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NEWS ARTICLE

Macedonian agribusiness exhibit for the first time at the “World of Private Label” trade fair in Amsterdam

In May 2008, the USAID AgBiz Program supported three Macedonian agribusiness companies that expressed a strong commitment and capacity to participate as exhibitors at the **2008 World of Private Label trade fair in Amsterdam (PMLA)**.

World of Private Label is the industry's largest trade show and reflects the global growth of retailers and their private label supply chains. This year's event was the biggest ever, with more than 3,200 exhibition stands, representing more than 1,600 companies and attracting more than 35 national and regional pavilions. New exhibitors from Cyprus, Sweden, Macedonia, Lithuania, Malaysia and Canada promoted their products, regions and countries. PLMA is the place where Europe's retailers and wholesalers go to find suppliers for their private label programs. It is a crossroads for buyers and manufacturers from nearly 70 countries where they meet to develop new private label partnerships and see the latest product developments.



PMLA Trade Fair entrance

Inter-Mak from Veles, a wild mushrooms processor; Vitalia from Skopje, a healthy food processor and Tehnoalat (Hina Products), a vegetable processor from Gevgelija have already adopted HACCP and ISO standards and have the capacity to competitively produce a high volume of quality products, and therefore are well prepared to approach the EU private label market. This was the first time a group of companies from Macedonia participated as exhibitors at this Fair. AgBiz helped them arrange for their exhibits at the fair and coordinated their participation. This was an excellent opportunity for Tehnoalat, Intermak and Vitalia to enhance their understanding of private label requirements, and determine the potential for producing and marketing private label products for EU supermarkets.

The **World of Private Label** trade fair was a very relevant place for the participating agribusiness companies to promote their products to all categories of private label buyers and to explore the opportunities for establishing contacts with key trade and retail players. The Fair enabled the exhibiting companies to market to buyers from all over Europe and other countries. Trade, Brand and Category Managers for major retailers were seeking products that can provide the best price for quality, appealing packaging and attractiveness, and satisfy the latest requirements of their customers. The participating companies establish very important contacts with several relevant retailers/buyers with very good prospects for leading to the development of strategic supply partnership relations. Also, they used this opportunity to study competitors' offerings, new products and ideas for expanding their product lines and adjusting them to the specific preferences of private label programs.

Attending a special conference on marketing private label, held prior to trade fair, helped Macedonian companies to understand how to take advantage of opportunities in private label sales, and was of great benefit to the participants. The conference featured a full schedule of presentations and workshops devoted to private label principles, sales issues such as procurement policies and practices of larger international retailers, export promotion, EU import rules and regulations as a tool to build exports, quality control and risk management.

As participants in the **World of Private Label**, Macedonian companies became members of PLMA, which will enable great ongoing exposure to a vast number of potential buyers within the various customer type segments.

The USAID AgBiz Program will continue its strong support to Macedonian agribusinesses to help them make the needed improvements in their operations to maximize their performance and meet the demands of buyers, thus enabling them to successfully sell into private label channels.