



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

LAND O'LAKES  
**VENTURE37**

## SNAPSHOT

### **LINQ and F2F FSQ Programs Collaborate to Assist a Local Business Comply with International Standards and Expand Market**



Land O'Lakes Inc. volunteer Evie Severyn, Senior Quality Assurance Manager visits The Good Thymes facility



The Good Thymes employees receive food safety practices training by local expert Ms. Zeina Nakat, Food Safety and Quality Consultant and Auditor.

*“These interventions played a central and instrumental role in putting me on the right-path to the export market”*

Fady Aziz, owner of The Good Thymes

The Good Thymes (TGT) is a small business nested in the Kfar-Houneh village of South Lebanon specializing in handpicking, sorting, and drying Thyme leaves. The leaves are then mixed with various natural ingredients to create their end product, Zaatar, a mixture of spices well-known across the Middle East.

To ensure a sustainable and profitable business, The Good Thymes sought to improve their food safety systems to comply with international food safety standards and access international markets.

F2F FSQ and LINQ both implemented by Land O'Lakes Venture37, funded by USAID Washington and the USAID Mission in Lebanon, respectively, teamed up to provide assistance to the local business, filling food safety gaps and opening opportunities for new markets. Since partnering with the two projects The Good Thymes has begun exporting its products to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabi, and the United States, in addition to increasing their domestic market by selling through online platforms.

F2F FSQ first helped The Good Thymes understand their food safety gaps by sending Land O'Lakes, Inc. volunteer, Evie Severyn, to Lebanon to host a seminar on the Global Markets Program (GMaP), a program created by the Global Food Safety Initiative. This seminar and the subsequent completion of the GMaP assessment tool guided by Evie provided a road map for The Good Thymes to follow to improve food safety and meet international food safety standards.

Once The Good Thymes understood the improvements that needed to be made within their facility, the Lebanon Investment in Quality program (LINQ) stepped in to help the company realize Ms. Severyn's recommendations engaging a local Food Safety consultant to guide the facility upgrades, bringing their product quality and safety in line with internationally recognized food safety standards.

After following on LINQ and F2F FSQ' program recommendations, The Good Thymes realized that one final gap needed to be filled to finally make the leap to the export market. F2F FSQ engaged a volunteer, Christine Blackledge, an expert in nutrition facts and labeling, to help The Good Thymes produce a nutrition facts label that met market standards.

#### **Telling Our Story**

U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

In a time of severe economic crisis in Lebanon, exporting products, within the region and to the U.S., is critical for processors to survive and sustain a profitable business. With their improved food safety practices and new nutrition facts label all meeting international standards, The Good Thymes can now reach export markets, and in turn support their own country's journey to self-reliance.

The F2F FSQ and LINQ Programs are funded by the United States Agency for International Development and implemented by Land O'Lakes Venture37.