



Breaking news

WINE AND CHEESE TASTING AT THE US EMBASSY

On December 14, the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) and the U.S. Embassy held their annual Wine and Cheese Tasting Event. Each year, this event allows retailers, restaurant owners, local vendors, and members of the international community to sample wine and cheese produced



by Armenian producers supported by CARD. This year, 10 cheese producers and 7 wine producers presented 17 types of Armenian wine and 19 varieties of local cheeses. New cheeses were presented for tasting, among them: Ricotta, Gouda, Cheese khinkali, Blue cheese, Tommy (goat cheese) and Feta type sheep cheese.

U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Joseph Pennington opened the event by welcoming the guests and expressing words of thank you to CARD for its active involvement in the organization of the event and generally for its great contribution to the development of agriculture in Armenia.

Sean Carmody, USDA Program Coordinator in Armenia and Georgia introduced CARD as an organization assisting farmers and agribusinesses in the production and marketing of food and related products. He also thanked CARD for all the achievements on its way to develop the rural Armenia.



During the event the visitors had the chance to taste different types of Armenian wines and cheeses beautifully displayed on the tables and enjoy pleasurable sounds of piano accompanying them throughout the evening.

The event concluded with the serving of sweet wine and Armenian chocolates.

Breaking news

CARD AND COAF SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AT CARD HEADQUARTERS

On the 7th of December, 2007 the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) and the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) signed a Memorandum of Agreement for a partnership in establishing a Milk Marketing Cooperative and Milk Collection Center in the village of Lernagog, Armavir marz.

The ceremony was opened by Sevak Manukyan, CARD Deputy Director who welcomed the presentees and introduced the signing parties in the name of Arpie G. Balian, COAF Country Director and Gagik Sardaryan, CARD Director. Prior to the long-awaited moment of



signing the papers the floor was given to Arpie Balian and Gagik Sardaryan respectively. The both parties were happy for this partnership, which was based on mutual trust and was established for the common good, for the welfare of dozens of families settled in Lernagog.

This joint effort will greatly contribute to the sustainable growth of Lernagog community through assisting local dairy farmers to increase milk production volumes and efficiently collect and sale high quality milk.

The Milk Collection Center will be located in the community with renovated physical premises according to the food safety standards and equipped with contemporary milk testing and cooling equipment. The Center will be operated by the Milk Marketing Cooperative established by 39 dairy farmers of the community.

Sean Carmody, USDA Program Coordinator in Armenia and Georgia concluded the ceremony. Mr. Carmody emphasized CARD's experience in implementing such projects, consequently this is the 18th Milk Marketing Cooperative and the 36th Milk Collection Unit established so far. Sean also added that he was confident of the best outcome and hoped this collaboration will turn into a long-term partnership.

CARD-ORGANIZED TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION TECHNICIANS

Dairy herd management plays a significant role in the proper use of natural resources, economic development, and in securing food resources of Armenia.

The effectiveness of this sector is mainly conditioned by proper dairy herd management, however studies showed that unfortunately there are lots of gaps and deviations in this field due to lack of appropriate knowledge and experience.

Foreign experience shows that work directed to genetic improvement, the new technologies of animal care and maintenance, feeding and veterinary services are the most important prerequisites for high quality milk production. Since 2005 CARD "Dairy Herd



Management" project is a part of CARD's strategic plan.

The project consists of the following components:

Dairy herd genetic improvement through the use of high quality bovine semen imported from US WWS, organization of training programs including both theoretical and practical courses for AI technicians, improvement of cattle-breeding/veterinary system, increased efficiency of veterinary services, import of input supplies and introduction of new technologies in dairy farms.

In recent two years CARD Foundation provided financial and technical assistance in the implementation of a wide range of activities in this sphere throughout Armenia. Thus, 15050 doses of "Holstein" "Swiss" "Jersey" dairy breeds and "Angus" beef breed semen have been imported to the republic of Armenia, 8000 doses out of which have been distributed so far.

4 seminars have been organized in order to improve the qualification of AI technicians. 30 specialists from 7-8 regions of Armenia participated in the aforementioned seminars, as a result of which effective AI activities have been implemented in dairy farms.



The activities aimed at increasing milk production

volumes and herd reproduction capacities has become more efficient due to the veterinary tools and equipment ordered from "NASCO", "DeLaval", and "WWS" companies.

On December 11, 2007 CARD organized a seminar in Shirak Hotel with the participation of cattle-breeders and veterinarians from different regions of Armenia, ASAU professors, students, specialists from RA Ministry of Agriculture, and media representatives. The following topics were discussed during the seminar: the role of private

veterinary services and artificial insemination in milk production, CARD's "Dairy Herd Management" project, introduction of advanced technologies etc.

Felix Vardanyan, CARD Rural Development Department Manager and subsequently Gagik Sardaryan, CARD Director opened the seminar by welcoming the participants of the aforementioned seminar. The seminar was focused on the technology of animals' artificial insemination with the use of straws presented by Andris Zalitis from Vidzemis Veterinary Service, Latvia. Then Arman Ohanyan, CARD Dairy and Beef Specialist



presented CARD's "Dairy Herd Management" project and Tigran Gabrielyan, Candidate of Veterinary Science, "Dili" LLC introduced the practice of "Dili" milk processing unit in application of new animal husbandry technology in milk production in Armenia.

The practical part of the seminar was conducted next day, 12 December 2007 in "Black Ox" farm owned by Ghazaryan's family in Bardzrashen village of Ararat region. The farmers/participants from different regions of Armenia were introduced to the method of artificial insemination of cows which was being applied in "Vidzemis" veterinary service of Latvia. During the theoretical and practical courses Andris Zalitis introduced hermetic semen storage tanks, plastic straws, thermometer and other tools. The participants of the seminar, particularly the farmers were satisfied with the seminar organized by CARD. They highly appreciated Andris Zalitis's professional skills and work experience.

Concluding the seminar Felix Vardanyan, Rural Development Department Manager thanked the attendees for active participation and assured that the knowledge gained during the seminar would be very helpful to the farmers in their future activities in this field. Felix Vardanyan also expressed his gratitude to Ghasaryan's family for their commitment in providing necessary conditions for the implementation of the practical course.



Ashot Hovhannisyan, Head of Animal Husbandry Breeding Department of RA Ministry of Agriculture thanked the organizers of the seminar and emphasized the importance of this kind of initiatives.

Following the closing speech Galina Gringer, USDA Animal Health Consultant, handed certificates to all the participants.

CARD

#74 Teryan Str., Yerevan 0009, Armenia

Tel. (374 10) 54-57-11, 54-57-12, 54-57-13, 52-52-34, 54-00-16; Fax: (374 10) 58-79-28; E-mail: card@card.am; Website: www.card.am

QARADZOR VILLAGE: New Method of Beef Cattle Raising

On 19 December 2007 the opening ceremony of CARD's 'New Method of Beef Cattle Raising' project was held in Qaradzor village, Lori region.

The farm was established in 2005 and was involved in raising only beef cattle for meat production. CARD foundation financially assisted this farmer for introducing new method of beef cattle raising in open air barn by constructing three sided shed in the year of 2007.

In his welcome speech Felix Vardanyan, CARD Rural Development Department Manager, congratulated Hakob



Karapetyan, the owner of the above mentioned farm, for the successful completion of the new open air barn construction works. In recent years CARD has implemented a considerable number of projects aimed at

improving the dairy cattle breeding in Armenia, while the area of beef cattle breeding was still unobserved. In order to discover the farmers involved in this field CARD made an announcement and the response was immediate. Hakob Karapetyan, a farmer from Qaradzor village of Lori region submitted his project proposal and got approval. Hence CARD launched the implementation of the project.

Afterwards Arman Ohanyan, CARD Dairy and Beef Specialist, briefly introduced the three-sided shed conditions and other details of the project. Mr. Karapetyan was eager to establish an open air barn as a model of modern animal breeding technology with the purpose of raising bulls there. The construction of the above mentioned barn started in April 2007 and was finished in August 2007. In open air conditions the animals can move freely, approach the feedbox and drink 3-4 degree hot water through the installed waterer with a heating system adopted



from the US "Nasco" Company. In the above-described conditions the animals stretch higher, which develops their bones enabling the weight growth. Currently there are about 80 heads of beef cattle in the three-sided shed, but the farm is estimated to house about 100 beef cattle. The farm is mainly fattening the local beef cattle and selling to different meat processors and butcher shops.

Gagik Sardaryan, CARD Director informed those present at the ceremony that CARD is also going to assist this farm in

the genetic improvement of local breeds by conducting Artificial Insemination with the use of imported Angus breed bovine semen from WWS LLC, USA. Gagik Sardaryan also mentioned that CARD is intended to go further with the development of beef cattle breeding in different regions of Armenia.



CHEESE MAKING AT HOME

The lost art of cheese making is making a comeback in today's modern kitchen. This new hobby is much like that of making your own bureau wanted to allow you to experience the culinary delights of homemade cheese.

Some cheese, like cottage cheese, is rather simple to make but other cheeses may require complex equipment and

procedures. If you're thinking about making cheese at home you may want to start off with the easiest types of cheeses. It would



help you in your cheese making endeavors, you can buy kits and supplies that will aid in this project.

While making cheese can be a complicated process there are some types like cottage cheese that are actually quite easy to make in your own kitchen and don't require any fancy equipments and starter blends.

Here's a quick recipe to make your own cottage cheese at home.



1. Heat 3.5-4 liter of 2% milk until it reaches 64°C
2. Add one half cup vinegar
3. Let the vinegar and milk mixture cool

This will result in a curdled mixture that consists of curds and whey. Separate out the curds by putting it in a colander or strainer. You may want to line it with cheese cloth or coffee filters to keep any small curds from escaping.

Add salt and other spices to taste. Some things that taste great went to cottage cheese include garlic, black pepper, onions and even pineapples.

On the next issue of Gourmet Corner we will talk a little about the history of Cheese Fondue.

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