

## Organizing cattle feeding and care in open three-sided sheds

*By Arman Ohanyan, CARD, 1 June 2006*

It is around four years that USDA MAP, and currently CARD, are implementing testing-demonstration activities of organizing milch cattle feeding and care in open sheds.

These constructions - free and by outside temperature regime, are just ideal for animal husbandry.

The low winter temperature has absolutely no negative impact on animal health and viability. Moreover, practical observations of animal behavior showed that even during winter months, in conditions of closed sheds with comfortable walking alley, the cows leave again the warm constructions and strive to spend their time outside. This confirms once again the known fact that the open sheds correspond more to the animals behavior requirements than warm constructions.

The new guidelines on construction - linked with dairy animal husbandry management, should be forwarded, based upon the principle of refusing the old ones.

Starting October, 2005 by the suggestion of "Tolors" milk consumers cooperative members in Tolors village, an open behavior technology for five cows experimental group was implemented in one household (Hovik Badalyan) by the joint financial means of CARD and the farmer. Along the whole confinement period, the farmers themselves were doing observations and comparative calculations of the forage. Another activity was done in these conditions, which included observations and registrations of the average daily performance of calves, born in open conditions. As of June, 2006 the two calves, born in open conditions, were exceeding by their performance (about 100 kg live weight / 3 months old), as well as health the traditionally fed and kept steer (65-70 kg live weight / 3 months old). And the production performance of milch cows is calculated by production cycle. During one of the meetings, Hovik Badalyan said: "This year my cows have excellent feeding and incomparably healthy look, and the comparative evaluation of the milk produced in two months and the forage consumed, is positive from the point of view of profit. I am completely sure that the open behavior technology is not only profitable, but it makes the job of the farmer triple, even four times easier".

From May, 2006, by CARD co-financing, similar two projects were also launched with the proposal on "For cows milch herd reproduction, the purposeful growing of the she-steer in an open shed".

1. Asatour Haroutyunyan, Tashir town, Lori Marz
2. "Artsroun & Vordiner" LLC, Martouni v., Gegharqouniq Marz

The objective of the project is to decrease the time period of growing a heifer in open conditions and proper feeding, and get heifer with 320 kg live weight in 17-18 months, inseminated for herd reproduction. Currently the civil works of the open sheds are being implemented, and parallel to that a balanced feeding of 30 she-calves, selected beforehand.

The two farmers are positive that in future they will be able to provide the local market with high quality heifers or cows for milch herd reproduction.

Currently the application of open behavior technology in dairy field bears a nature of chain reaction, one of the simplest proofs of which is the open shed, foreseen for 50 heads, constructed by the own initiative of Armen Avetisyan from Medovka village, Tashir Region, Lori Marz.