



Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS FOR CARD PARTNERS AND STAFF

LAUNCH OF ANOTHER LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP



The development of Armenian dairy industry including cattle farm management is one of CARD's strategic directions. Feed production and improvement of feed base is another target point. Current feeding practices mainly rely on high-fiber, poor quality forage with a low protein level. In the long run, animals hardly receive adequate nutrition and energy, whereas for maximum performance and healthy animals, optimum nutrition is required. Introduction of feed additives and calf starters is CARD's solution to the problem.

The idea of CARD-Trouw Nutrition collaboration emerged during the discussions held at PUM Netherlands Senior Experts office as part of the visit CARD specialist Arman Ohanyan paid in the winter of 2012. Then, PUM senior experts Dr. Robert Back and Dr. Wim de Jong linked CARD with the Trouw Nutrition, one of the world leaders in animal nutrition and fish feed, and facilitated the future collaboration.

As a result, Trouw Nutrition Regional Marketing specialist Kornelis Hooghiemster and dairy specialist Peter van Dooren were invited to Armenia to provide on-site consultancies and conduct workshops for CARD vet specialists and farmers on feed additives and concentrates.

PUM MISSIONS IN ARMENIA ARE ONGOING



Visits were paid to cattle farms in the Aragatsotn and Shirak regions, where the ruminant experts examined the feeding practices, food ratio and overall conditions of the animals and accordingly provided their advice for the problems encountered at cattle farms.

For the introduction of minerals, feed additives and starters, presentations were made for nearly 15 farmers at CARD office and for a group of 17 at the Farm and Veterinary Service Center (FVSC) in Azatan community of the Shirak region.



"We have very good expectations of the ruminant market in Armenia. Though, there is a lot of room for improvement, especially on basic animal nutrition, with good products we can help the farmers grow", said Mr. Hooghiemster. "The seminars were very productive and audience was enthusiastic, farmers were eager to learn. Even though we didn't cover certain subjects as we focused on calf nutrition, vitamins, and minerals, we could see that there is a lot of interest", added Mr. Hooghiemster.

PUM Netherlands senior experts

For the period of January 19-27, PUM expert Mr. Jan Boeren was on his first mission to Armenia.

The one-week visit was full of discussions and consultation on issues related to strategy, corporate management, project management, leadership and communication.

Meetings held with CARD Management group and the staffs were very productive in terms of finding out gaps and making possible changes for improvements.

Special emphasis was put on tactical management as to how strategic decisions should be transferred into operational functioning. As a follow-up mission, in mid April, CARD is going to host another PUM expert, Mr. Renze J. Klamer, who will deliver demand driven sessions on leadership, project management and general management practices.

SUPPORT TO LOCAL GREENHOUSE FARMERS



Under the auspices of the USDA-supported greenhouse component, CARD hosted Mr. Andrii Galaguria, who is

one of the leading agronomists in Rijk Zwaan company. During a two-day visit, Mr. Galaguria conducted workshops for 15 greenhouse farmers and owners from the Ararat, Armavir, Aragatsotn and Kotayk marzes on the introduction of growing technologies, plant nutrition and improvement of drip irrigation.



The workshops tailored to the needs of the greenhouse farmers were aimed at improving their operation and minimizing losses they face due to lack of knowledge and practice on plant nutrition and drip irrigation. The refresh knowledge and on-site consultancies will help farmers manage the production efficiency and increase production volumes per square meter.

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE WITH ANAU STUDENTS



The private veterinary clinics and services for large animals need to be addressed in Armenia. In the framework of the USDA Animal Health project, a workshop on the private veterinary business management was conducted at CARD office on March 30, 2013.

The training was delivered by an expert from Latvia, Andris Zalitis, who runs the Vidzem private veterinary clinic there.

11 senior students and 1 lecturer from the Veterinary department of the Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU) were invited to take part.

The training was designed to exchange experience with the young generation and stimulate them to think more on developing the private vet sector. "If it works for Latvia, it can be true for Armenia too", said Mr. Zalitis.

The key message of the expert was that **the prevention is always effective and relatively inexpensive, whereas the treatment is seldom effective and always expensive**, and that the cause must be revealed and solved, not the problem.

He also shared with the students 10 golden rules he applies in the clinic during his daily work which is a key to the success in private vet business: "always be accessible; be kind; be honest to your customer; listen to your customer; put aside your private matters; keep confidentiality; improve your qualification; be prepared before you pay a visit; furnish information to your client and make people know you".



The students were quite impressed by the presentation as they studied a completely different approach to herd health management focusing on **prevention** firstly. They also thanked CARD team for the given chance to take part in the session.

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NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN DAIRY HERD MANAGEMENT



February 10-23, 2013, CARD cattle breeding project consultant Arman Ohanyan took part in the training organized at the “Agribusiness and Management” Academy of St. Petersburg State Agrarian University, Russia.

The training was aimed at introducing 2 computer programs. One of them enables to make a balanced feed ratio for the cattle based on the available feed base at farms which is cost effective, increases the potential milk yield per head, extends the productive life of a cow and finally increases the economic efficiency of animal husbandry. The second program “Seleks” allows automatic preliminary calculation of pedigree and genetic potential, operative management of farms, breeding-selection operative management, animal bonitation, analysis of bonitation works, prediction of cow productivity and a number of analytic works related to pedigree breeding.

The eleven-day training was conducted by the University lecturers and specialists in charge of field works at the

pedigree breeding of the “Plinor” computer laboratory in the in St. Petersburg.

As a result of the visit, licensed “Feed balanced ratio”, as well as Contract for installation and license of “Seleks” programs were obtained.

Through the application of the mentioned programs, it will be possible to establish regional information databases at the Farm and Veterinary Service Centers (FVSCs) established by CARD. With those databases, the genetically improved cattle and dairy herds will be registered; after the quality evaluation of available feed resources, feed balanced ratios will be made and provided to farmers; finally, modern registration system can be developed which will reflect particular region’s strong parts and concerns.



Upon the end of the training, the trainees were also handed state certificates by the Rector of the University.

COCHRAN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, USA



From March 17-28, 2013, under the USDA-initiated Cochran Fellowship Program, a study tour was designed to familiarize the 7 participants from Armenia, including CARD Agribusiness and Marketing Department representative Naira Mkrtyan, with Horticulture/postharvest practices using the most productive Agricultural region in the world-California’s San Joaquin Valley.

The participants, who were horticultural farmers from all over Armenia, had the opportunity to learn about farm-to-fork approach and about the best practices in horticulture.

Program delivery focused on three primary areas: Effective Horticultural Practices; Modern Post Harvest Production and Marketing Agricultural Products.

The program included lectures from university faculty combined with field visits to a variety of agribusiness entities including growers, packers and shippers with an emphasis on enhancing the postharvest component of value chain.



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ARID GOAT BREEDING CENTER TO HOST TALIN FARMERS



CARD Foundation cooperates with many development organizations in Armenia; one of them is World Vision International. Within the framework of such cooperation, on March 26, CARD organized an exchange visit to ARID goat breeding center in the Vayots Dzor region for 11 farmers from Talin region of the Argatsotn marz and 2 World Vision employees from Talin Area Development Program (ADP).

During the visit to ARID center, the farmers learned about the daily operation of ARID center and the proper ways of

goat farm management, feeding, herd health control and animal care. The farmers were also eager to learn about how the Center cooperates with goat farmers and what kind of services they provide.

After the visit to ARID center, the group also visited to one of the leading goat cheese producers in the region, Golden Goat cheese plant, where the farmers were introduced to cheese production cycle, goat milk collection process and farmer-producer cooperation.



IMPROVED YOUNG STOCK CARE AND NUTRITION AT BLACK OX



The Black Ox dairy farm located in Bardzrashen village nearby Yerevan is owned by the Ghazarian family and is one of the most progressive farms in Armenia. Starting only with one cow, a calf and a heifer, the farm gradually increased the number up to 78 cattle half of which are Holstein heifers bred through artificial insemination (AI).

In 2005, the AI technology was applied in the farm with support of CARD and the US-based World Wide Sires (WWS) specialists. After participating in capacity building programs on AI and dehorning, today, the owner's son, Norayr Ghazaryan, carries out artificial insemination at his farm using the semen from the US.

Having a genetically improved livestock, the farm produces up to 6500 liters milk annually, whereas previously this number hardly reached 3000 liters. More than 70% of the cattle are milked with "De Laval" milking machines.

CARD's ongoing support and consultancy to Norayr Ghazaryan has marked considerable improvements in animal care management at the farm, young stock care and nutrition in particular. New modern barns along with special calf feeding buckets have been placed for pure bred calves which are as well fed with Trouw Nutrition products-calf starters.



"The construction of a loose barn for cows and the provision of balanced feed ratio is a priority. In case of such favorable conditions for the livestock, we are likely to register an increase of 15-25% milk yield", said Norayr Ghazaryan.

Being formerly a semi derelict structure, the farm now has become a demo project due to the devoted and hard work of the Ghazaryan family.