

## The Trends of Organic Farming Development in Armenia

*By Gagik Sardaryan, CARD, 10 March 2008*

The overall objective of the CARD's Organic Initiative is to improve rural income and food security through diversified production and specialty marketing of high-value and high quality products with environment enhancing production methods.

During the past few years, there has been an increasing interest toward organic farming and processing of organic products in Armenia. CARD has been supporting the development of organic sector since its establishment in 2005. The support included organization of organic conferences, marketing research projects regarding the organic market in Armenia. CARD also supported the accreditation of institutions working with farms and agribusinesses for organic food production, processing, and certification. Currently, CARD is working on establishment of the organic food consumers' association and on creation of a webpage, which will embrace the news and trends in the world organic sector and in Armenia.

CARD supported a group of organic producers composed of Tamara Fruit CJSC, Kilikia CJSC, ECOGLOBE LLC and individual farmers led by EcoGlobe NGO to attend the BioFach 2008 World Organic Fair held in Nuremberg, Germany on February 21-24, 2008.

Gagik Sardaryan, CARD Director also was among the attendees of the Fair. During the event Mr. Sardaryan met Organic industry representatives, development agencies and input supply (fertilizers, seeds, etc) producers. Besides, meetings with potential buyers, as well as suppliers of range of organic products were held.

In total, meetings with more than 158 producers from EU, USA, Canada, Israel, Switzerland and India were held, which represent the following sectors of the industry:

1. Organic Farm Supplies - seeds, processing materials, pesticides, processing and packaging equipment;
2. Processed Food Products - tea and spices; chocolate and cacao; olive oil, soup and pasta, dried fruits and nuts, coffee, cookies, pasta and cereals, sausage, preserves and juices;
3. Other sectors - clothing, cosmetics, dairy products, cleaning supplies;

As a result of the participation in BioFach Organic Fair CARD is intending to import high quality organic input supplies for Armenian farmers, including seeds and pest control materials.

During the fair several business contacts have been established with importers interested in organic juices presented by Tamara Fruit and Kilikia.

CARD and EcoGlob arranged several meetings with organic development organizations from all over the Europe and the world in general, such as Avalon Foundation, IFOAM, SIPPO and others. One of those meetings was organized by Avalon Foundation from the Netherlands, where experts from Azerbaijan presented projects on organic production in Azerbaijan.

All objectives set by the project on attending organic fair have been met. The knowledge gained on the market development and the links established will support the sustainability of CARD through launching different development projects, other initiatives and further development of organic farming in Armenia.