



Breaking news

USDA AND CARD INITIATE FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATES COURSES

In April 2006, the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center (LSU AgCenter) and its US and Ukrainian partners, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center (SU AgCenter), in Baton Rouge Louisiana, the International Institute for Food Safety and Quality (IIFSQ), Kiev, Ukraine, and the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD), the Armenian partner, began implementation of the Technical Assistance Program to Support the Armenian Food Safety System funded by USDA/FAS.



Within the framework of the Project, a series of certificate courses were conducted from June 11 through June 23, 2007. Each training course was designed according to the requirements of a specific industry branch: dairy, canned food, and food service

sectors. Certified instructors from LSU, SU, and IIFSQ, as well as private consultants were invited to deliver the trainings. Total of 53 stakeholders participated in the trainings, 34 of which were food industry representatives, 7 representatives of NGOs (including 4 CARD employees), 7 representatives of regulatory agencies (including different departments in MOA, MOH, and MOT), and 5 university representatives.



Certificate training programs included three areas: a) Grade "A" Pasteurized Milk Ordinance, taught by Dr. Kayanush Aryana; b) ServSafe program for retail food establishments, taught by Dr. Fatemeh Malekian; and c) the Better Process Control School

(BPCS) for low acid canned foods, taught by Dr. Michael Moody, Dr. Gennadii Myroniuk, Mr. Steve Spinak, and monitored by Dr. Daniel Geffin of the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA).

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All participants received certificates of attendance from training organizers, and those who successfully passed exams will receive certificates of completion from the relevant authorized entities. These courses were offered for the first time in Armenia and there is a great demand to repeat them at least once a year. Finally, these trainings were especially important for capacity building of CARD staff, who now received an opportunity to conduct such courses not only in Armenia, but also in other CIS countries.

THE US NEW ASSIGNED AMBASSADOR IN ARMENIA VISITS CARD OFFICE

On July 24, 2007 Ambassador Rudolf V. Perina, Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the U.S. Embassy, and DCM Pennington, accompanied by Sean Carmody, USDA FAS CADI Coordinator, paid a visit to the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) to get familiar with its activities.



Gagik Sardaryan, CARD Director welcomed the guests and organized a small tour through CARD departments introducing different USDA projects implemented via CARD.

The visitors were impressed by CARD's wide-ranging activities all aimed at addressing the poverty reduction issues in rural Armenia.

The honorable guests thanked CARD for the good work being performed and expressed their willingness to cooperate with CARD in the future.

Upcoming Events

- September 8th: Traditional Cuisine contests to begin. First of series of cook-offs to be held in t. Gyumri, Shirak region.
- September 10-12: Workplace Sanitation and Introductory Seafood HACCP Training.
- September 17-20: Workplace Sanitation and Introductory Meat and Poultry HACCP Training.

PLEASE CONTACT CARD FOR FULL DETAILS

CARD

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THE US WWS REPRESENTATIVE HOLDS SEMINAR AT CARD

On 31 July, 2007 Tony Evangelo, US WWS Marketing Manager, who had visited Armenia with the purpose of evaluating the Cattle Genetic Improvement project in Armenia, held a seminar at the CARD office dedicated to the activities and accomplishments of US World Wide Sires,



which provides high quality bovine semen all over the world. CARD had invited farmers, specialists from the RA Ministry of Agriculture and students to participate in the aforementioned

seminar. The purpose of the meeting was also to have discussions on implementation of animals' artificial insemination in Armenian farms, to raise issues and make recommendations to solve them.

Gagik Sardaryan, CARD Director, opened the meeting by welcoming those present and briefly introducing the achievements in cattle breeding in Armenia due to the close cooperation with the US based World Wide Sires. Special thanks were to go to David Slusser, who initiated this collaboration. He also thanked the specialists from the RA Ministry of Agriculture for their support and willingness to input their knowledge and experience to help farmers make this project possible.

Then the floor was given to Felix Vardanyan, CARD Rural Development Department Manager. Felix also welcomed the participants and thanked everybody for their relevant contribution in the implementation of Cattle Genetic Improvement project, especially emphasizing Tony's role, who had personally been involved in this initiative from the very start. Mr. Vardanyan informed about Tony's recent visits to different farms across Armenia where the AI technology has been applied to. Tony was happy to witness the results of the project, which turned out to be successful.



Arman Ohanyan, Dairy and Beef Project Consultant, made a short presentation on accomplishments in cattle breeding and herd management in Armenia in recent years through applying new technologies of raising heifers in open air barns, animals' artificial

insemination, good maintenance and care, proper nutrition etc. introduced by US World Wide Sires.

Before starting his presentation, Tony Evangelo welcomed the participants and thanked for their contribution in the development of herd management practices and cattle genetic improvement in Armenia, where the results were noteworthy. He also thanked CARD, especially Felix and Arman, for organizing this seminar and successfully coordinating the Cattle Genetic Improvement project.

During the seminar Tony spoke about the key factors to success with the imported genetics (i.e. proper AI technique and semen handling; selection of sires that meet the farmers'

needs; appropriate use of new technologies), the advantages of AI, genetic evaluation principles. He also introduced several types of sex-biased semen including Bovatel semen, Gender Selected semen and Sexed semen, which enhance the proportion of heifers as compared with male calves born.

The seminar was very helpful to the participants, especially to the farmers who has been applying the AI technology or are going to do so.

Tony Evangelo concluded the meeting with warm notice addressed to the farmers wishing them success in their future endeavors.

THE ORGANIZATION OF SUMMER CAMPS FOR RURAL YOUTH IS ONGONING

Starting from 2005 every summer CARD implemented Training Camps for Youth. It is a 4-5 day education program organized for 600 youth and adult volunteers every summer. Camps provide an opportunity for youth to develop life long living skills in a non-formal learning environment; provide a chance for interaction and coalition building among youth from different regions.

This year CARD, in collaboration with US Peace Corps Volunteers and "Green Tavush" NGO, organized 5 ecological summer camps for 200 youth, which were held over the months of June and July.

During those camps 200 youth received environmental knowledge/skills and 50 local community members developed their capacities in the design and implementation of youth environmental summer camps. Within the frameworks of the training programs community members learned valuable skills such as: environmental education, camp administration, organizational leadership, budgeting, time-management, staff supervision, management of environmental programs and community action. Campers aged eleven to thirteen

(from Gandzakar v., Haghartsin v., Voskevanv., Voskepar v., Tavoush marz, Kurtan v., Lori marz, Vaghatin v., Syunik marz, Gegharkunik and Surenavan v., Ararat marz) learned the basics of environmental protection, ecology and leadership.

The camps were concluded with a ceremony, where the students presented skits and songs about what they had learned during the week.

The greatest success of the camps was that it brought together students from different communities for a unique integrated learning experience. By including students from CARD youth groups as well as Green Tavush Eco-Clubs, a foundation has been laid for future inter-community cooperation.



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The Newborn Crossbreds in RA Dairy Farms Ensure the Growth of Livestock Potential

Since 2005 CARD has been involved in genetic improvement of dairy herds as a part of CARD's strategic plan.

Dairy herd management plays a significant role in the proper use of natural resources, economic development, and in securing food resources of Armenia.



The effectiveness of this sector is mainly conditioned by proper dairy herd management, however our studies in a number of dairy farms showed that unfortunately there are lots of gaps and deviations in this field due to lack of knowledge and experience. Also it was found out that the average production performance per cow was quite low, 1700-1800 kg yearly. The demand for heifers in Armenia is 72,000 per year, but the country lacks farms that are actively involved in heifer raising and marketing.

In order to enhance dairy farms with high quality heifers discussions were held with specialists from the RA Ministry of Agriculture and Armenian State Agrarian University, as a result of which the priorities were decided.

Based on those needs, CARD Foundation and CARD Agroservice CJSC signed an agreement with the US world famous World Wide Sires LLC, which has distributors of frozen bovine semen in more than 80 countries.

First the WWS Marketing Manager Tony Evangelo visited Armenia to study the local dairy herd gene pool. As a result of discussions with specialists from the RA Ministry of Agriculture and farmers it was agreed to import bovine semen of Holstein, Swiss and Jersey dairy breeds to Armenia. In 2006-2007 15 050 doses of frozen semen was imported to Armenia.

Within a year artificial insemination was applied to over 1500 animal in more than 70 farms of Armenia.



During the project monitoring in June-July 2007 two momentous events took place:

The first Holstein crossbred calf of 41kg body weight was born in Hunan

Sargsyan's farm, v. Aragatsavan, Aragatsotn marz.

In Aram Harutyunyan's farm (v. Nor-Yerznka, Kotayk marz) as a result of artificial insemination conducted by him Holstein crossbred of 35kg body weight was born and 40 more calves are being expected.

In order to improve and update the knowledge of AI specialists 4 trainings were organized and conducted for about 40 specialists from the RA 7 marzes.

As a whole, birth of 300 crossbred calves was registered in dairy farms within one year period and about 200 more are being expected by the end of this year.

As a result of the dairy herd genetic improvement project implemented by CARD the yearly production performance will increase up to 4000-5000kg on average.

The CARD Staff Members Attend Fundraising Training Programs in the U.S.

From 9-19 July, 2007 CARD staff members Artak Khachatryan (Rural Development department) and Karen Harutyunyan (Agribusiness & Marketing department) participated in fundraising training programs in the USA. The training programs were organized by The Grant Institute in Cooperation with Northwestern University of Chicago and The Foundation Center, Washington DC.



As a result of the trainings attended the CARD employees improved their knowledge and experience in program development, proper use of advanced communication tools and fundraising techniques. They were also provided with detailed information about the resources of Foundation Center, which can be used for researching the list of potential donor organizations and learning about their program objectives.

WINE & FOOD PAIRING GUIDELINES

Some foods are harder to pair with wine than others. For example, many people seem to have a hard time pairing French food and wine. However, there are some guidelines that you can turn to when pairing wine and food.

For instance, the oldest rule for pairing food with wine is to have red wine with red meat and white wine with fowl, fish or pork. While this is a good starting point, it isn't a set rule. For example, red wine pairs extremely well with Chicken Parmesan.



Here are some other things to consider when pairing wine and food:

- 1) Astringent or bitter foods go well with full-flavored wines, such as a Cabernet Sauvignon.
- 2) Crisp wines, such as a Pinot Grigio, go well with salty foods
- 3) Fatty cuts of meat work well with bitter wines, as they will tone down the bitterness.
- 4) Highly acidic foods pair well with acidic wines.
- 5) Serve light-bodied wines with light food and full-bodied wines with heavier foods.
- 6) Spicy foods pair well with sweeter wines.
- 7) Sweet foods need a dry wine to offset the sweetness.

On the next issue of Gourmet Corner we will talk a little about the wine serving etiquette.

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