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AgBiz Program

SUCCESS STORY

Macedonian Agribusinesses Sell Products Worth EU500,000 to CEFTA Customers

AgBiz is helping Macedonian agribusinesses to strengthen business relations with potential partners from South Eastern Europe and increase regional trade in agricultural and food products.



Photo: AgBiz Program Staff

The CEFTA Conference



Macedonian Exporter and SEE Buyer at a B2B Meeting

“...This really is a brilliant way to meet potential regional customers and market our products...”

Macedonian Exporter at B2B Meetings

Macedonia's business integration into Europe depends on the ability of local companies to meet EU product standards and to strengthen their competitiveness, as well as on the ability of the Government of Macedonia (GoM) to create an environment that supports a fully functional market economy similar to that of Europe.

Macedonia has signed five trade agreements that provide significant opportunities to expand overall exports, including products from the wine, fresh vegetables and processed vegetables value chains supported by USAID's AgBiz Program. To expand exports, Macedonian agribusinesses must exploit opportunities created by these recent trade agreements. An important step in that direction is improved business practices, with added emphasis on strategic planning and market penetration at both the private sector and government levels.

To assist AgBiz customers to utilize the benefits of existing trade agreements, AgBiz, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group and the Macedonian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE), organized the "Implementation of Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA)-Free Movement and Barriers on Trade of Agricultural Goods" conference, that was followed by business-to-business (B2B) meetings. The conference was part of the 60th International Trade Fair for Consumer Goods-Agrofood 2010, and provided an overview of the positive achievements of CEFTA, as well as regional trade challenges and obstacles.

“The CEFTA market is only open for those agriculture-based products that can comply with EU quality requirements,” said MAFWE Minister Dimovski.

The conference brought together many key players from the region such as the Slovenian Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food; the Macedonian MAFWE Minister; representatives from the governments of Bulgaria, Turkey, Serbia and Croatia; delegates from regional Chambers of Commerce; and over 50 agribusiness' representatives from Macedonia.

After the conference, AgBiz organized B2B meetings between Macedonian exporters and importers from South Eastern Europe (SEE) countries. Eighteen Macedonian agribusinesses had an opportunity to establish new contacts; reinforce existing relationships; and meet with leading buyers, such as Mercator and Fructal, from the CEFTA countries.

The B2B meetings resulted in Macedonian companies signing 550,000 Euro worth of orders for exporting fresh fruit and vegetables, making this event an outstanding success.

To capitalize the presence of the leading regional buyers and their interest for fresh produce and postharvest handling practices in Macedonia, AgBiz also organized meetings with local authorities in the Valandovo and Rosoman municipalities, as they are the regions with the largest production of fruits and vegetables.