



Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2009
Volume 4, Issue 10

BREAKING NEWS

U. S. AMBASSADOR MARY YOVANOVITCH VISIT TO AGRIBUSINESSES SUPPORTED BY USDA/CARD

Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch visited 6 USDA/CARD projects located in different marzes during the period September - October, 2009. Specifically she visited Tavush Agricultural Support Center, VAN 777 winery, ARID goat center, Getnatun winery and Ashotsk cheese plant.

Demonstration Plot for New Grape Varieties in Tavush Marz

Ms. Yovanovitch had a tour in a nursery of World famous grape varieties established through USDA/CARD support. In 2005 USDA/CARD provided 6 world famous grape varieties to Tavush marz Agricultural Support Center for implementing demonstration project for comparative study and dissemina-



tion of new grape varieties. Tavush Marz was selected for the project as the region is phylloxera infected.

In total 3000 rootstocks were imported of Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz, Pinot Noire, Sauvignon Blanc grape varieties from France. Parallel to this project, in 2006 USDA/CARD implemented a drip irrigation system in the same vineyard, aiming to convert the nursery into a demonstration and experimental vineyard for the region. ACIDI/VOCA through MCC funding helped Agricultural Support Center to renovate the pipeline for irrigating the vineyard as well as expended the varieties of the nursery.

Agritoursim at VAN 777 winery

Ambassador Yovanovitch's next tour was in Van 777 Winery which has been supported for Wine production and Agritourism development activities.

VAN 777 Ltd is a small winery in Taperakan Village, Ararat marz. The history of the winery started with the purchase of abandoned, marshy land in 1995. The construction started with \$5000 initial grant from USDA. USDA provided the winery with loans and leases for the purchase of the grape from about 100 farmers, as well as for acquisition of production line, bottles from Italy, tanks and semiautomatic filling and corking machines.

In addition, USDA/CARD provided technical support with promotion of the wines, Agritoursim activities and quality improvement through trainings and consultation provided by invited foreign experts. Currently Van 777 cooperates with

ARID Goat Breeding Center

Ambassador Yovanovitch had a visit to Arid Goat breeding Center and was provided information on the development of the Center and goat industry in Armenia throughout the years. ARID Goat Breeding Center, located in Vayots Dzor marz, was established within the framework of Goat Industry Development Project in 1999 by CARD's predecessor, the USDA Marketing Assistance Project with the objective to create independent and economically viable means of dairy goat production. ARID Goat Breeding Center is cooperating with hundreds of rural farmers throughout Armenia.

ARID Center is providing technical assistance to farmers, agribusinesses and students of agriculture. Technical assistance relates to proper nutrition, proper milking procedures, genetic improvement, animal health and disease prevention. The Center is also collaborating and supporting the Goat cheese producers located throughout Armenia.

Young Farmers' Group

On 26 August, Ambassador Yovanovitch and other guests from the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan, CARD Foundation and AGBU visited Jrahovit village of Ararat marz and met Young Farmers' Group at the sweet corn field. They tasted sweet corn grown by young farmers and discussed the advantages of the "Sweet Corn" project with the youth.

Organization of Young Farmers' Groups is the new initiative of CARD Foundation in collaboration with AGBU Young Professionals Group. Many young people can't find appropriate and interesting jobs in their communities after completing their studies or returning from army. This is one of the reasons why some of them leave their native villages and find a job else-



where. After the Young Farmers Group was organized, the trainings were conducted on technology of growing Sweet Corn. The idea of the project was to educate young people on principles of farming, high value crop cultivation, harvesting and marketing.

Getnatun Winery

Particularly impressive for Ambassador Yovanovitch was the trip to Gatnatoun winery in Vayots Dzor marz and the progress they achieved in a short period of time.

Getnatun winery was established in 2000 with the output of 1000 bottles of dry red wine. Today Getnatun winery, known as a leading high quality wine producer in Armenia, offers different kinds of wines: dry red and white, semi-dry and semi-sweet. Since 2007 the winery has started to export to Russia and had a big demand in the market before the financial crisis.

Getnatun winery received various types of marketing, technical and financial assistance from USDA / CARD Foundation in different areas including: food safety, advanced production technologies related to processing, storing, new product development, packaging and marketing. Combination of loans, in-kind loans and equipment leasing were provided for covering its operational expenses, mainly for making timely payments to farmers for the supplied grapes. CARD and CARD AgroCredit are supporting the company with affordable loans to purchase grapes from farmers, as well as to develop agro-

PROJECT STAFF VISIT TO LORI, TAVUSH AND SHIRAK MARZES

On August 19-21, 2009, Ms. Keti Kheladze, the project manager of "Poverty Reduction and Confidence-building in Border Areas of Georgia and Armenia by Strengthening Civil Societies in Sustainable Rural Development" (STAGE II) project visited three project target regions in Armenia: Tavush,



Lori and Shirak as well as capital Yerevan. During the three-day visit, Ms. Keti Kheladze, and Mr. Armen Harutyunyan, coordinator of the project in Armenia, conducted introductory meetings with the local and central government representatives and civil society organizations.

Ms. Kheladze announced the Project start-up, presented objectives and expected results as well as further cooperation perspectives within the framework of the project. The local government representatives in all target marzes expressed their willingness and commitment to endorse the project.

Ashotsk Cheese Plant OJSC

The trip to Ashotsk Cheese plant was a demonstration of USDA/CARD assistance in dairy sector in Shirak region. Ambassador Yovanovitch was elaborated on the assistance provided and the impacts it made.

The plant started operations in 1973 with production of 50 tons of milk per day. As a result of secession from the Soviet Union and the entailing crisis of the industry, the plant lost its capacity and was operating only at a partial capacity. In 1998, it was a fully renovated production of Armenian cheese type; it is designed for European cheese production as well.

USDA/ CARD have provided technical and financial support since 1998 which include:

1. Loans for purchasing milk from farmers
2. Support with Emmental cheese production and marketing in Armenia and Russia
3. Introduction of pH meters, milk analyzers for cheese quality improvement
4. Introduction of high quality ingredients and molds for cheese production
5. Assistance received from USDA/Agroleasing was for the pur-

persons to ensure its smooth and productive implementation. Besides meetings at the local level, the team met with the representatives of Ministry of Agriculture and Armenian Development Agencies who appreciated the visit and expressed their willingness to support and cooperate in project implementation.

During the meetings several problems that will be addressed in the framework of the project were discussed. Particularly, lack of skilled human resources and cross border trade facilitation was pointed by the local government and CSO's. Local government representatives emphasized the importance of the cross border cooperation between Armenians and Georgians which will greatly support the economic development of both countries.

"Poverty Reduction and Confidence-building in Border Areas of Georgia and Armenia by Strengthening Civil Societies in Sustainable Rural Development" (Stage II) project is financed by the "Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe" (ADC) (for more information please visit: www.mfa.at/adc, www.ada.gv.at), implemented by CARE Osterreich and CARE International in the Caucasus, along with the partner organizations – Civil Development Agency (CiDA) in Georgia and Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development Foundation (CARD) in Armenia. Total Budget of the project STAGE II comprises 463.980 Euro. The project started on May 1, 2009 and will last till October 31, 2011.



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