



Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2008
Volume 1, Issue 9

BREAKING NEWS

US Ambassador's visit to CARD office in Yerevan



The US Ambassador to Armenia, her Excellency Marie L. Jovanovich, visited the Centre for Agribusiness and Rural Development to learn about the projects implemented by the Foundation. The Ambassador was highly impressed with the range of projects in various sectors of agriculture implemented throughout the country.

The Director of CARD Gagik Sardaryan introduced staff as well as gave a presentation on CARD activities in rural Armenia, past and present. The Ambassador noted the importance of USDA role in creating jobs and increasing incomes in Rural Armenia. The Ambassador was accompanied by Sean Carmody, the Coordinator of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Projects in Armenia and Georgia.



Scholarship to commemorate Felix Vardanyan

We would like to inform you all that we have opened an account to set a Scholarship which will be donated to Felix's foster child/ his nephew, Narek. Narek is now a residency student in Yerevan medical University, majoring in vascular surgery. In the meantime he is getting ready to apply to residency program in an American University in the US. This year he graduated from the Yerevan State Medical University with Honors Diploma with a score of 9.8 points out of 10. To graduate residency and emphasize on his studies he needs support at least for a year to cover the minimum of his living cost. Felix's unexpected passing away has left him without any support. By donating we will commemorate Felix' memory and will help a very bright young Armenian man, a future brilliant doctor on his path to realizing his and Felix's dream. CARD has opened an account for the scholarship in HSBC Armenia bank.

Acc No 003-056546-046, SWIFT: MIDLAM22

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MARKETING

Fresh fruit market development through the biggest supermarket chains

During the soviet years Noyemberyan community was famous for the exceptional quality and taste of local peach. However, after the collapse of Soviet Union all peach orchards were cut down, and the previously well known fruit brand was gradually forgotten. In the late nineties, about third of orchards were replanted through the efforts of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). However during the years of scarcity of peaches the processing facilities, irrigation systems and market for the famous brand stopped functioning too.

In 2008 July- September, CARD implemented peach market development assistance for Noyemberyan community, to support local farmers to sell products from replanted peach orchards in bigger quantities and at better price. The main goal of the project was to reintroduce Noyemberyan Peach to Armenian customers, thus recreating the market for the produce. First of all CARD contacted an interested person in Noyemberyan community, who is capable and willing to cooperate with CARD for successful implementation of the project.

The selected person, Mr. Andranik Veranyan started a company which became a link between farmers and retail sector. With CARD support, the company established a small consolidation center where the products from different farms are collected sorted, graded and packed into boxes and then distributed to the supermarkets and other retail outlets. CARD specialists supported with creation of brand attributes such as company logo, brochures, posters, carton boxes, as well as a brand name for the company. Several tasting events and in-store promotions were conducted in a number of Yerevan supermarkets. During in-store promotions about 1000 customers were able to taste Noyemberyan peach and get information sheets on nutritional features of the produce.





In total, the project helped the farmers to sell about 40 tons of fruits, 20 tons of which were sold through chain supermarkets. For the next year the company is planning to increase the number of involved farmers as well as to improve the quality of the peach through implementation of advanced pre and post harvesting measures. The number of retail outlets will be increased significantly to ensure a reasonable and profitable price for the farmers and CARD is intend to assist with the initiative further.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Pathways to Rural Economic Development in Transition

Countries: The Role of Agricultural Cooperatives

The international seminar in Yerevan Suggests Solutions

CARD supported ICARE to host seminar on “Pathways to Rural Economic Development in Transition Countries: The Role of Agricultural Cooperatives” on September 5-6, 2008 organized jointly with the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Research Committee.



The seminar started with the opening remarks by the First Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Armenia Samvel Avetisyan, followed by his report on problems existing in the agricultural

cooperative movement in Armenia and solutions thereof. Then Gagik Sardaryan, Director of Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD), presented the role of third party facilitator in the development of cooperative movement in Armenia. Gagik Sardaryan indicated problems facing cooperatives and cooperative development donor agencies. It is obvious after donor funding ends many of

well performing cooperatives will stop to operate worse case, or perform as LLCs. The seminar brought together agricultural economists and coop researchers from 11 countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, the United States, Georgia, Iran, Israel, Sweden, Russia, Italy, and Armenia) to discuss the development of cooperatives and get practical ideas for possible implementations. It was a good opportunity for well-known and young researchers from the above countries to present their research findings and case studies within the key topics: *the role of cooperatives and associations in rural development; credit cooperatives; the role of cooperatives in the agri-food supply chain; policy and legislative implications*. In particular, examples were brought up to indicate how cooperatives contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth stimulation, and the role of agricultural credit cooperatives in the development of the rural finance sector in transition countries was revealed. In addition, relationship between cooperatives and contracting in agriculture, studies of cooperatives' marketing efforts, and advantages of cooperatives in vertical integration were presented and actively discussed.



FOOD SAFETY

Serving Safe Food

On September 23-26, the ServSafe training program was offered to Armenian Food Service establishments. ServSafe is the industry's leading food safety training and certification program, created by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. The program is offered for the foodservice industry to assist in setting high food safety standards. ServSafe is recognized by US federal, state, and local jurisdictions.

The training was conducted by Dr. Fatemeh Malekian, Associate Professor, Southern University Ag. Center, USA, at the conference facilities of the Best Western Congress Hotel. There were 21 participants from retail stores, restaurants, hotels, government agencies, etc. In addition to the theoretical part, there was also a practical component in the training assigned to each of the six teams. Demonstration supplies, such as digital thermometers, gloves, hairnets, hand washing solutions, and kitchen cleaning solutions and supplies were placed on display throughout the training and the participants were trained on how to use the items. At the end of the training, these items were distributed to the participants as prizes for the teamwork assignments.

In addition to the main course, guest lecturer Vardan Parsamyan, representative of Johnson Diversey's Uniclean LLC in Armenia, was invited to speak about Industrial Kitchen Hygiene. The management of the Congress hotel agreed for the participants to take a tour in their kitchen facility. This tour helped everybody to use the acquired knowledge in the relevant environment. At the end of the training, all trainees received certificates of attendance from USDA/CARD, and those who successfully passed the test will receive certificates of successful completion from the National Restaurant Association Solutions. CARD is gradually evolving into an independent and sustainable organization. Therefore, for its capacity building it is highly recommended for its employees who have already successfully completed the course to become certified ServSafe instructors. In the future ServSafe training will be offered to Armenian food service industry on yearly basis.



CARD Food Safety Team Promoting On-Farm/Producer Level Sanitation and Hygiene

CARD Food Safety Team is currently engaged in implementation of a small grants program. This program is mainly focused on sanitation and hygiene and it is supported by small grants to local groups and associations who could serve as the delivery mechanisms in the future. Given the present level of understanding of the current rural practices particularly with respect to slaughtering of animals for the vet markets, opportunities for improvements in sanitation and hygiene through awareness and training have been identified. In this regard, the small grants approach is being utilized to explore demonstration projects to improve exist-



ing enterprises that are economically and culturally sustainable. These will be model projects to be replicated by other enterprises in rural and underdeveloped areas. Train-

ing for rural abattoirs will be held where hygiene is integrated with the application of right slaughtering equipment and practices.

A complete package for the Small Grants Program was developed. After its revision, it was decided to offer four small grants to four selected candidates (Syunik Milk Producers Association, supplying milk to Elola dairy; Noyemberyan Community Union, working with meat farmers and processors of the region;

Elite Farmers Association Consumer Cooperative, supplying milk to Dustr Melania dairy; and Milk Production Development Association, supplying milk to Ashtarak Kat dairy). At the initial stage of the project, CARD employees

Arman Ohanyan, Andery Araksyants and Artak Khachatryan delivered trainings for meat producers and dairy farmers. Training materials were developed by Dr. James McNitt and Mr. Curtis



Chisley, Southern University, Ag. Center, US. The number of participants who attended train-the-trainer program totaled 54. At the second stage, the trained specialists from grant-receiving organizations continued providing the trainings to the other farmers of the project. Over 1000 farmers participated in second-stage trainings.

After the trainings, farmer-level sanitation and hygiene supplies were distributed to the grantee organizations. In addition, farmers were provided consultation for the development and implementation of Sanitation Improvement Plans for their facilities. At the final phase of the project Dr. James McNitt and Mr. Curtis Chisley, SU and Food Safety team of CARD visited project sites to appraise the impact of the program.



CARD

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