



Breaking news

MEETING ON FOOD STANDARDS REGIONAL POLICY REVIEW IN TBILISI

USDA/CARD food safety team members Zaruhi Davtyan and Mkhitar Hakobyan traveled to Tbilisi, Georgia from February 21-23, 2008 to participate in a research review meeting held



by members of numerous policy research consortium organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Eurasia Foundation's (EF) South Caucasus Cooperation Program (SCCP), within the framework of its ENP Civic Dialogue Project, requested regional policy research on food standards and safety as a part of the European Neighborhood Policy.



Report drafts from each of the consortium partners were presented and discussed during the meeting. The policy report is expected to provide a roadmap for government officials, EU representatives and nongovernmental organizations for addressing critical food standard and safety issues, particularly in the areas of policy and standard development, communication and training.

Breaking news

ARMENIAN FOOD PRODUCTS CATALOG NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The 2007 Armenian Food Products Catalog is now available online at

www.card.am/main/catalog2007/index.html

or you can simply Google **Armenian food catalog**

The hard copy of the catalog was developed and printed in July 2007, by Armenian CARD staff.

The catalog contains 47 Armenian products including a great variety of: dairy, meat, wines, dried foods, frozen foods, processed fruits and vegetable products. Also included is producer contact information and detailed product specifications.

Many of the companies and products presented have



been granted prestigious awards at local and international exhibitions and some have appeared in the market due to the CARD intervention and

extensive support projects.

The electronic version of the catalog makes the access to the information regarding Armenian products quick and efficient. The electronic version of the catalog will be recorded on CD with more detailed information and search options. This tool will provide entrepreneurs and people interested in cooperation with local producers necessary contact and product information.

CARD plans to introduce updated versions of the catalog on a regular basis in the future.

THE TRENDS OF ORGANIC FARMING IN ARMENIA

The overall objective of the CARD Organic Initiative is to improve rural income and food security through diversified production and specialty marketing of high quality and value products.



During the past few years, there has been an increasing interest in organic farming and processing of organic products in Armenia. CARD has been supporting the development of the organic sector since its establishment in

2005. This support includes the organization of organic conferences and marketing research projects regarding the organic market in Armenia. CARD also supports the accreditation of institutions working with farms and agribusinesses for organic food production, processing, and certification. Currently, CARD is working on establishment of the organic food consumers' association and on creation of a webpage that will draw attention to the news and trends in the world organic sector and in Armenia.

CARD supported a group of organic producers composed of Tamara Fruit CJSC, Kilikia CJSC, ECOGLOBE LLC and individual farmers led by EcoGlobe NGO by sending representatives to the BioFach 2008 World Organic Fair held in

Nuremberg, Germany from February 21-24, 2008.

Gagik Sardaryan, CARD Director, also attended the fair. During the event, the participants met organic industry



representatives, development agencies and input supply (fertilizers, seeds, etc) producers in addition to potential buyers and suppliers of organic products. They met with more than 158 producers from Europe, the United States, Canada, Israel, Switzerland and India, representing the following sectors:

1. Organic Farm Supplies – Seeds, processing materials, pesticides, processing and packaging equipment

2. Processed Food Products - Tea and spices, chocolate and coco, olive oil, soup and pasta, dried fruits and nuts, coffee, cookies, pasta and cereals, sausage, preserves and juices

3. Other sectors – Clothing, cosmetics, dairy products, cleaning supplies

As a result of the participation in BioFach Organic Fair, CARD is intending to import high quality organic supplies for Armenian farmers, including seeds and pest control materials.

During the fair several business contacts were made with international importers interested in organic juices presented by Tamara Fruit and Kilikia.

CARD and EcoGlobe arranged several meetings with organic development organizations from all over the



Europe and the world, such as Avalon Foundation, IFOAM, SIPPO and others. One specific meeting was organized by Avalon Foundation from the Netherlands, where experts from Azerbaijan presented projects on organic production in Azerbaijan.

All of CARD's participation objectives were met. The contacts made and knowledge gained on market development will support the sustainability of CARD and its clients. The organization hopes to launch different development projects, new initiatives and further develop organic farming in Armenia.

Upcoming Events

March 13-23: Training on Traceability and Risk Analysis for the Food Safety Authorities; GMP- Good Manufacturing Practice

March 31-April 05: Training on Artificial Insemination of Animals

PLEASE CONTACT CARD FOR FULL DETAILS

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

Khachik Village: CARD Helps Rural Women Build Sustainable Income

Khachik village is a remote borderland community located in Vayots Dzor region of Armenia, with houses built right on top of the mountain. As being quite isolated the community suffers from widespread unemployment, which leads to large-scale migration.



However, Khachik village also hosts people of strong will and commitment. Among those are the four women, members of the Khachik Village women's

group. The women's group has been engaged in Doshab (sweet grape syrup) production since its foundation in 2006. The group began producing Doshab and presented the product at the 2006 Vayots Dzor regional exhibition. That year, the four-member group identified a demand for their product in local markets as well as among Sudjukh (walnut sweets) producers in the region. Sales of a portion of Doshab production began.

Although there are many grape varieties growing in Khachik village and 100-120 tons of grapes are being harvested each year, wine makers do not normally buy the whole yield for wine-making. The grapes in this particular village ripen 1.5 months later than the majority of grapes in Vayots Dzor region due to specific climatic conditions. Considering these factors, the women's group decided to launch Doshab production from local grapes. Only the four members of the women's group of Khachik Village have mastered the unique preparation technology.



Doshab production is advantageous because after harvesting grapes the syrup can be boiled as early as the third or fourth day. The ready-product does not have special storage requirements and can be stored for 6-7 years without losing flavor or useful properties. Doshab is not only considered a valuable food item, but it is also used for medical purposes. Veterinarians use the syrup to treat cow mastitis.

The women's group struggled to make the business sustainable. The women were manually pressing grapes, leading to a loss of raw material and low efficiency. CARD expressed its readiness to assist the women in acquiring a pressing machine, which significantly increased their labor efficiency and the amount of grape juice produced. In addition, CARD helped the women's group obtain bottling and labeling supplies, alleviating the cash flow burden the women had. This increased the marketing opportunities of the

product, thus increasing revenues for future sustainable production.

Today, there is a great demand for Doshab in the local markets and among Sudjukh producers.

The women's group of Khachik Village has a successful Doshab production business. The group members are employed and have sustainable income through producing good quality agricultural commodities.



GORGONZOLA CHEESE - AN ITALIAN DELIGHT

Italy is well known for its culinary delicacies and love for good foods. In fact, Italians believe that if edition is not tasty there is no sense in serving it. To this end, Italian cooking uses lots of herbs and spices to make sure every meal is full of flavor. And the same philosophy extends to their cheeses. One of Italy's greatest cheeses, for example, is the gorgonzola cheese. Named after the town situated

outside Milan where the cheese was originally processed, the gorgonzola cheese is a dairy of ivory color with streaks of bluish veins. Such a color is quite inviting, its exotic texture will never fail to lure



curious taste buds into taking a bite. The town is very proud of its cheese, and such was recognized by the country itself. The cheese type has been accorded the Protected Designation or Origin status, meaning, the town will always be associated with the mention of its product. Only three places have been accorded such a distinction based on their cheese products. Gorgonzola is one, Toma



and Mozzarella the others.

This cheese comes from cow's milk and has a rich creamy taste with a little tinge of a pungent flavor. Like most

cheeses this pungent case is most desired and cheese aficionados will find this advantageous. A unique aspect of Gorgonzola cheese is that the taste improves immensely as it is aged.

Typically this cheese will not be sold unless it is aged for at least six months but like a fine wine the more you aged the better case. On the next issue of Gourmet Corner we will explore the history of Feta cheese.

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