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**AgBiz Program**

## Success Story

### Macedonian Table Grape Companies Learn from Their South African Colleagues - the Fourth Largest Exporters of Table Grapes in the World



Pack-house in Cape Town, South Africa

In February 2008 representatives of five Macedonian table grape businesses, along with Dr. Krum Boshkov a “St. Kiril and Metodij” State University Lecturer representing the Department of Viticulture and Wine Production, participated in a Table Grape Study Tour to Cape Town, South Africa. During this ten day event representatives of the most significant players in the Macedonian table grapes business had a unique opportunity to see some of the best table grape vineyards in the world.

USAID’s AgBiz Program listened to the producers’ needs, and with support from South African Table Grapes Institute organized the study tour to the largest exporter of counter seasonal table grapes to EU markets. South Africa exports more than 200 million kilograms of table grapes per year, which makes South Africa the fourth largest exporter of table grapes in the world. Macedonian companies that traveled to South Africa enjoyed a unique opportunity to study some of the best table grape vineyards evaluate growing, pre-harvest and post harvest practices.



Mr. Ivan Turanov owner of “Turan” explores new South African table grapes

Macedonian company owners and managers who participated in the study tour evaluated new technologies and the practices utilized by successful suppliers of quality, value added table grapes to EU markets. Tour participants studied integrated production and post-harvest systems that would allow Macedonian companies to competitively export their existing varieties to EU and regional markets, and also learned how these new systems can enable their fresh grapes to meet EU supermarket standards.

USAID’s AgBiz Program provide an exclusive opportunity for Macedonian firms to visit modern table grape facilities, especially high tech pack-house centers which contribute to the quality and shelf life of added

value and pre packaged fresh grape products. Mr. Jordancho Gjorchev, representative of GD Tikvesh said: *“The experience gained there was outstanding! We find it very useful to see totally new and different ways of grape growing from those which we utilize in Macedonia. The latest technology which we saw, the production process in South Africa, and the experience taken from there should be replicated here to the extent possible, and is the right path to follow.”*

After the study tour, the five company owners meet and discussed actions that need to be taken in Macedonia to enhance the competitiveness of Macedonian table grapes in regional and EU markets. They focused on implementing “drop by drop” irrigation systems; establishing modern packing centers and undertaking modern grape production measures at the company level. As common needs they are interested in forming a Table Grape Association that will represent the interests of producers and marketers; conducting an assessment of current domestic table grape production and marketing; engaging an international consultant (most likely the one that accompanied them in south Africa) to improve post-harvest handling; and organizing another study tour evaluating new growing system. AgBiz will work with participants in the Table Grapes Value Chain to help them achieve several of these objectives.