

REGIONAL PROGRAM IN AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Regional Program in Agribusiness Development, part of the cooperative agreement between MASHAV/CAR, aims at providing support structures for the development of a profitable, sound and modern small- and medium-sized agribusiness sector in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. This project builds on previous work conducted by MASHAV under the CDP, consists of pilot farms that demonstrate technical aspects of modern production and agribusiness consulting centers that give advice to farmers on business planning and development. The agribusiness consulting centers organize and provide training and professional workshops. They are fully equipped with international communication means, in order to provide access to professional and commercial information for local businesspeople and entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. The centers also provide assistance in the preparation of business plans to raise capital from local and international funding institutions. Services provided by the centers, which complement government programs in the field, are in high demand by the emerging private sector and agribusiness initiatives.

KAZAKHSTAN

AGRIBUSINESS CONSULTING CENTERS

In the Atyrau Region, a MASHAV Consulting Center staffed by a resident expert and local staff provide consulting services to local farms and greenhouses, answering the market need for locally-produced, high-quality fresh vegetables to supply the large population of petroleum workers. A profitable agricultural sector will furnish an alternative to produce imports, thereby diversifying the economy and providing an alternative livelihood to the now common poaching of endangered sturgeons.

This activity is implemented in close cooperation with other donors, such as the UNDP and TengizCevOil (TCO), and the district Ministry of Agriculture.

MASHAV Agribusiness consulting centers also operate in Almaty, Astana, Chimkent and Kyzylorda.

HORTICULTURE AND FIELD CROPS DEMONSTRATION

The MASHAV-USAID program provides support for local MASHAV-sponsored agricultural demonstration projects. The first demonstration project, Kunarly, was launched in the late 1990s – and has established hundreds of projects employing new advanced technologies in cropping, stockbreeding and fish farming. Vegetable and flower greenhouses have also been constructed in the Almaty, Atyrau, Kyzylorda, Aral and Shymkent regions.

All the farms have achieved high yield harvest and produce high quality products. The experience attained will be used in the future within a state program for the encouragement of the agricultural sector.

LIVESTOCK SECTOR PROMOTION

The stock-breeding program comprises 15 farms in the Almaty, Akmola and south Kazakhstan regions working in cooperation with MASHAV experts. The milk yield on these farms has risen to 5,000 liters per cow a year as compared to the average milk yield in Kazakhstan of less than 2,000 liters a year. Another aspect of livestock sector activities is the efficient operation of unique camel breeding farms and the launch of the first camel milk plant in Kazakhstan.

KYRGYZSTAN

AGRIBUSINESS CONSULTING CENTERS

MASHAV operates three Consulting Centers in Bishkek, Osh and Chulpan-Ata. These centers support former MASHAV demonstration farms in the region and assist farmers interested in planning, financing and implementing improved systems. Application of advanced technologies has resulted in diversification of crops and higher yields for local farmers.

Agribusiness consultation services are given in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and other donors and organizations that provide agricultural credits to Kyrgyz farmers, such as KAFC (Kyrgyz Agricultural Financial Corporation), Mercy Corps, PRAGMA, IFDC, etc.

UPGRADING DAIRY AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

A number of former MASHAV demonstration projects in Kyrgyzstan have been transferred to local management and are now thriving, with the support of MASHAV agricultural experts. Most of these farms are managed by women.

The first two MASHAV demonstration projects in Kyrgyzstan, the Sokoluk dairy farm and the Belovodsk crop growing farm, are now self-sustaining, and are also instrumental in disseminating more advances agricultural technologies to private farms in the region. The Sokoluk mini-dairies demonstrate advanced technologies in the fields of up-to-date dairy production and stock breeding. Similar former MASHAV farms are operational in other regions of Kyrgyzstan. Women run a majority of these farms.

The Mic demonstration farm is also equipped and supported by MASHAV. A government farm, it has become one of the largest and most advanced cooperative farms in the CIS, demonstrates modern methods of growing and management, particularly of field crops and vegetables. The Mic Farm introduced modern methods of irrigation and water management. In addition, the cooperative management system has been transformed with the help of MASHAV, for far greater efficiency and accountability. The project serves as a center for demonstrations and workshops for farmers all over Kyrgyzstan and exports high value crops to CIS countries.

Among the farm's achievements:

- * Output and quality of the product, as well as vegetable shelf life, have increased as a result of the modern and more efficient methods.
- * New varieties that better meet market demands for yield crops and vegetables have been introduced.
- * The Mic farm serves as a seed farm, developing and marketing improved seed varieties to farmers in Kyrgyzstan. In this way, crop output and quality is improved.
- * The Mic farm is among the most successful stock-breeding farms, with milk yields exceeding 5,000 liters per cow per year, development of new breeds of cattle, now in their third generation of Israeli lines, and computerization of the milking parlor.

UZBEKISTAN

DAIRY CATTLE HUSBANDRY – AKURGAN AGRICULTURAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The project's goals are the modernization of dairy farming, combining management improvements to the central dairy farm at Akurgan, as well as the development of two model family dairy farms.

The activities of the project focus on improving feeding systems, marketing and overall dairy management practices, including establishment of a mini-dairy processing unit.

The project, and in particular the two model family dairy farms, demonstrates a successful and sustainable farm unit and has attracted the interest of the Ministry of Agriculture and financing institutions to promote and support this type of development at the national level.

DAIRY CATTLE HUSBANDRY – KIBRAI AGRICULTURAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

The project is a further expansion of the Akurgan family dairy farm development, and involves the initiative if the Kibrai authorities and various new private dairy farms in the vicinity to formulate a privately operated commercial undertaking.

The farmers are the shareholders of the project, financing the construction of the processing unit, and at the same time being provided with technical and professional extension and other advisory services. This project, along with other family farm developments demonstrates possibilities of market-oriented developments of former kolkhozes and sovkhoses transformed into economically sound family dairy farms.