

Special Edition

In memory of Felix Vardanyan

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When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is someone who, instead of giving profuse advice and solving many problems, has chosen to share our pain and touch our hearts with a gentle and tender hand. Such a friend is one who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, and who can stay with us in an hour of grief and powerlessness. Such a friend was Felix Vardanyan...



Felix helped many people, including us---CARD staff, maximize our potential and fulfill our goals. He was a very spiritual person and was firmly committed to what the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) was doing in Armenia, and equally dedicated to the mission and sustainability of CARD. Felix lived an amazing life, even though cut short. He was a great friend, the kind of friend you can rely on and who stands by you in times of need.

That was true as far back as 14-15 years ago when Ruth Harris, former USDA-MAP Director, and Gayane Mkrchyan first visited Alaverdi and met Felix, then Regional Agricultural Department Chief and Coordinator of Extension services. From their initial meeting they knew Felix could and should take on more responsibility to help farmers nation-wide, and they invited Felix to join the USDA MAP project in Yerevan. Throughout his more than 12 years working with the USDA in Armenia, Felix conducted many rural development initiatives and worked with farmers, American agricultural experts, and government officials with equal ease.

What will we remember most when we think of Felix? I think everyone who knew him well will agree on this. He was honest; committed; hard-working; and loved to help needy villagers who struggled after land privatization. That, and of course his special sense of humor, originating from the Lori region as he did. He was the kind of person who could make everyone laugh by laughing himself. With such good humor and positive energy, Felix achieved many things in rural and agricultural development in Armenia.

Felix was instrumental in introducing the country's first Milk Collection

Units and Milk Marketing Cooperatives, setting up a livestock breeding program, and connecting Armenian farmers with the best world farm input supplies from America. Felix was one of the founders of the continuing annual National Milk Marketing Conference that brings together farmers, processors, exporters, donor organizations, and policy makers to discuss common problems and seek mutual solutions.

We write this to bear witness that Felix always did his best, and that his best proved essential to renew rural society and restore hope among villagers.

There was much more Felix planned to do. But now, particularly when we are faced with so many things to accomplish and with so many difficulties, Felix not being with us is a terrible blow for us all.

Felix was well-loved and he will be dearly missed. He accomplished many things on earth and we are sure he will do much more in heaven...

FELIX VARDANYAN'S INVESTMENT AND INPUT IN THE "DAIRY HERD MANAGEMENT" PROJECT

Starting from 2005 "Dairy Herd Management" Project is included in the strategic plan of CARD Foundation. The program was led and supervised by Felix Vardanyan. The fertile soil for the project was inherited from USDA MAP specialist and advisor David Slusser – Felix's close friend.



In 2004-2005 due to collaborative effort of Felix Vardanyan, David Slusser, Tigran Gabrielyan and Arman Ohanyan for the first time in Armenia 400 doses of "Jersey" and "Swiss" dairy cattle high value deep frozen semen was imported from famous "World Wide Sires" company, USA.

CARD management highly valued the idea and the importance of that process for the country as well as the dedication of the team. In 2005 CARD became the sole supplier of the World Wide Sires in Armenia. One should see Felix's excitement and happiness when 10000 dose of semen, after hard work and lots of efforts was imported into Armenia.



Before the distribution process started, Rural Development Department developed the following documentations: "Procedure on artificial insemination for the animals" and "Criteria for selection of dairy farms". At that time there was a

lack of professional experience and doubts that the usage of imported semen would bring non significant results. Felix has made the decision to add one more component



to the strategy, which was "Training of the veterinarians and specialists on artificial insemination of the animals with the purpose to introduce the techniques of straw usage"

"CARD has put so much effort and hard work while importing the semen to Armenia, so everyone should realize and appreciate how important it is for our dairy farms" Felix would say these words every time he would make an opening speech during the seminars.

Seeing Felix's hard work and efforts put, many foreign and widely known specialists have been invited to come to Armenia to conduct trainings and for experience exchange: Tony Evangelo, USA, World Wide Sires,



Market Development Regional Director; Chris Kurth, USA, "Accelerated Genetics"; Andris Zalitis, Latvia, "Widzemes veterinarian service" Director of the company, veterinarian and Joel Mergler, USA "Select Sires" Marketing Director, Leading specialist on artificial insemination.

Currently, CARD Rural Development Department has imported about 16000 doses of semen, trained more than 100 veterinarians and specialists on artificial insemination of animals. In 1500 farms, representing 70 communities of 8-9 regions of Armenia artificial insemination of animals was conducted, more than 2000 F 1 cattle was produced, and only 15 days ago, in "Black

CARD

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Ox” farm F 2 “Holstein” cross breeds started to born, the latter are 75% genetically improved cross breeds, and, alas, Felix did not see them.

One of the components of the project was the establishment of genetic improvement banks in the regions of Armenia. CARD together with 27-30 veterinarians established more than 15 genetic banks in more than 7 regions of Armenia, which would serve a big number of specialists serving in the “army” of AI specialists.

*This material is dedicated to Felix Vardanyan,
To a friend, manager, specialist and a life mentor...*

Arman Ohanyan

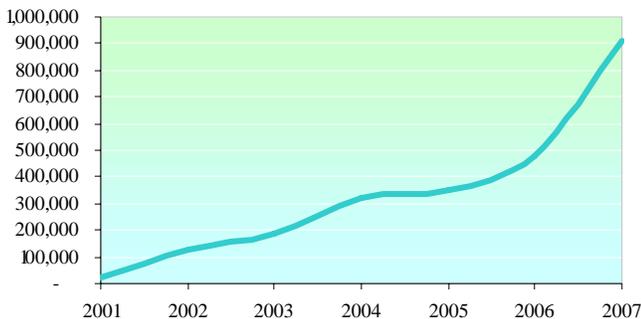


INTRODUCTION OF MILK MARKETING COOPERATIVES MODEL IN ARMENIA

CARD and formerly USDA MAP had always emphasized the crucial role of human potential in building up development projects that would impact rural livelihoods.

Whether it is rural development, healthcare or social project, success of it lays on team’s ability to create spirit and will

Incomes generated by Milk Collection Units



towards innovation and positive change. Under this light, Felix Vardanyan’s professional and personal contribution is invaluable.

Felix was among pioneers that were first to introduce the concept of Marketing Cooperatives and create successful models of milk collection units in Armenia. Starting in 2000, Felix and the team had entered in the process of establishment of the first milk marketing cooperative in Armenia.

Lejan village of Lori region had been elected to become the first unit on which about 20 Milk Marketing Cooperatives throughout Armenia will be built upon.

Back in 2000, one could hardly envision that Felix’s commitment will result in countrywide development of milk market chain: 6 years of rapid scale up of the initiative performed at the level of 4.5 times increase annually.

By the end of 2007 there were 19 Milk marketing Cooperatives operating in 7 regions of Armenia.

Over 35 Milk Collection Units are now creating incomes for more than 2,500 rural families.



Felix managed to be a good colleague and a committed friend. His dedication towards people he had ever worked with and the principles and values of organization were the key for motivating people to think wide, do more and perform better.

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Thoughts and prayers for Felix...

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On behalf of World Wide Sires, please accept our heartfelt condolences upon the passing of our friend and colleague Felix Vardanyan.

We have appreciated working with Felix in the past years as he diligently led the way to improve the quality of cattle in Armenia as well as help so many with technical training in the cattle business.

Recently it was our pleasure to spend time with him in Rome at the WWS global conference. We always appreciated his friendship and will miss him dearly.

We recall his contributions to the Ag sector in Armenia and want you to know that your friends in the USA have you in our thoughts and prayers at this time.

**Sincerely,
John Schouten
CEO
World Wide Sires**

~***~

I am sad to hear of the death of Felix. His vast knowledge of agriculture and people was valuable to me and my students. Please add my name to all those who appreciated him and will miss him.

Thank you, Verne

**Verne W. House, PhD
4740 Sourdough Rd
Bozeman, MT 59715**

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I was saddened to learn the news of the passing of Felix Vardanyan over the weekend. Felix was a great supporter of the Agriculture industry in Armenia, and a personal friend of mine. He will be sorely missed.

Please send my condolences to Felix's family and friends.

Felix was a great supporter of WWS, as he attended the Distributor Conferences in 2006 and 2008, and always welcomed visitors from the US to Armenia. He also encouraged WWS to conduct AI training courses in Armenia. Felix was a great promoter and had a very strong friendship with Armenian farmers. It was his desire to see all farmers in his country flourish and succeed.

I will have many fond memories of my time with Felix, both in Armenia and at WWS events. He always had a kind smile and a giving, thoughtful attitude.

I have asked all at WWS to keep Felix's family and friends in their thoughts and prayers during their time of grief.

**Tony Evangelo
World Wide Sires**

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~***~

I'm so sorry to hear about Felix. He was always a quiet, capable, and supportive leader on the USDA-MAP program.

Please pass my condolences to his family.

**Best regards,
Hiram Larew**

~***~

I was shocked and saddened to hear about Felix. I just could not believe it. I loved Felix like a Brother, and had to fight tears several times that day I heard about him. We had so much fun together as we worked...

**David Slusser
Animal Agriculture Specialist**

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Our first meeting with Felix was in 2003, when the fruitful cooperation with USDA MAP and later on CARD had been established. Felix was among those unique persons, whose work in different regions and communities of Armenia became a cornerstone for creating different agricultural capacities that serve to the entire nation till now.

Each visit of Felix to Artsrun and Sons LLC was passing in very friendly atmosphere, but this friendship along with his strong character was forcing us to be more responsible and targeted to developing our business. The assistance Felix provided to us is highly valuable and we are sure that we will yield the impacts of his work for many years since.

**Artak Khachatryan
Artsrun and Sons LLC**