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AgBiz Program

Success Story

Macedonian Famous Products Exhibited at the Chicago Global Food & Style Expo

Thanks to USAID's AgBiz Program and the Ministry for Agriculture Forestry and Water Resources (MAFWE) five leading Macedonian companies including Altra – Gevgelija, Univerzal Promet – Kocani, Bonum – Skopje, Trgoproduct - Strumica, Lars – Stip and Intermaak – Veles, exhibited at the **2008 Chicago Global Food & Style Expo** and participated in a study tour after the fair that involved visiting US vegetable processing equipment dealers in the Chicago area.



Macedonian Stand at the Expo

The **2008 Global Food & Style Expo**, held April 27-29 at Chicago's McCormick Place, was a resounding success with **more than 12,000 attendees**, especially domestic and international buyers, visiting **over 800 exhibitors** representing **more than 56,000 of the world's most innovative and trend-setting food and lifestyle products**.

The 2008 Global Food & Style Expo included three distinct events: the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture's (NASDA) U.S. Food Export Showcase, the Organic Trade Association's All Things Organic™ Conference & Trade Show and the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASFT) Spring Fancy Food Show. Attendees, US large and small retail and food service buyers as well as buyers from around the world, appreciated the diversity and innovation of the Expo's offerings.



US Consumers Enjoy Macedonian "Ajvar"

During the study tour, Macedonian participants were taken to numerous retail shops that carry traditional eastern European and Macedonian products. They also visited a cross-section of retail shops for a good understanding of the range, diversity and differentiation of food retailers so Macedonian products could be modified, if necessary, to appeal to different markets beyond expatriate countrymen. Attendees prepared for and exhibited at the Expo, a trade event that capitalized on the rising demand for organic foods and ingredients. Also during the study tour, attendees visited four leading used and new equipment dealers to investigate the possibility of acquiring modern vegetable processing equipment.

AgBiz assisted Macedonian companies to exhibit at the **Expo and to present their various products** including roasted peppers, ajvar, lutenica, mixed processed vegetables, stuffed peppers, wild mushrooms and dried vegetables. Also, taste tasting (ajvar and lutenica in particular) was organized during the fair days for visitors to sample these products, unique for American mainstream consumers. Using a variety of savory snacks and breads, the exhibitors served both spicy and mild ajvar to attendees. In fact, the visitors were extremely impressed with the roasted pepper flavor, and could imagine numerous uses for the product, including a pasta topping, a hors d'oeuvre spread, as a ravioli filling and as a side dish.

During the show AgBiz costumers initiated a number of serious business contacts. In fact 10-15 contacts per company were achieved out of which 20% have potential for concluding business deals. 25 contacts were made for exporting of ajvar, lutenica and other processed vegetables; 20 contacts for potential export of wild grown mushrooms (frozen and dried) to US buyers and 15 serious contacts for potential export of stuffed peppers. One contract, valued at US\$300,000, for exporting Macedonian processed vegetable products was concluded during the Expo. In addition, Macedonian companies negotiated with leading US food processing equipment manufacturers from the Chicago area to purchase equipment. One of them concluded a contract worth US\$500,000 for a stem peeler and slicing machine.

"Fantastic organization; excellent presentation of the Macedonian stand; very successful selling event; and all thanks to USAID's AgBiz Program. We made numerous good business contacts and signed pre-contracts for purchasing equipment"said Mr. Trajko Alcinov, owner of Altra, one of the exhibitors.

Based on the good acceptance of Macedonian products at the 2008 Global Food & Style Expo, USAID's AgBiz Program will provide assistance to the participants to further investigate the potential for a broad-based introduction of Macedonian flavor ajvar and lutenica.