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AgBiz Program

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Macedonian Fresh Produce Exporters go on a Business Mission to Croatia and Slovenia to Recapture Markets

The USAID-funded AgBiz Program is organizing a six days study tour and business-to-business mission in Croatia and Slovenia for ten Macedonian fresh produce exporters that will take place from the 16th to the 22nd of August, 2010. The participants will be Agro Skopje Komerc, AD Venec, Dusan Ciric, IN-Jovanovski, Ana-Mak, CVCS, Intermaak, Agro Vinozito, Vivi Prom and Plostovo.

The Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (FF&V) Value Chain plays a very important role in Macedonian agribusiness and represents a significant part of overall agricultural exports. In the past, nearly all FF&V exports went to ex-Yugoslav markets where produce from Macedonia enjoyed the good reputation of being natural and with excellent taste. But in the last decade, as these traditional markets became more sophisticated and open to competition, Macedonian products have lost market share and are struggling to sustain their sales.

This challenge is mostly due to Macedonian exporters' lack of knowledge and ability to respond to changing market requirements and trends. Today, most Macedonian fresh products are being exported in bulk, that is becoming less in demand, and more value added fresh products are required. Therefore, Improving field productivity, post harvest handling, market diversification, logistic arrangements and the overall image of Macedonian FF&V products are needed as the pre-requisites for re-gaining these markets and securing long term export sales growth.

To help accomplish this objective, AgBiz is facilitating study tour visits and Businesses-to-Business (B2B) meetings to Croatia and Slovenia for FF&V exporters. The study tour will help participants understand the purchasing practices of Agro Zona and other companies in the Rijeka (Croatia) Wholesale market. Participants will also visit the Plodine Supermarket chain and meet potential buyers in Croatia to identify opportunities for establishing long term cooperation for supplying fresh produce to ERA-Good wholesale centers and the Sava group hotels chain in Slovenia.

"This study tour will assist Macedonian Fresh Fruits and Vegetables exporters investigate opportunities to establish new sales channels in Croatia and Slovenia, and ultimately develop long term supply agreements with potential new buyers in these two important markets."; said Lovre Ristevski, the AgBiz Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Value Chain and Access to Finance Manager.

To date, AgBiz has provided support to 180 agribusinesses, 26 producer organizations and four trade associations; trained over 1,307 individuals; assisted agribusiness companies to sign 10.8 million Euros in export orders and helped 39 agribusinesses to identify financing of over US\$7 million. For more information please visit: www.agbiz.com.mk.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.