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AgBiz Program

Success Story

Eight Macedonian Food Processing Companies Explore Competitiveness Enhancement Opportunities in Turkey

In January 2008, eight Macedonian firms, members of the Macedonian Association of Processors (MAP) and their representative participated in a technology transfer focused Study Tour that included visiting the FOOD-TECH 2008 Food Technology Fair in Istanbul, Turkey.

Due to the increasing demand for valued added foods and price pressure from large retailers, food processing companies need to utilize new technologies and highly productive machinery to increase their product range and production throughput and efficiency, and therefore their competitiveness. Turkish producers of food processing machinery and equipment are therefore undertaking big investments focused on research and development activities to meet this increasing demand. The Turkish food technology industry is the most modern in the region, driven by the rapid growth of the Turkish food industry and its demand for modern food processing technology. USAID's AgBiz Program recognized this need, and with the Macedonian Association of Processors (MAP) organized a five day Study Tour that included a visit to the FOOD-TECH Fair, trade visits and Business to Business meetings. The FOOD-TECH Fair provided representatives of Macedonian food processing companies an opportunity to see and understand Turkish machinery and technology that will achieve high food quality standards and good operating efficiency.



"Bigtem" manager introducing modern technology to Macedonian colleagues

The companies also had a unique chance to visit three Turkish private companies, leaders in their own sectors. "Bigtem" the leader in food processing engineering, design and manufacturing, located in Istanbul; Olive and Vegetable Processing Company "Idonya" and seed production company "Neobi" both from Izmir.

Macedonian processors talked with "Bigtem" managers and technical staff about modern food processing systems and equipment. As a result, Bigtem will supply Macedonian companies with filtration drums that will assure environmentally sustainable production and enhanced overall competitiveness of their products. A pre-contract worth \$140,000 was signed for purchasing the equipment. After this initial contact "Bigtem" managers will come to Macedonia in February 2008 to sign contracts with other processors for purchasing modern food-processing technology.



MAP member discuss new products

When AgBiz linked MAP members with the "Idonya" olive and vegetable products processing company, Study Tour participants were familiarized with new pepper-based products that Idonya exports to EU, US and Canadian markets. These included grilled items, egg plant preserved in olive oil and zucchini. These are successful items that can be replicated in Macedonia.

Toward the end of the Study Tour, MAP members were introduced to the "Neobi" seed company. Neobi shared their extensive seed development experience with the Macedonian participants, and stressed that using "high quality and certified seeds" is critical for achieving higher yields and uniformity of vegetable production.

The Executive Secretary of Macedonian Association of Processors, Mr. Saso Ristevski, the leader of the Study Tour said: "We learned a lot! USAID's AgBiz Program helped us to understand and experience how modern technology affects processing and competitiveness! Participants made 5 contacts with companies supplying raw materials; signed a pre-contract worth \$140,000; found new technology and equipment to enhance their processing, and learned from Turkey's advanced food processing-related experience many ways to upgrade our raw materials, processing technology and products, and thereby improve our competitiveness."