

# SUCCESS STORY

## Study tour to Sweden results in initial sales of \$70,000



B2B meeting at "Plivit" trade company in Vas-tervik



Photo: AgBiz Program's staff

COOP Forum, one of the three largest supermarket chains in Sweden, being visited by AgBiz customers

**AgBiz's Human Capacity Enhancement Program has to date organized ten study tours that have 1) enabled 62 of our customers to better understand new markets in Europe and United States and 2) helped more than a hundred individuals learn new technologies as well as management and marketing practices.**

In response to a request from the Macedonian Association of Processors, from November 3 to 7, 2008 AgBiz and the MAASP Project supported and organized a study tour to Sweden for Macedonian vegetable processing companies to identify new customers. Altra, Vipro, Kim, Konimex, Mabi Trade/Dentina, Bonum, Medium Export, Tehnoalat and Pajdakov/MTD Prom for the first time had an opportunity to explore the potential and advance their knowledge of the Swedish market.

During this intensive learning experience, four leading Swedish importers of processed/fresh vegetable products were visited as well as the largest food distribution centre in Scandinavia. The nine Macedonian companies also visited numerous retail shops that sell traditional Southeastern European and Balkan foods. AgBiz customers met with the managers of the most famous supermarkets in Sweden, and gained a good understanding of the range, diversity and differentiation between Swedish retail shops, and how Macedonian products could be adapted to Swedish tastes and legal requirements. Therefore, the primary objective of this activity was accomplished since useful information on the Swedish market for traditional ethnic (Balkan) foods such as ajvar, lutenica, pindjur, roasted and preserved peppers was obtained and analyzed by the group.

First hand information on Swedish processed vegetables sales volumes and sales, company and brand shares, distribution and pricing data was collected, and was subsequently distributed to other participants in the Processed Vegetables Value Chain by AgBiz.

*"The biggest benefits to participants were 1) having a unique opportunity to observe the potential of this new market and its distribution dynamics, and 2) the opportunity to achieve accelerated entry of processed vegetable products into the Swedish market";* said Zlatko Edeliniski, the AgBiz Processed Vegetables Value Chain Coordinator and study tour facilitator.

During the study tour AgBiz customers had B2B meetings with Swedish buyers, presented their products and assessed their competitiveness in supplying traditional processed vegetable products to Swedish companies. Their conclusion was - there are numerous opportunities for further development of the Swedish market for Macedonian processed vegetables products! The reasons are strong Swedish demand for ethnic products, and a flavor profile that fits current trends in retail and food service channels.

Three months after the tour two out of nine companies have succeeded in shipping \$70,000 worth of processed vegetables products as well tea and apple vinegar products to new Swedish buyers. The remaining participants are intensively negotiating with potential Swedish buyers.

*"This type of activity was very useful for establishing and strengthening new buyer relationships and learning new technologies, for example innovative packaging of pepper based products, and effective organization of exports."* said Mr. Tome Kichukov of Tehnoalat.