

*entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs*

PUM Netherlands senior experts is affiliated to The Confederation of Netherlands industry and Employers

**TARGETED TRAINING CAN CHANGE A FAMILY LIFE**

Within the framework of the USDA livestock sector development initiative, CARD, in close collaboration with PUM Netherlands Senior Experts, organized Farm Management training for dairy farmers from the Syunik and Shirak regions in March, 2011. Consultants, Robert Back and Wim de Jong conducted the seminars and trainings both in classrooms and at farms.

Razmik Sargsyan, a farmer from the Meghrashat community of the Shirak region took part in the training. At first, he was not in favor of the new cow comfort concept with free access to fresh air and sunlight, and the use of improved bedding and milking technology. Razmik's skepticism during the training led the PUM experts Mr. Back and Mr. de Jong to spend the practical part of the training at his dairy farm.

What CARD Rural Development staff learned several months later was that, thanks to the training and PUM experts' consultations, Razmik's dairy farm conditions have improved considerably. Previously, the family handled the dairy herd reproductive process with natural breeding and inbreeding was happening. The calves were raised with traditional feed rations under unhygienic conditions but the farm now has pregnant cows artificially inseminated, the cattle are dehorned to reduce aggression, and the cows are milked by the world famous "DeLaval" milking machines.

The community veterinarian, Vardan Papoyan, who has been cooperating with CARD for a long time, also had a lot of input into the radical changes made in Razmik's dairy farm. In addition, Mr. Papoyan was a 2010 participant in the USDA Cochran Fellowship Program and visited Washington D.C., Iowa and Wisconsin for trainings.

Thanks to Artificial Insemination (AI) and high quality genetics introduced by the US-based World Wide Sires (WWS) company, the milk yield is going to be much higher at Razmik's dairy farm.

*"The advices provided by PUM and CARD experts were of utmost importance for me and were very effective. A lot has been improved in animal feeding and care. Now I have very good calves, the milking is carried out by milking machines. Little by little, I am trying to apply the "cow comfort" concept; I have already changed the roof of the barn, and working on the improvement of the ventilation system for winter times", said Razmik, the head of traditional rural family where 3 generation leaves together and shares challenges of farming in Armenia.*

