

# SUCCESS STORY

## EU Customers Buy Value Added Table Grapes from Peca Komerc



Tables Grapes Stored in Peca Komerc's Packing Center



Table Grapes being Exported to EU Buyers

Photo: AgBiz Program Staff

***Peca Komerc is one of four fresh fruits marketers out of the 20 Macedonian agribusinesses that received export-focused business expansion project grants from USAID's AgBiz Program.***

***AgBiz continues to support activities that enhance the competitiveness of Macedonian fresh produce exporters via transferring knowledge and know-how from more experienced countries to Macedonia. AgBiz support to exporters at trade fairs, study tours and B2B meetings is assisting Macedonian agribusinesses to successfully export their products during these difficult times. We are also helping our customers to access available sources of finance, especially IPARD.***

U.S. Agency for International Development  
[www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

Macedonia is a significant producer of fresh and processed horticulture-based products because very favorable agro-climatic conditions exist for production of a wide diversity of high quality fruits and vegetables. Understanding horticultural products, knowing how they will perform during post harvest and distribution activities, and appreciating the importance of using modern cold chain management principles to deliver premium quality horticultural products to export markets are key success factors for horticultural products value chain participants. Significant opportunities exist to strengthen the Macedonian horticulture industry and further develop market opportunities for both fresh and value-added fruit and vegetable products. However, significant improvements in postharvest handling of fresh produce will be necessary for Macedonian fruit and vegetable exporters to be competitive.

In the recent past many value chain participants were not aware of the postharvest technologies that must be utilized to optimize the in-market quality for their specific products. In the past year AgBiz has focused on improving the marketed quality of Macedonian fresh produce so existing ex-Yugoslav markets can be maintained, and new markets in the EU can be developed. We are working with progressive fresh produce growers and exporters who are committed to invest in their operations and methodologies to increase standardization and delivered product quality, and enhance their capacity to successfully enter new markets. Peca Komerc is one such AgBiz customer.

Peca Komerc was awarded a \$30,000 AgBiz grant for a project titled "Establish a Modern Produce Packing Center". Also, Peca Komerc management has been a regular participant in AgBiz competitiveness enhancement activities such as B2B Meetings in Poland, the Study Tour to South Africa where they learned how to improve cooling and marketing of table grapes, and the California Table Study Tour where new vine support systems and root stock production techniques were learned. Most recently Peca Komerc staff participated in a workshop and one-on-one consulting by a US horticulture expert where recommendations were provided for proper use of sulfur during pre-cooling and storage of produce, achieving proper temperature and humidity control, managing, organizing and operating a cold storage facility and using energy efficiently in post harvest processes.

AgBiz support contributed to Peca Komerc expanding into markets beyond the Balkans by finding new customers in France, Poland and Holland. This was achieved by Peca Komerc completing a new, fully equipped packing center that includes digital intake scales, implementing the good production and hygienic practices essential for exports, and implementing HACCP. The new business enabled the company to increase their employment to 18 persons.

*"Thanks to the experiences gained working closely with AgBiz, my company is becoming more competitive in existing markets and has successfully entered new markets, and all because we now better understand how to preserve the original quality of our produce and achieve better prices"; said Mr. Blashko Temov, owner of Peca Komerc.*