



# Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Holiday issue



Dear Readers We Wish You A Joyous Holiday Season and a New Year of Happiness and Hope for a World of Peace

### BREAKING NEWS

## The Eighth International Food Exhibition "ArmProdExpo 2008"

The Eighth International Food Exhibition, "ArmProdExpo-2008," took place on November 14-16 in Yerevan, Armenia. The opening of the expo ceremony was attended by Prime-Minister, Tigran Sargsyan, the Minister of Agriculture, Aramays Grigoryan, and the newly appointed US Ambassador to Armenia, Marie Yovanovitch. The overall interest in the exhibition, hence the appreciation for local agro-production, increases year after year. This year, sixty two companies exhibited their products and over twelve thousand visitors attended the exhibition. CARD supported the exhibition by providing financial and technical assistance both to organizers and to fifteen small and medium size agribusinesses representing dairy, wine making, fruit and vegetable processing and meat processing industries. The scope of assistance included consultancy in development of labels, packages, price lists, promotional brochures and posters, as well as the arrangement and layout of their respective display booths. It is noteworthy to mention that the financial assistance provided by CARD for the proces-



sors to participate in ArmProdExpo is undergoing a gradual reduction year-by-year. CARD intends to withdraw gradually from food exhibitions and shift to providing more technical assistance and paid services. At this stage, the processors are more than willing to cover the major portion of expenses for their participation and view this as a good opportunity for the marketing of their products.

This year four out of fifteen CARD supported companies participated in the expo and presented their products to attending visitors. The event is not only an excellent way to promote their products, but also an opportunity for our clients to increase the quality and appearance of their produce through direct communication with consumers and competitors alike, providing them with indirect and direct constructive feedback on their offering.

CARD had its own booth at the event to present the activities it is involved in and to promote companies which were not present at the exhibition. In addition, Ecoglobe LLC, the organic certification company was hosted at CARD's booth. The President of Armenia, Mr. Serzh Sargsyan, along with the Minister of Agriculture, Aramays Grigoryan, visited the CARD booth and in his comments thanked USDA/CARD for their achievements in aiding the development of the private agriculture sector in Armenia. Mr. Sargsyan took away some valuable insight from the CARD booth, and subsequently announced a strategy building off of CARD's established efforts of developing new brand names for Armenian agriproducts, other than Armenian Brandy and Apricot, and to pay special attention to local goat and sheep cheese. Sean Carmody, USDA Program Coordinator in Armenia and Georgia, and Marie Yovanovitch, the US Ambassador to Armenia, visited the exhibition and praised USDA/CARD for its efforts in agriculture in Armenia.

During the closing ceremony, all participants were given Diplomas of Honor for the high quality of their presented products. Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, processed fruit and vegetables competed in a tasting competition and were awarded medals. Among the awardees were several CARD clients as well. Also, a Diploma of Honor was awarded to CARD for active participation and assistance in the organization of ArmProdExpo-2008 International Exhibition.



## “The Results of Trainings are Promising

Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 2008 seminars on “Artificial Insemination of Cattle” for AI specialists were held in Martuni village in the Gegharkunik region and Sarnakunk village in the Syunik region of Armenia. In total, 18 veterinarians participated in the most recent two seminars: 10 veterinarians in the Gegharkunik region and 8 in Syunik.



CARD Rural Development Department, the organizer of the seminar, aims at establishing a cooperative network of highly qualified AI technicians in all the regions of Armenia through the organization of recurring seminar series covering Artificial Insemination. The seminars are mainly conducted by rural veterinarians, who have received accredited professional qualifications during past seminars organized by CARD.

The first seminar was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July in the Gegharkunik region and was facilitated by Hakob Margaryan, a Vardadzor village veterinarian and an Artificial insemination specialist. Mr. Margaryan has been cooperating with CARD for more than 3 years. As an AI specialist he provides services to between 6 and 8 communities in and around the Martuni area. Within the first six months of 2008, he inseminated about 200 heads of cattle.

The second seminar was held from July 9<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> and was facilitated by Suren Vardanyan, a Sarnakunk community veterinarian. This seminar was designed and organized in much the same way as the previous seminar, drawing from its initial success. WWS specialists Kris Kurth, Joel Mergler, and Latvian Specialist Andris Zalitis guest lectured on two main subjects:

1. Theoretical courses: “Peculiarities of Modern Breeding Practices,” “Physiology and Anatomy of Reproductive Organs of Cattle,” and, “Artificial Insemination Technique With the Application of Straws.”
2. Hands-on training in applying theoretical knowledge and the technology on the organs of slaughtered animals or those which are subject to slaughtering.

The goals of the training program have been discussed with the RA Ministry of Agriculture’s Cattle Breeding Department, who have approved the initiative. Both the theoretical courses and the hands-on training provided through the seminars have aroused great interest amongst participants. All of the AI specialists in attendance during the seminars have been actively engaged in the learning process, openly participating in discussions and in providing feedback. The pedagogical methodology employed during the seminar series draws participants in, and allows them to gain ownership in the discussion, before providing the ultimate solution the seminar series is intended to provide.

Before starting the hands-on training, the participants got familiar with the theory of the application of straws. Then the participants were divided into several groups to collaboratively implement the designated experiments in practice on the provided animals. The hands-on training is fundamental to the farmers’ adoption of modern AI “best practices.” Also, such practices as pregnancy checks, identification of causes for barrenness and other related activities have been covered and implemented during the seminar series.



Also, during the seminar, the specialists worked with electronic educational materials provided to CARD by WWS and through the Armenian translation prepared by the Rural Development Department, in large part through the efforts of Artak Khachatryan. In general, the project has been very effective. To build on this success, a general strategic plan is being developed, as well as an action plan in deciding how best to move forward and expand the success of the AI seminar series.

According to preliminary calculations, and based on the fact that during the first half of the current year 27-30 specialists in Armenia inseminated 2500-2800 cows using about 4000 doses of semen, we anticipate doubling both the number of specialists and communities involved, as well as the amount of semen used within the same time period in 2009.

Our future is bright...

## “The first presentation of Youth Program at the US Embassy”

On November 12, CARD Rural Youth Program had an opportunity to give a presentation at the US Embassy. Youth Club members from the Artsvakar community of Gegharkunik marz had been invited to introduce, in English, what they had learnt during the two projects which CARD implemented in collaboration with the United States Peace Corps, Armenia. Before



visit to the US Embassy, the kids and the Club Leader were given a tour of the CARD offices and got acquainted with all the departments and the staff. After the tour, Gagik Sardaryan, CARD’s Director presented the children with gifts.

During the Embassy presentation there were many officials present such as: US Embassy Public Affairs Office Director Tom Mittnacht, Peace Corps Director Lee Lacy, Peace Corps Assistant Director Jason Compy, Peace Corps Administrative Officer Maureen Yates, USDA Agricultural Project Coordinator Georgia/Armenia Sean Carmody, CARD Director Gagik Sardaryan, and other representatives of the US Embassy and the CARD Foundation. The presentation was conducted by Anna Karapetyan, CARD Gender and Youth Program Specialist with the participation of 5 representatives of the Youth Club



from the Artsvakar community of the Gegharkunik region. Also, the Peace Corp Volunteer who teaches English in that particular Club, and who participated during the Green Camps 2008, introduced the “English Teaching Classes for Rural Kids” and “Ecological Summer Camps/ Green Camps 2008” projects.

At the end of the presentation the Ambassador also joined the group, welcomed and talked to the children. She spoke about the importance of Youth Programs and associated projects.



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## “Youth works presentation in Yerevan”

On November 16, a benevolent event with the exhibition and sale of pictures and carpets made by the children from Gyumri’s “Hyus” Orphanage was held in the “Puppet Theatre” in Yerevan.

Before the event, a visit was organized to Yerevan for all the children of the orphanage. Kids were taken to the circus, museum and on a tour around the city. All the impressions gained through their experience of touring



Yerevan were reflected in the pictures the children subsequently presented for their exhibition. The project was facilitated by the AGBU YPY (Young Professionals Yerevan). The CARD Rural Youth Program decided to join the campaign, along with UMCOR, and provided meals and stationary gift packages for all 69 participating children.

Different organizations, business elite, art workers, mass media, government officials and many other representatives were present during the ceremony.

The funds raised from the event have been dedicated for future projects for the orphanage, which will benefit the orphans,



such as establishing computer classes for children. Building on this, the CARD Foundation will contribute further by providing furniture and other equipment necessary for the computer classes.

### Scholarship to commemorate Felix Vardanyan

We would like to inform you all that we have opened an account to set a Scholarship which will be donated to Felix’s foster child/ his nephew, Narek. Narek is now a residency student in Yerevan medical University, majoring in vascular surgery. In the meantime he is getting ready to apply to residency program in an American University in the US. This year he graduated from the Yerevan State Medical University with Honors Diploma with a score of 9.8 points out of 10. To graduate residency and emphasize on his studies he needs support at least for a year to cover the minimum of his living cost. Felix’s unexpected passing away has left him without any support. By donating we will commemorate Felix’ memory and will help a very bright young Armenian man, a future brilliant doctor on his path to realizing his and Felix’s dream. CARD has opened an account for the scholarship in HSBC Armenia bank.

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