



THE VICE PRIME-MINISTER ARMEN GEVORGYAN'S VISIT TO CARD-SUPPORTED PROJECTS IN LORI MARZ



On January, 22nd, 2014, the vice Prime-Minister and the Minister of Territorial Administration Mr. Armen Gevorgyan, as part of his regional visit to Lori marz, paid visits to the US Government and Austrian Development Agency supported projects among them: the Stepanavan Farm and Veterinary Service Center (FVSC); Asatur Harutyunyan's dairy farm and Dustr Melania cheese plant in Tashir.



Among the dignitaries present were also Lori Marzpet Mr. Arthur Nalbandyan and Stepanavan Mayor Mr. Michael Gharakeshishyan.

CARD director Mr. Gagik Sardaryan was invited by the vice Prime-Minister and the Minister of the Territorial Administration to his office to discuss agriculture extension service system in the regions as well as to introduce CARD projects and activities.



The first tour was made at the Stepanavan Farm and Veterinary Service Center (FVSC) which was established in 2013. This is the third such center in Armenia aimed at replicating the unique model of agricultural extension services.

To the vice Prime-Minister's question how many farmers the Center provides services to, the Center Manager Mr. Armen Jaghinyan answered, "Currently the Center cooperates with 14 veterinarians to increase the access of farmers to the advanced vet services and input supplies reaching 25 communities and providing services to nearly 2500 farmers".

The vice Prime-Minister expressed high interest to visit other such

projects CARD implements in other regions of Armenia.

The next stop was made at Mr. Asatur Harutyunyan's dairy farm which is one of the first farms in Armenia to adapt the "open air barn" and "cow comfort" concept with the technical and financial support



of USDA/CARD. In 2004, Mr. David Slusser, a USDA TDY from the Pennsylvania State University, first introduced the cattle genetic improvement technology and farm management practices in the dairy farm. In collaboration with the US-based World Wide Sires Company, today, Mr. Harutyunyan owns second and third generation of 50 pure bred high performing cows as a result of artificial insemination.



The final visit was paid to the Dustr Melania cheese plant which is one of the most advanced plants in the Caucasus. Through USDA/CARD's support, the dairy plant improved its cheese production technology; obtained pasteurizing and milk cooling equipment; developed new cheese varieties; increased export volumes; set up a Master Cheese Makers' School; operates according to HACCP standards developed by the CARD Food Safety team in cooperation with Louisiana State University, and the last but not the least, applies the somatic cell counting system as a new method to check milk quality and safety.

The company currently produces 8 types of cheese (300 tons), processing 25,000-30,000 liters of milk per day. The products are sold in major supermarkets and exported to Russia and the US.

