

USAID AgLinks Plus (ALP) Project
Monthly Report #19 – January 2014

Contract # EDH-I-00-05-00004-00
TO # AID-176-TO-11-00002-00

ADMINISTRATION. ALP hosted 3 official visitors to project sites in January from State, USAID and the DAI Home Office. The State Department's Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (Daniel Rosenblum) visited on 20 January. The State visit was followed on 22nd January by the new USAID/CAR Mission Director (Jonathan Addleton). Both the State and USAID guests visited ALP partner Mirzaev Horticultural Research Institute to review collaborative efforts to establish a tissue culture lab and a fruit tree nursery and orchard employing advanced irrigation methods (ex., drip, mist, spray, sprinkle). Mr. Addleton also visited an ALP partner cold store utilizing an Ultra Low Oxygen (ULO) system to control the storage atmosphere and thereby retard ripening.

At the end of the month the DAI Regional Managing Director for Asia (Jennifer Baker) visited project sites in Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara to review the entire fruit value chain from nurseries to orchards to cold stores and exporters. ALP also received a World Bank delegation (Olga Sherbina and Xavier Gellnyck) tasked with designing the post-harvest elements of a potential horticulture project. Two ALP staff submitted proposals and were accepted to follow a global smallscale post-harvest e-learning program offered by the Postharvest Education Foundation. ALP staff provided facilitation and translation services for internationally renowned cherry specialist (Lynn Long) during his one week stay in Uzbekistan at the request of the local Pepsico bottler.



Rosenblum Presents New Apple Manual to Mirzaev Institute Deputy Director - Tashkent

TECHNICAL. January highlights include pruning HEP09, Training of Trainers, and cold store activities.

Horticultural Exchange Program (HEP). On January 28th the 9th HEP group of Uzbek horticulturalists departed for California to participate in a program focused on "Integrated Orchard Management." The majority of HEP09 representatives were from the private sector (7) with two representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR); from Tashkent and Samarkand, respectively. One of the original 10 participants had to withdraw from the group on the departure day due to personal issues. The group will return on 24th February after visits to nurseries, orchards, packing houses and with UC Davis professors and extension agents.

Training of Pruners' Groups. AgLinks Plus staff conducted Intensive Apple Pruning training in January for pruner groups, agronomists and farmers in the Ferghana Valley. A total of 76 people participated in the trainings which were organized in intensive apple and pear demo orchards. In one instance, the resulting trainees were immediately hired by the orchard owner to prune the entire 2 hectare (ha) orchard. Previous ALP-trained pruning groups were hired in January by private companies to prune intensive apple orchards in Tashkent Province (50 ha for UzVinProm) and Samarkand Province (50 ha each for two private firms; one orchard & one processor).



Intensive Orchard Pruning Training - Bulokboshi District, Andijan Province

Cold Stores. The ALP cold chain expert continued site-visits to partner cold stores in all 6 provinces. Cold store owners are presently selling apples and grapes from 2013 after following ALP technical advice on best practices to prolong produce shelf life. "This year my apple losses are 1-2% compared to 20% last year thanks to ALP's technical assistance. I also sell grapes 5 months after harvest which I never would have thought possible" said Aslan Shirinov from Bukhara Province. A group of 10 cold store owners requested the ALP cold chain consultant to facilitate a study tour to India on "Best Grape Storage Practices" scheduled for the last week of February to coincide with the grape harvest on the subcontinent. Participants will cover all their own travel costs with local costs paid by the private Indian firm, Grapage, a supplier of sulphur dioxide pads to the Uzbek grape industry. This public-private partnership only requires the technical, cross-cultural and translation services of the ALP cold chain expert.

Publications and Trainings. Farm manuals on Grape and Raisin Production (3,000 copies; 2nd edition) and Intensive Pome Fruit Orchards (5,000 copies) were co-produced and published by ALP in collaboration with the Mirzaev Horticultural Research Institute (formerly Shreder). Manuals are distributed to partner organizations (Mirzaev, UzVinProm, other donor organizations, etc.) for use in their trainings and during ALP organized trainings sessions. For example, the Grape and Raisin manual was provided to 48 participants in Andijan Province in January as part of the winter vineyard pruning program.



Winter Grape Pruning Training - Hujaobod District, Andijan Province

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE. No activities were conducted during the month of January that required Environmental Assessment. Initial Environmental Reviews prepared in January included:

Category-2: Categorical Exclusion for

1. Training: winter grape pruning (Andijan Province) -. Only environmentally friendly practices were recommended during the training.
2. TOT: Training of Trainers on intensive orchards (Andijan Province) – Environmental issues addressed and only environmentally sound practices were recommended.
3. WCA General Assembly Meetings: only internal institutional issues addressed at annual general assembly meetings in Tashkent and Fergana provinces.

NEXT MONTH. The following major activities are anticipated for February 2014:

1st week – WCA General Assembly meetings (Namangan Province)

2nd week – Cherry bud sampling for s-allele testing to identify pollinizers (6 provinces)

3rd week – Intensive Orchard Training by Tim Mitchell (Namangan Province)

4th week – India Exchange Visit on "Best Grape Storage Practices"; HEP09 group returns from US