

Monthly Newsletter



Breaking news

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AGRICULTURE CREDIT CLUBS UNION

In 1998 the United States Department of Agriculture Marketing Assistance Project (USDA MAP) has launched the Agriculture Credit Clubs Program aimed at providing direct technical and financial assistance to farmers and was the first



and unique in its type with no analogues in Armenia: collateral free; group liability and mutual guarantee principle; system of membership payments directed to the Credit Club Funds.

The Program involved farmers from the same community or village, engaged in the same type of activity or business. The group should have been connected to USDA MAP Strategic Loan Program or collaborating agribusinesses, cooperatives and associations, thus covering the first component of whole chain of assistance: production to marketing.

In 2002 the "Law on Agriculture Credit Clubs" was adopted by Parliament of RA and farmer groups got registered in State Register as "-----"

Agriculture Credit Club Non Commercial Cooperative (ACC). There are 47 registered ACCs in 10 marzes of Armenia involving over 900 farmers. Starting from April 2005 the Agriculture Credit



Clubs Program was transferred to the newly established Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development Foundation (CARD). The ACC portfolio for 2006 was 739,000,000 AMD, out of which CARD investment was 526,000,000 AMD and Credit Clubs investment- 213,000,000AMD.

After 9 years of operation it became clear that the Agriculture Credit Club Program needs to pass onto the next stage of development, which according to the Law on Agriculture Credit Clubs will be the establishment of the Union of Credit

Breaking news

Clubs. The idea was initiated by the presidents/leaders of over 20 credit clubs, who realized the importance of having one general coordinating body, which will be a main partner of program donors and program implementers, plus, establishment of ACC Union will enable the increased efficiency of self sustainability and self governance mechanisms of credit clubs.

On May 16, 2007 20 best performing Credit Clubs' Presidents met and made a decision to establish Agriculture Credit Clubs Union (ACC Union). Out of 20 President 5 were selected to serve as the working group to develop ACC Union By-Law, ACC Program new term and conditions, internal procedures and other related documents.



The next step was to hold a Founding Meeting, where the ACC Union President and other responsible cadre will be elected as well as the Union authorities and activities will be defined.

On July 27, 2007 the Agricultural Credit Clubs Union Founding Meeting was held, during which the elections were conducted, and presently the Union has its President, Board of Directors and Supervisory Committee. Hereafter the President, together with the Board will actively work on defining the strategy for the Union and seeking for the donors.

Upcoming Events

- September 10-12: Workplace Sanitation and Introductory Seafood HACCP Training.
- September 17-20: Workplace Sanitation and Introductory Meat and Poultry HACCP Training.

PLEASE CONTACT CARD FOR FULL DETAILS

HIGH QUALITY FORAGE ENSURES INCREASED MILK PRODUCTION

Taking into consideration the importance of high quality forage production for the improvement of dairy cattle feeding practice during winter season, the cooperative members of Ttujur Milk Marketing Cooperative located in v. Ttujur, Gegharquniq region, asked for CARD's assistance to start



cultivation of sainfoin crop to serve as forage for their animals.

For this purpose the cooperative members rented 10 hectares of land from the community to produce 60 tons of

high quality forage, the use of which will result in more cost efficient milk production. The cooperative is planning to expand the cultivation land by 2 hectares yearly and reach up to 20 hectares.

With CARD's support the project was initiated in March, 2007 and is still ongoing. In spite of the fact that the rented land was arid and had not been used for 16 years, which resulted in erosion, the farmers jointly with CARD made all efforts to overcome the obstacles.

As a consequence, during the monitoring visit in August, 2007 the CARD Rural Development team found the cultivated land in proper condition with the sainfoin seeds grown up and spread over, which serves as a guarantee for the project to be a success.

Another similar project was implemented by CARD Rural Development department in cooperation with the US Tropical Seeds LLC aimed at pasture improvement in Lori, Tavush, Gegharkunik and Kotayk regions. According to this project the beneficiaries from the above mentioned regions received Papalotla Brachiara Hybrid (a fodder crop rich in protein, the use of which enables the increase of milk production) seeds and fertilizers from CARD Foundation and with their own contribution conducted land preparation and sowing. 3 of 7 beneficiaries sowed the seeds this year, whereas the results were noteworthy in terms of the speed of the seeds growing and the respond of the animals.



CARD Rural Development team is planning to distribute the remaining of the seeds in other regions of Armenia as well.

The outcome of this and the projects alike will be the increase of high quality feed production capacity of RA region and utilization of previously unused croplands, thus contributing to the improvement of dairy farming practices and the decrease of costs of milk production. Besides, with the dairy cattle fed on high quality forage in addition to other traditional feedstuff the milk production will increase by at least 10%. This new feeding practice will be further disseminated among the farmers in other regions of Armenia.



Staff news

CARD Marketing Specialist Builds up Skills in the U.S.

The University of California at Davis has a unique enology and wine science department, which is the leading school in this sphere all over the world. Besides the degree programs it also organizes three week wine marketing short course once per year that focuses on marketing and sales. This year Armen Harutyunan, CARD Marketing Development and Research Specialist, has got an opportunity to participate in this course and get deep knowledge in wine marketing, as well as join in field trips to Napa and Lodi valleys and many wine stores. Among the participants also were OIV students from France, Italy, Spain, China, Greece, Germany, New Zealand and other countries.



CARD

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Arcolad: Promoting Businesses Gives Striking Effect



Arcolad CJSC is a small-scale business of chocolate production. It was founded in 2004.

Starting from 2006, Arcolad CJSC began production of chocolates with dried fruits, which became their major product and bestseller. Currently they produce such varieties as dried apricot with walnut in chocolate, dried apricot with marzipan in chocolate, dried peach with walnut in chocolate, dried peach with marzipan in chocolate, dried melon roll with smashed walnut in chocolate etc.

With CARD's support in 2006 the company implemented promotional campaign to increase awareness of the brand and develop local and Georgian markets. CARD's assistance implied preparation and installation of unique chocolate showcase at duty free stores to attract increasing flows of the tourists, preparation of posters and booklets for InterFood Georgia exhibition, and design and printing of Arcolad product catalog for direct sale.



As a result of the project implementation the company acquired 12 new business clients and compared to the third quarter of 2006, in the fourth quarter general sales increased by 85.1%. Sales at duty free stores have increased

by 42.9%, and compared to June 2006, sales have increased 3 times. After installation of Arcolad showcases at duty free stores, during two months sales has increased 1.5 times. Some preliminary agreements were made in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Arcolad chocolates were also presented by CARD at the International Agricultural Exhibition in Paris, March 3 -11, 2007, where they turned out to be one of the most unique and favored products of the Armenian stand. During the exhibition days, a contact was made with an Importer /TRITRADE/ of agricultural products in France who is working with a wide range of grocery stores.

As a result of the negotiations, 640 boxes of Arcolad chocolates were shipped to France on March 29, 2007.

Based on the information received on April 9, more than half of it has been sold out already. Currently Arcolad management is negotiating with the importer for the further positioning of the product in French market and for the shipment of the second batch of the chocolates.



The product is differentiated from the other products produced in Armenia due to the highest quality chocolate used and the choice of dried fruits. The management of the



company puts high emphasis on quality and innovation first of all.

The project can be considered a success and management of the company is continuing implementation of

promotional activities in Yerevan to continue sales growth and increasing brand awareness.

Due to the highest quality production, the company can provide import substitute and also penetrate export markets. And the increase of sale volumes will directly impact the dried fruit market development in the country.

WINE SERVING ETIQUETTE

Wine is highly regarded for its wonderful qualities, including both taste and aroma. To truly enjoy the entire rainbow of wine varieties, especially in social settings, a few rules of etiquette should be applied.

Wine Serving Temperatures: The temperature at which a wine is served has an immense impact on its taste. Serving wine cool will mask some imperfections; good for young or cheap wine, while a warmer wine temperature allows expression of the wine's characteristics; best with an older or more expensive wine.

Decanting Wine: Vintage red wines sometimes require several hours of decanting to allow the sediment to settle and the aromas to reach their full bouquets. At bottling, white wines are by nature ready to drink.

Pouring Wine: Still wines should be poured towards the centre of the glass, while sparkling wines should be poured against the side to preserve bubbles. To control drips, twist the bottle slightly as you tilt it upright.

Wine Glasses: As important as wine serving temperatures is the type of wine glasses in which wines are served. The shape of a wine glass can impact the taste of the wine, and for this reason different types of wine are served in different glasses.

The three main types of wine glasses are:

1. White wine glasses: tulip shaped
2. Red wine glasses: more rounded and have a larger bowl
3. Sparkling wine flutes: tall and thin.

On the next issue of Gourmet Corner we will present some of wine tasting techniques.



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