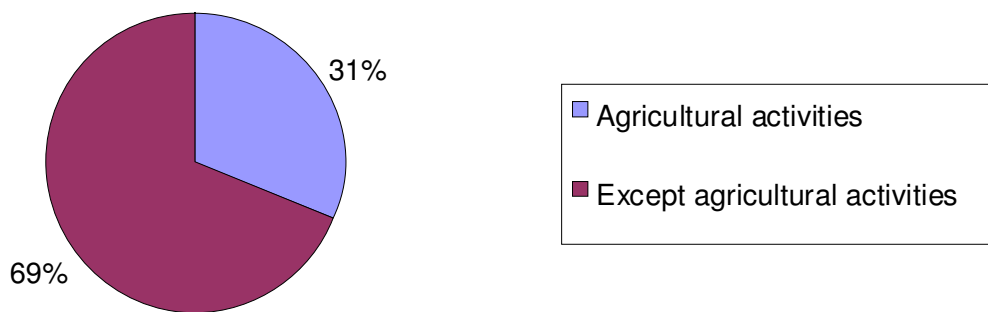


Figure 1. Land allocation of AFF.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the preparation of this research, different types of materials were used. These materials are summarised as follows: As being the first model farm in Turkey, the information about the managerial and economical structure of the farm was gained from various sources and statistics. The data about the activities of the Atatürk Forest Farm were gained from AFF's annual reports, supreme auditing commission reports and face-to-face interviews. Before analysing AFF from the managerial aspect, the development of the farm from the day of its establishment was explained. In the research, all of the divisions of the farm since their establishment were examined. In order to that, face-to-face interviews with the related associations and legislation analysis were made. Moreover, another aspect of the subject, that is about the cooperatives which were studied by considering their relationship with the Farm.

THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Atatürk forest farm's managerial structure

Atatürk Forest Farm's current and legal status

Atatürk Forest Farm's capital is 500,000,000. TL, the budget of 2004 is 40 trillion and the budget of 2005 is 48 trillion (Anonymous, 2004a). Atatürk donated AFF that was purchased by him to his nation which is carrying on its activities by making profit with 13 administrators, 65 officers, 112 permanent and 240 temporary workers (430 in total) (Anonymous, 2004a). Agriculture Craftmanship Department (dairy products factory), Leaven Craftmanship Department (honey, pickles, wine factories), Zoological Gardens Department, Livestock Department, Field Cultivation Department, Vineyard and Gardens Cultivation Department are the divisions of the Atatürk Forest Farm. Also, Workshop Department, Legal Counsel Department, Personnel Management and Education Department, Accounting and Finance Department and Commerce Department are the departments that manage the common activities of the aforementioned departments. In the 'management' of the Atatürk Forest Farm: Number 5659 establishment act, the regulation of the cabinet decision number 98/11395 about selling, purchasing, to let for rent and to take a rent, as issued in the official journal date 30 July 1998 and

number 23418 and with the cabinet decision number 98/11395, AFF's officers personal raising position as issued in the official journal date 3 March 2000 and number 23982. AFF's manager of Accounting and Finance Department is appointed by Ministry of Finance, AFF's officers personal rights are subject to number 657 Government Officers Act and this act's attachments.

Acts about the workers are being executed by the working act number 1475 and number 506, 2821 and 2822 Social Security Institution (SSK) and collective bargaining agreement.

Atatürk Forest Farm's current land assets and distribution of the agricultural fields in the Atatürk Forest Farm

The current land assets of AFF: 1150.4 ha of the farm is used as forest and park land (Figure 1). The remaining land's 27.79% that is 930.7 ha is used for growing grain (barley and wheat) and feed grain. 2.27% of the land that is 76.2 ha is used for growing nursery and ornamental plants. 1.03% that is 34.4 ha is used as feeding grounds. As it can be understood from the information earlier mentioned; farm land's 31.09% that is 1041.3 ha is appropriate for agricultural activities. Besides, 0.96% of the farm's land (32 ha) is a Zoo garden. 20.54% of the land (688.1 ha) is on rent. 2.94% (98.3 ha) is used by the official associations and corporate and private entities. The remaining is as follows: 3.6% (102.2 ha) stone quarry, 0.78 (26 ha) marshland and reed-bed, 2.99% (100 ha) road, 0.64% (21.2 ha) land, 0.96% (31.9 ha) canal, 3.23% building. The sum of the land that is not used in the agriculture is 68.90% which is 2307.4 ha. Major portion of the forest land was afforested by the voluntary people and the associations (Anonymous, 2004a).

Main products that are produced in Atatürk Forest Farm

According to AFF's 2004 records; the main products that

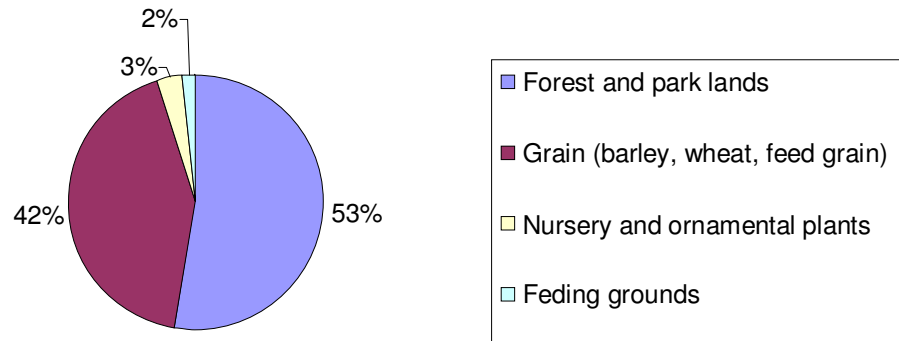


Figure 2. The distribution of the agricultural fields in the AFF.

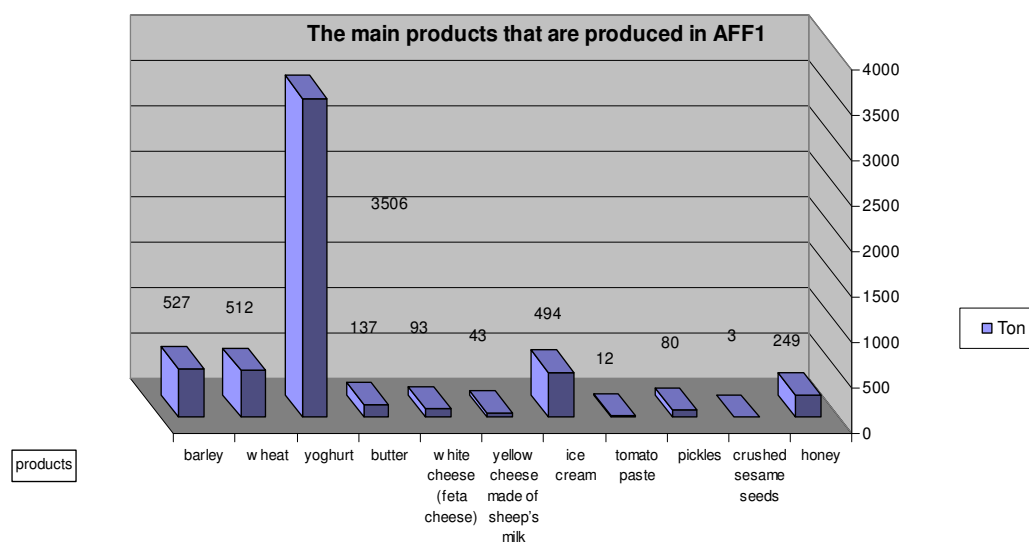


Figure 3. The main products that are produced in AFF.

are produced in AFF are shown in Figure 3. The most important products are pasteurized milk with 8454 litter, yoghurt with 3506 ton, ayran with 654.000 litter, barley with 527 ton, wheat with 512 ton and ice cream with 494 ton (Figure 4). Also, honey, crushed sesame seeds, vinegar, pickles, tomato paste, tomato juice, varied furiet juices, wine, yellow cheese made of sheep's milk, white cheese (feta cheese) and butter are being produced (Anonymous, 2004a) (Figure 2).

Atatürk Forest Farm's financial analysis

AFF's financial analysis results are given in Table 1. If the current ratio is greater than 1, AFF is not having difficulties in its cash flow and the farm does not have short term debt burden which is a positive situation. Besides, AFF's liquidity assets are in an adequate level. AFF's equity ratio to long term debts is considerably high; as a result of this, there is no difficulty in paying the debts. When we

analyse the financial profitability of the AFF, because of the intensive competition in the market, the farm bears loss from its main activities, however, by the effect of the rent and soil pouring revenues, profit for the period is high. But when we analyse the last two ratios in the table, it can be said that the turnover is low, the profitability should be increased and the farm's activities should be more efficient. When we make a general evaluation, it can be said that, AFF runs all of its activities from its own revenues. AFF bears loss from most of its production activities and profit for the period comes from the rental incomes of the private and corporate entities and soil pouring revenues from soil pouring to farm's lands. Therefore, these activities should be considered as the farm's main activities from now on. Also, it can be said that for the time being, AFF finances itself out of its main activities. In accordance with Atatürk's testament letter, protecting the farm's lands, handing them on to the next generations, increasing the forests, offering park fields and forests to the public, enlarging the zoo are vital

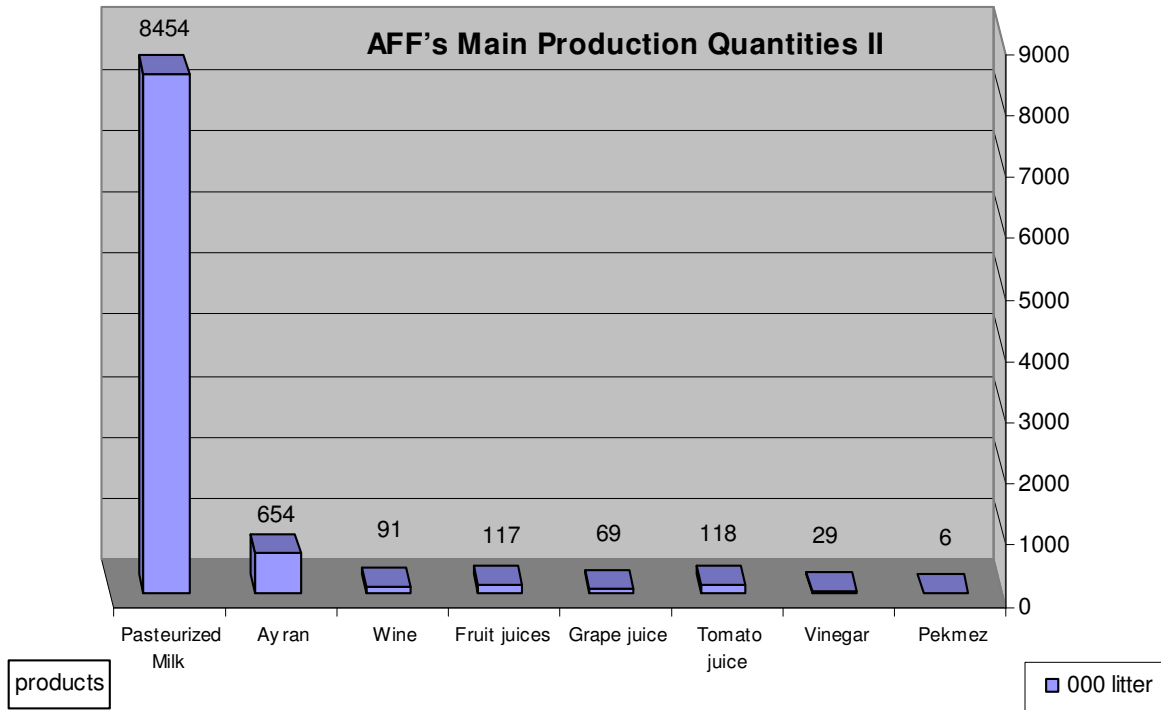


Figure 4. AFF's main production quantities II.

Table 1. AFF's financial analysis results.

| | | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|-------|
| Current ratio | Circulating assets/short term loan capital | 16,513,129/3,264,078 | 5.06 |
| Liquidity | Current assets/short term loan capital | (16,513,129 - 135,497)/3,264,078 | 3.48 |
| Equity ratio to long term debts | Equity/long term debts | 37,914,301/473,790 | 80.02 |
| Economical profitability | Profit for the period* 100/investment capital | (3,653,128 x 100)/41,652,169 | 9 |
| Financial profitability | Profit for the period* 100/equity capital | (3,653,128 x 100)/37,914,301 | 10 |
| The ratio of net sales to net fixed assets | Net sales/net fixed assets | 23,461,723/25,139,040 | 0.9 |

Source: Calculated according to farm's records, 2004.

dynamics for being a modern capital.

Since all these activities need major investment and sources, afforesting activities are done by the protocols that were made by the voluntary associations. Especially, the production functions that result with loss should be reconsidered and the farm should concentrate onto the activities that were mentioned earlier. Moreover, adequate resources should be transferred to the farm. AFF, at the center of Ankara, faces with some critical attitude about the scope of its business activities from various auditing commissions. As a result of that from time to time, the management of the farm feel indecisive about how long more the farm should continue its main activities. As a result of that, the management of the farm cannot behave as a private sector enterprise. Even though, today's production technologies are trying to be followed, since the general government policy is far from being active in the free market economy, and prefer

being a regulatory, the farm faces obstacles in reflecting projections about the future policies. Even though, the difficulties in today's very competitive free market economy, AFF's efforts to produce added value should be considered with appreciation. Therefore, for our country and especially for the public in capital Ankara, in order to perpetuate and develop this very valuable enterprise, it is very important to issue and apply the required acts.

Atatürk Forest Farm's relationship with the cooperatives

Cooperatives are the economical associations that put people factor in the foreground. Today, the cooperatives are managed by the principles that are developed by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA). These principles

are: voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training and information, cooperation among cooperatives and concern for the community (Mülayim, 2006). Cooperatives are the third sector besides public and private sectors. For the benefit of the society, and with the principles that were mentioned earlier, they can cooperate with the public and private sectors. In this perspective, as being a part of the public sector, AFF and the cooperatives are in cooperation because of their common matters. Moreover, beyond the cooperatives, another type of production association that is expanding quite rapidly in the last years are Service Support to Villages Associations and AFF also is in cooperation with these associations. However, because of the undemocratic type of their management and high commissions that they collect from selling milk, using those commissions inefficient cause dissatisfaction among the producers (İnan ve Ark, 1999). As being a modal association to Turkish agriculture on behalf of the public sector, AFF always act in cooperation with the associations which carry out the same objectives.

AFF, provide raw material need in various types of production from cooperatives and associations. The cooperatives and associations which supply raw materials that the farm need are close to the farm. Hence, this makes a major advantage in the costs. Another advantage is the size of the cooperatives. It is very important for the farm to make its production activities continuously and at this point the size of the cooperatives are big enough to supply the demand of the farm continuously. These conditions cause consistencies in the price, continuity and quality in the farm's activities. Thus, this is the reason of working with the public owned cooperatives and associations. AFF's relationship with the cooperatives especially takes place during buying raw milk. According to the third act of the Public Tender Law, AFF makes direct purchases from the cooperatives, Service Support to Villages Associations and Revolving Fund Associations. 3% of the milk need of AFF is produced by the farm and the rest from the Service Support to Villages Associations which are a part of the local governments and also from the development cooperatives which are managed by major milk dealers. AFF provide its milk need from Kızılağaç, Keçili Village, Karaaliler Village, Çamlık Village, Taşkapi Village, Kuşçular and Devederesi Villages, Kızılkaya, İlyaslı Village Agricultural Development Cooperatives that run their activities in Burdur and Ankara district. Moreover, from Service Support to Villages Associations which are in the administrative district of Acıgöl, Avanos and Tufanbeyli and in Nevşehir and Kayseri towns (Anonymous, 2004a).

Previously, the milk need of the farm was provided from the major milk collectors in Antalya and Burdur district. When the act number 4734 became operative, buying

raw milk from the private sector ended. Thus, with the contributor factors in the law, the farm started buying raw milk from the cooperatives that are mentioned earlier. However, even though this act fostered the cooperatives and the associations, since the cooperatives did not have enough financial resources, for a short period of time, the private sector milk collectors provided milk on behalf of the cooperatives in this district. The most important feature in here is that the profit margin from selling milk goes to the hands of the milk collectors and as a result of that the cooperative partners loses revenue. In order to support the farmers in the district, AFF has always given high 'minimum price' to the raw milk. After many years of trading, mutual trust developed and in order not to aggrieve the cooperative partners, AFF authorities visit the district occasionally and listen to the problems of the public and try to find solutions to their problems.

Conclusions

Considering the real owner of the Atatürk's farm, testament letter; a clear, transparent and participative master plan should be prepared in order to guarantee correct usages and avoid very discomfoting fait accomplis. Part of AFF includes the public services such as the zoo garden, museum, picnic field and forest. Hence, the farm is not an association which only aims to make profit. Therefore, the farm should not be left to its fate. On the other hand, in order to reflect Atatürk's bright light to next generations in the right way; legal arrangements to get financial support for this valuable custody and for the lungs of the city should be made (for instance, in the first years of its establishment, the farm was exempted from taxes, however, with the acts which came into effect later on, these acts desuetuded). Defined as the connected association to Ministry of Agriculture, AFF runs all of its activities with its own sources and therefore, the farm is considered as a floating capital association. However, since this condition has not been recorded legally, the farm cannot derive benefit from the advantages of the floating capital associations and as a result of that, qualified personnel cannot be employed. In order to avoid abuse and structuring, the declaration of the farm as a first degree protected area has made positive effects, but on the other hand, this has been a negative factor in the economical investments and progress.

Since being first degree protected area caused the farm interpreted as Efes Antique City in the means of the law. Therefore, declaring the farm as first degree protected area should be interpreted correctly. Foresting and running forest area is a quiet costly activity and since AFF runs all its activities only with its own sources, the farm cannot fulfil its purpose in the desired level and today an important part of the farm land is still empty. In the attempts that were made with government's related

association, 'general directorate of forresting' which operates entirely with the general budget allowance did not yield any results. Solving the legislation problems and managing a forresting campaign will be supported and have great repercussions. In order for the farm to be more efficient in marketing and to accomodate very intensive market conditions, the necessary arrangements have to be made.

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