



## CARD IMPLEMENTS FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN ARMENIA

Today the issue of food safety is everybody's concern. When buying food, people hope that it's wholesome and safe. People should not get sick in this century because of their negligence or a lack of conscientiousness.

During the last decades, specialists developed a system that permits managing the safety of processed food. This system is called Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). In the 1990s it gained the power of law in some European countries and the USA. Since 2000 other developed and developing countries required the use of the HACCP system in the food industry. In 2000 the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) invited internationally recognized experts to Armenia at the request of some leading food processors. The invited experts conducted trainings, visited plants, and provided consultations. In 2006, the USDA launched a new technical assistance project to support Armenia's food safety system through a partnership between CARD Foundation and Louisiana State University. In this project the specialists from CARD were trained in the US and the organization was certified as a HACCP training provider. Afterwards, US and Ukrainian specialists provided consultation on implementation of the HACCP system in some plants.



On December 2nd, CARD Foundation signed a contract with the Unifish Company. "Unifish" is a superior fish farming and fish processing company and has supplied local and foreign consumers with fresh cooled and quick

frozen trout and sturgeon since 2007. The company realizes the advantages of the HACCP system for supplying people with fresh fish and for giving it a chance to enter new European markets.



It should be mentioned that implementation of the HACCP system implementation has some difficulties, including a lack of specialists, gaps in the legal situation, as well as the requirement that significant investments are required to improve the sanitary condition at plants. The latter is a necessity to implement the HACCP system. Today CARD Foundation is proud that some plants have successfully introduced the system and, beginning in 2012, are going to apply for ISO22000 certification. Those companies are the Linda meat processing plant and the Dustr Melania cheese plant.

What does the Government say? The new food safety law of 2006 stipulates the HACCP system to be compulsory for food safety management, defining each year of the period between 2011 and 2015 as a deadline for a particular branch of the food industry. One of the latest Government initiatives is in conforming the food safety laws to international, and in particular to European, requirements. Currently, laws, regulations and normative acts are being reviewed and amended and new legislative documents are being developed. Also, necessary manuals and guidelines on the HACCP system are in preparation.

The contract signed is only the first step, but there are many challenging and fruitful years ahead.

## CARD AND PUM TO ASSIST HORTICULTURE FARMERS IN ARMENIA

The CEO of Netherlands Senior Experts (PUM), Thijs van Praag, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) last spring with the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD). After obtaining successful results, the agreement is being continued.



### CARD and PUM

CARD is an umbrella organization for agriculture and livestock in Armenia supported by the agricultural industry and the government. As part of the agreement between CARD and PUM, groups of 15 to 20 companies will be formed, and PUM will advise the collectives on management issues and the best means of production. Several missions have been successfully completed and new ideas have arisen that require an expansion and extension of the agreement between the parties.

### Plans for the Future

CARD plays an important role in the development of agriculture in Armenia. PUM will support the organization so that it will eventually be working as an independent advisory body. A plan was drawn up in 2012 in which five missions are planned in various regions of Armenia along with three business-link visits to the Netherlands. This time the focus is primarily on horticulture; a field where the Dutch have a huge advantage in terms of experience compared to Armenian gardeners.

The signing of the MoU took place at the headquarters of PUM in The Hague. Attending from CARD were Gagik

Sardaryan and Arman Ohanyan. Also, the Ambassador of Armenia in the Netherlands, Her Excellency Dziunik Aghajanian, was present. PUM was represented by the CEO, Thijs van Praag; the sector coordinator for livestock, John Koeslag; the horticulture sector coordinator, Ger van der Eijk; the country coordinator for Armenia, Luit Kelfkens; Project Officer, Anna Tishina; and three PUM experts, Robert Back, Wim de Jong and Anton Andela.

### Optimum results

The Director of CARD, Gagik Sardaryan, announced that he was delighted with the extension of this agreement focusing on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Armenia. Her Excellency, Dziunik Aghajanian, mentioned that this kind of knowledge sharing delivers the best results. "The message is going from mouth to mouth. At first people were reluctant to accept advice from a stranger. Now they see that new approach works, they are very enthusiastic. An agreement on paper is one thing, but it is much more important that it lives in the hearts of the people."

### Train the trainer



PUM expert Robert Back has more than 33 years working experience as a vet in Lochem and has accomplished a total of 18 missions. Along with expert Wim de Jong, he gave seminars to farmers in Armenia. Years ago Robert suggested the "train the trainer" concept to address as many people as possible. He is very excited that plans are now put into practice in Armenia. "With simple things you can make great strides in some companies."

Supported by



1/21 Azatutyan Ave., Yerevan 0037, Armenia  
Tel. (374 60) 440-550  
E-mail: [card@card.am](mailto:card@card.am); Website: [www.card.am](http://www.card.am)