Breaking news

SEMINAR ON PACKAGING OF FRESH PRODUCE

Armenian agricultural products lack high quality packaging that could enhance positioning in local and international markets. Armenian fruits are exported in second hand boxes previously used for cigarettes. This kind of packaging is not accepted by supermarkets, and as a result, the fruits are sold in street markets at a comparatively lower price. Armenian fruits are currently exported to mainly Russia and Georgia. In order to reduce the level of dependency on the markets of these two countries and penetrate new niche markets, Armenian fresh fruit and vegetable producers have to substantially improve the packaging and transport logistics of their products.

CARD and ACDI/VOCA organized a seminar and training for Armenian farmers related to new packaging technologies for fresh produce. The seminar's structure was based on a trip taken by ACDI/VOCA, CARD, and ArmenPack Association representatives to Israel this year. Fourteen farmers and representatives of farmers' associations participated in the training, where the latest international trends for fresh produce packaging were presented. The participants of the seminar had a chance to learn about the technical and marketing requirements for the packaging as well as to meet representatives of the Carton Plast Company that produces polypropylene (PP) boxes suitable for wholesale trade of fruits and vegetables. ACDI/VOCA and CARD representatives also provided demonstrations of the packaging produced by Israeli and Armenian companies.

USDA/CARD INTRODUCE THE FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM TO THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

From March 24-26, USDA Office in the US Embassy in Armenia, CARD and ACDI/VOCA held courses on the "Introduction to HACCP System and Application of Codex Alimentarius Requirements " for representatives of the Republic of Armenia Ministries of Agriculture and Health, as well as food industry personnel, consultants and professors.

More than 30 people participated in the trainings delivered by Oksanna Dorofeyeva, a representative from the International Institute of Food Safety and Quality, from Kiev, Ukraine.

The goal of the trainings was to establish an effective Armenian food safety program bolstering the economy through increased demand and sale of food products within Armenia, regionally and for export, and to provide a safe and reliable food supply for the populace.

The curriculum covered key aspects of hygiene control systems, prerequisite programs, including standard sanitation operating procedures, preliminary steps for implementation of food safety management system and research to develop HACCP plans. The seminars were organized within the framework of a USDA/CARD and ACDI/VOCA joint project titled "Food Industry Technical Training and Assistance."

CARD Continues Promoting English Classes in ASAU Language Centre

Beginning with the establishment of the Armenian State Agrarian University (ASAU) Language Centre in 2002, USDA MAP and CARD have made significant contributions to English language classes taught at ASAU. These classes

provide opportunities for students, lecturers and professors to become involved in international programs.

Reports of the first semester of the 2007-2008 academic year state that the ASAU Language Center organized an English language performance. This performance allowed participants to demonstrate their skills and knowledge gained.

"It was such a pleasure to see the students enthusiastically performing in front of many guests invited, singing and playing - and all in English!" said Artak Khachatryan, CARD Rural Development Specialist, who was present at the event.

The performance was clear evidence of the efforts made by

the teachers as well as all the initiative's supporters.

The ASAU Language center aims to facilitate the students' participation in different international educational programs. This spring, students hope to continue their studies. Through hard work, they will successfully complete the course and have the necessary tools to build their career.

Upcoming Events

End of April (the date is not yet confirmed): Project opening – Establishment of a Milk Marketing Cooperative and a Milk Collection Unit in Buzhakan village, Aragatsotn region.

PLEASE CONTACT CARD FOR FULL DETAILS

GREEK MYTHOLOGY, ITALIAN NAMES AND FETA CHEESE

Feta cheese is a product of the ancient civilization and its recipe has remained the same over the years. Though definitely Greek in origin, the name "feta cheese" can actually be traced to the Italian language. Feta is a derivative of "fetta," the Italian word for slice. The Greek cheese is made up of slices of curd

substance exposed in brine. It is white in color, and it tastes salty, but the distinct flavor is definitely there.

Feta cheese is so old that it can be traced back to the era of Homer the book poet of the ninth century Greece. In his poem, the Odyssey, and in the hero, Odysseus travels to the land of Polyphemus the Cyclops. The Cyclops drank milk from cheap and would often bring milk and meat back to his cave to have something to eat over the winter. The milk that he carried tucked under his arm would harden into a salty flavored white cheese. Because of this, many people throughout the ages

used to believe that Polyphemus is actually the father of cheese.

Feta cheese has an acquired taste for many. Typical cheeses take a couple of days to be processed but feta takes several months and actually goes better with age. In the 17th century, this cheese was so coveted that it was only served on

special occasions along with a glass of red wine. Nowadays, the feta variety of cheese is still being considered as a special treat in many territories where this kind of delicacy is not as widely available. Indeed, it's one of the most special cheeses in the world.

On the next issue of Gourmet Corner we will learn a little about the history of Velveeta cheese.