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AGRICULTURAL LINKAGES PLUS PROJECT (ALP UZBEKISTAN)

QUARTERLY REPORT (Q3 FY 2012)

APRIL 2012 – JUNE 2012

JULY 2012

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AGRICULTURAL LINKAGES PLUS PROJECT

(ALP)

Q3 FY 2012 QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL 2012 – JUNE 2012

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U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RAISE Plus IQC

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ACRONYMS

ALP	Agricultural Linkages Plus project
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BDS	Business Development Services
BEO	Bureau Environmental Officer
BFU	Business Forum of Uzbekistan
CAR	Central Asian Republics
CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNFA	Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs
COP	Chief of Party
CPS	Crop Protection Services
DAI	Development Alternative Inc.
Dekhan	backyard farm
DPP	Dynamic Planning Process
EU	European Union
FFP	Food For Progress
FtF	Farmer to Farmer
FY	Fiscal Year
G&A	General and Administrative
GOU	Government of Uzbekistan
GSB	Growing Sustainable Businesses Initiative (UNDP)
ha	hectare (10,000 square meters, 100 meters by 100 meters, 2.47 acres)
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HO	Home Office
HPLC	High Performance Liquid Chromatograph
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IER	Initial Environmental Review
IKS	Islohotkonsaltsevis, Ltd. (local consulting firm)
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JSC	Joint Stock Company
Kholhoz	collective farm (during Soviet era)
LLC	Limited Liability Company
LOP	Life of Project
LSP	Local Service Provider
MASHAV	Agency for International Development Cooperation (Israel)
MAWR	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MERIT	Ministry of External Economic Relations, Investment and Trade of Uzbekistan

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDC	Negative Determination with Conditions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODC	Other Direct Costs
OH	Overhead
PD	Positive Determination
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan
Pudrats	Family-based agricultural production units
RBS	Royal Bank of Scotland
SABIT	Special American Business Internship Training
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEAF	Small Enterprise Assistance Fund
Shirkat	production cooperative (Uzbek)
SISF	Social Initiative Support Fund
SME	Small and Medium size Enterprises
Sovhoz	state farm enterprise (during Soviet era)
TA	Technical Assistance
TCN	Third Country National
TIKA	Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency
TQSA	Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance
TCCTC	Tashkent City Center for Testing and Certification
Tuman	rayon (district) in Uzbek
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USG	United States Government
USAID	US Agency for International Development
UzKDB	Uzbek-Korean Development Bank
VAT	Value Added Tax
Viloyat	Oblast (province) in Uzbek
WFLO	World Food Logistics Organization
WUA	Water User's Association
WUASP	Water User's Association Support Project

This report covers the third quarter (April-May-June 2012) activities of the AgLinks Plus (ALP) Project in Uzbekistan in fiscal year (FY) 2011. This is the third quarter of ALP project activities since the project was awarded and initial financial obligations made at the end of September 2011. ALP is the follow-on project to the predecessor USAID/AgLinks Uzbekistan project.

A. ADMINISTRATION

A.1 USG Related

US Ambassador George Kroll Visits Samarkand Province. On April 27 Ambassador Kroll visited ALP sites in the Samarkand Province including a fruit tree nursery and a major agroprocessor. The U.S. Embassy delegation began the visit in the Tayloq District with a visit to a farmer who is growing grapes, apples and pears. He has expanded his activities to include fruit tree propagation with ALP assistance.

Ambassador Kroll witnessed ALP activities including trellising, intensive horticulture and sapling “mother” blocks.

The delegation followed up the on-farm visit with a tour of the modern agroprocessing facilities at Agromir in the Samarkand District. Agromir is well known for its juice lines, including Bliss, which the Ambassador noted he drinks at home. The Director of the Agromir Samarkand plant explained the new “prism” packaging line and the new “juice boxes.” The delegation was also given the opportunity to try a variety of the juices produced in the factory from local produce and imported concentrates (citrus).



Photo 1: Ambassador Kroll visits Agromir juice lines in the Samarkand District

U.S. State Department Presentation. ALP had a meeting with U.S. State Department representatives Mr. Daniel Rosenblum, Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, and Ms. Karin Rutledge, Country Development Officer for EUR/ACE. ALP staff provided the representatives with an overview of ALP project activities and shared their experiences on running the project in Uzbekistan.

USAID Environmental Compliance Visit. On June 5 Nina Kavetskaya, USAID/CAR Mission Environmental Officer, and Alexander Kalashnikov, USAID/CAR/UCO Project Management Specialist, inspected ALP project sites in the Samarkand Province to ensure the sites were in compliance with USAID environmental requirements.

USAID/Uzbekistan Country Office Deputy Director Visits Namangan Province.

Nathan Park and Otabek Rakhimov, USAID CAR/UCO Project Management Specialist, visited the Apricot Variety Contest held on June 19 in the Pop District of Namangan Province (see B1 for details). Mr. Park had a chance to talk to farmers and after the event he visited a grape demo plot in Pungon WUA (Pop District, Namangan Province). Hayitali Juraev, owner of the demo plot, described the activities conducted within the USAID project since 2009. Mr. Juraev also shared his results and future plans.

A.2. Other Bilateral Partners and Programs.

The USAID/AgLinks Plus project is open for cooperation and collaboration with other projects and donor organizations to exchange ideas, identify and initiate mutually beneficial activities in technical assistance, training opportunities, and financing options. Partners and programs include USG-funded activities implemented through other agencies and departments, other donor-funded activities and multi-donor opportunities.

A.3. Other Multilateral Partners and Programs

Meetings with other projects and donors. Development of the horticulture sector in Uzbekistan has started to attract attention from other donor organizations. This quarter staff met with the following organizations:

1. On May 14th the U.S. embassy hosted the Agriculture Donors Coordination Meeting where ALP COP Charles May presented the project activities to the donors.
2. On May 16th UNDP Aid for Trade project representatives Joern Rieken, Team Leader, Daniele Gelz, Project Manager, and Kamolkhon Inomkhodjayev, Program Associate, visited the ALP office to learn about project experiences and discuss potential cooperation on overlapping areas.
3. On May 29th representatives of the Japan Water Agency implementing an ADB project--Arino Osamu, Canal Engineering Division Director and Akiba Nobuyoshi, International Affairs Division Specialist--visited ALP to learn about project experiences in general and particularly on advanced irrigation demonstrations as they plan to set up drip irrigation site in Uzbekistan.

Participation in events organized by other donors:

1. On June 12th-14th ALP representatives participated in The Regional Inception Workshop for Central Asia and the Caucasus of the CGIAR Research Program (CRP1.1). The purpose of the "Dryland Systems" was to discuss hypotheses, define priorities and develop an action plan for three (3) sites including the Aral Sea, Rasht Valley and Ferghana Valley.
2. On June 15th Asror Nazirov participated in a workshop organized by GIZ aimed at creating an intensive exchange on activities in the fruit production sector carried out by various donor agencies and development agencies in Uzbekistan.

A.4. Issue(s).

The major issue for ALP implementation remains the lack of an approved amendment to the existing MOU to expand project activities to the targeted new provinces and districts. Progress is being made but seasonal activities have begun and the project remains legally limited to work only in the original provinces and districts identified in the still valid AgLinks (predecessor project) MOU, which is valid through November 2015 until amended.

B. TECHNICAL

The third quarter of 2012 fiscal year is characterized by intensive training, study tours, a fruit variety contest and the harvest of certain crops.

B.1. Producers - AgriFirm and Water User Association (WUAs) Farmers.

Trainings. A total of 345 participants attended producer-level trainings this quarter, including fruit drying and processing and best grape production. Please see the statistics below in Table 1.

Province	Type	Name	Grape production (Andrew Teaubes)		Fruit drying and processing	
			F	M	F	M
Dates			3-7 April & 18-28 June, 2012		26-28 June, 2012	
			F	M	F	M
Samarkand	WUA	Bulungur Irmogi / Hujabuston Suv Tarmogi	2	36	31	
	WUA	Karshiboy Mirob / Damhasa Arigi		65		
	AF	Istiklol MevaSabzovot		52		
	AF	Dilkusho Sifat		50	10	1
	RI	Shreder			14	11
Ferghana	AF	Muyan		14		
Namangan	AF	Turakurgan Sohibkorlari		22		
	WUA	Pungon		13		
Bukhara	WUA	Jamiyat Oydin	1	23		
Total - 345 (58 Female, 287 Male)			3	275	55	12

Table 1: Attendance at Trainings Held by Province and Partner – 3rd Quarter FY 2012

Horticultural Exchange Program (HEP). The second in a series of quarterly “Horticultural Exchange Programs” (HEPs) initiated by USAID within the AgLinks Plus project (ALP) took place from May 10 – June 2, 2012 in California. The main theme of HEP02 was “Best Nursery Practices” with a total of eight (8) participants; three (3) from the public sector and five (5) from the private sector. The public sector visitors included representatives from the Horticultural Research Institute (Shreder) and the provincial branches of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR). All of the private sector participants were nursery owners. The exchange visitors participated in hands-on, “touch and feel” visits to over 24 sites in northern and central California including farms, private companies, Genetic Institutes (where new fruit varieties are developed) and fruit nurseries including two (2) of the biggest private nurseries in the United States.

They experienced new techniques used throughout the California nursery and horticultural industries and noted how to best adapt these practices to their own circumstances upon return to Uzbekistan. U.S. host professionals clearly enjoyed working with the group as they recognized that the Uzbek visitors were fellow nurserymen who understood the materials presented, were fully engaged and asked challenging, thoughtful questions. The discussions were focused on best nursery practices and how to solve challenges specific to the Uzbek nursery industry and Uzbek stone fruit farmers. Orientation program was conducted on May in MAWR office prior departure of the participants.



Photo 2: HEP02 Participants on recent exchange trip in California

The HEP03 exchange visit is scheduled for July and will focus on best cold storage practices. All necessary documents were prepared to be submitted to the VCS system. HEP04 is scheduled for mid-September and will focus on best grape production/processing practices. This quarter the list of participants was developed for submission to MAWR for approval.

Apricot Variety Contest. The event was organized by the USAID/AgLinks Plus project in collaboration with “Shirinsuve Yangier” WUA and the Shreder Institute – Namangan. The event was held on June 19, 2012, to allow for all apricot varieties to ripen. Forty two (42) farmers participated in the contest. The participants came from Pop and Turakurgan, located in Namangan province, and, for the first time, from the Kuvasay

District in the Ferghana Province. Farmers competed with each other in three different categories: 1) Dryable apricot, 2) Marketable apricot, and 3) Unique apricot.



Photo 3: Participants of the Apricot Variety Contest held on June 19, 2012

Three different prizes were provided for the place winners: 1st place received big lopper, 2nd place received small lopper, 3rd place received a hand shear. All tools were purchased and brought from the United States. In total, nine (9) participants received prizes for their participation and all others received a cap with the USAID logo. The panel of judges comprised of local experts

representing different sectors. They esteemed panelists were: 1) Abdumalik Nishonov (director of Namangan Shreder Institute), 2) Odiljon Okyulov (Head of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources’ (MAWR) Horticulture Department for Namangan), 3) Marifat Nazarova (Chief technologist at processing plant) and 4) Azamat Yuldashev (Chief Agronomist of Pop district of Namangan Province). While judges were evaluating the apricots, Horticulture Exchange Program (HEP) participants spoke about their

experiences in the United States. Farmers also had a chance to consult with each other and change best practices. Thus variety contests provide knowledge sharing platform. The apricot contest, which was held for the fourth time this year, is the oldest competition event organized by the project. The event was attended by USAID/Uzbekistan Country Office Deputy Director Nathan Park.

Advanced Grape Production Techniques. An international grape consultant, Andrew Teubes, provided trainings throughout April and during last two weeks of June on grape production and grape nursery techniques. The first sets of trainings were focused on planting, pruning and irrigating. Pruning, fertilization and pest and disease management were of particular interest to farmers due to their lack of knowledge on advanced technologies. New methods included “basket pruning” and a variety of trellising methods (“lyre” and “T”) for both raisin and table grape varieties. By increasing the height from the soil these trellises will reduce physical damage, dust and disease, increasing grape quality and decreasing losses. The second sets of trainings, in addition to previous topics, focused on thinning, tipping and topping. Almost 280 people were trained in eight (8) locales, including three (3) in the Fergana Valley, four (4) in Samarkand and one (1) in Bukhara.

Fruit drying and processing trainings. During June 26th – 29th Sharofiddin Mirzakhidov, Fruit Drying and Processing Specialist at the Shreder Research Institute - Samarkand branch, conducted training programs for men and women in three (3) districts of Samarkand including Samarkand, Taylak and Payarik. As with previous household processing training programs, these programs were conducted at one of the participant’s homes. A total of 67 people, of which majority were women, were taught household fruit drying and preparation methods of candied fruits from apricot, plum, sour cherry, peach and apple.

Cherry production consultations (Joseph Grant). Cherry harvest in recent years has been dropping. This year’s harvest was so low that the annual cherry variety contest had to be cancelled. ALP received requests from cherry farmers to help on this issue. Cherry consultant Joseph Grant spent a week in Ferghana Valley, visiting cherry farmers in nine (9) districts including the Turakurgan and Uychi districts in Namangam Province, the Kuva, Kuvasay, Altyaryk, Ferghana districts in Ferghana Province and the Payarik and Samarkand districts in Samarkand Province. He provided individual consultations to approximately 20 farmers on cherry production related topics such as pruning, pollination and fertilizers.

After talking to cherry farmers and agronomists and analyzing local cherry rootstocks/varieties and temperature data, the main cause for the decreasing cherry production was determined to be inadequate pollination due to the failure of farmers to include sufficient pollinizer varieties in their orchards. Lacking an understanding and/or appreciation for the need for cross-pollination, many farmers have omitted or under-planted pollenizers in orchards planted in recent years. Mr. Grant gave the following recommendations:

1. Conduct controlled pollination studies (emasculation, bagging, and hand application of selected pollen) and/or S-allele genotyping of 'Volova Cerdsa' and its putative pollenizers to confirm cross-compatibility.
2. Pending confirmation of cross-compatibility, promote re-introduction of pollenizers in orchards at appropriate densities, by top-working or interplanting.
3. Long-term, explore the feasibility of DNA diagnostic testing to accurately identify key varieties used in Uzbekistan, and promote practices and policies that ensure correct identification, certification, and production of plant materials that are true-to-type and free of plant pathogens.

IPM consultations. Frank Zalom, an international consultant from the University of California, Davis with an extensive background in Integrated Pest Management (IPM), visited three (3) districts in the Ferghana and Namangan provinces to conduct an assessment of the most common target crops pests and diseases in order to develop a plan to combat them. He provided several consultations to 36 farmers on the identification of the most common pests for their tree crops and grapes. He also gave advice on pesticides for combating the identified pests and their proper application, including safety equipment and practices, to limit environmental and health impacts.

New Demonstration Plots. The Uzbek government promotes the creation of intensive orchards throughout Uzbekistan which require dwarf variety trees, trellising, reduced spacing and managed water systems. ALP established four (4) intensive demo plots in Samarkand, Ferghana and Andijan provinces to provide locales for trainings and the promotion of best practices in intensive orcharding. Three different varieties of dwarf apples were provided to farmers in April. The installation of trellising systems occurred in May.

New plant material. The Government of Uzbekistan has been promoting intensive and semi-intensive orchards. Clean propagation material is essential to produce "virus-free" saplings. To support this initiative and further develop the fruit industry in Uzbekistan, the ALP project procured and distributed 51,330 apple and cherry graftsticks, saplings and whips (See Table 1) from Verbeek Company (Holland). Plant material will be propagated and then budded with local fruit varieties. This will make "virus free" and cheaper (than imported trees) planting material available for Uzbek farmers in coming years.



Photo 4: USAID/ALP procured saplings and whips

Table 1. Distribution of new plant material by location and partner

Name of recipient	Farm	District	Province	Colt 5-7mm	Colt 9mm	Gisela 5-7mm	Gisela 9mm	M9	MM106	Bench/graft Colt*5 varieties	Cherry whips on Gisela 5
Solihoji Mirzajonov	Turon Chashmasi	Ferghana	Ferghana	1500	3500	700	300	5500	3000	1000	50
Tashkent Shreder Institute		Zangiota	Tashkent	1000	2000	900	100	0	0	500	0
Asror Mallaev	Sardor Davlat tokzori	Toylok	Samarkand	2000	2500	900	300	5500	2000	500	50
Tojidin Toshpulatov	Private nursery	Turakurgan	Namangan	1500	1000	900	200	3000	0	2000	50
Sidikjon Botaboev	Private nursery	Turakurgan	Namangan	500	500	300	100	1000	1000	400	0
Tim Mitchell	Private nursery	Zangiota	Tashkent	0	2000	0	0	0	0	300	0
Bohodir Yusupjanov	Javohir Yangi bogi	Kuvasoy	Ferghana	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	180
Marco Polo Agro-Farm			Tashkent	500	1500	300	0	0	0	300	0
<i>Sub-Totals</i>				7,000	13,000	4,000	1,000	15,000	6,000	5,000	330
Total				51,330							

Arrival of tools and testers. ALP purchased orchard management tools to accompany trainings in pruning, grafting and budding for both the orchard and nursery development programs and test equipment to measure variables relevant to fruit quality including sugar (Brix), water (moisture), and ripeness (pressure). Tools and testers will be mostly distributed to farmers and the Shreder Research Institute branches.

Production of training video films. One of innovations proposed to implement within ALP was development of a Mobile Extension Value Added (MEVA) application for farmers. The MEVA system will contain training materials in the Uzbek language, in both written and video format (hands-on, do-it-yourself (DIY) style). To produce video content customized to the Uzbekistan environment, video production company Case By Case was contracted to develop the scenes and filming of the training videos. The crew spent a total of seven (7) weeks in Uzbekistan producing training films that cover stone, pome, grape and nut tree maintenance. The following films were produced and narrated and submitted to MAWR:

1. Apple tree branch training
2. Corrective pruning
3. Planting a tree
4. Pruning tool disinfectant

In addition, field work for four (4) more films was completed and now being edited:

1. Nursery
2. Safety clothes
3. Summer pruning of apricot and cherry trees
4. Grafting and budding of grapes

B.2. Private Sector.

Cold Chain Workshops. ALP, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) of Uzbekistan and the UNDP funded Business Forum of Uzbekistan (BFU), conducted a series of Cold Chain workshops. The training was conducted by experts of Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA), based in Arlington, Virginia and representing multiple cold chain interests. Three (3) workshops were conducted in Samarkand, Tashkent and Namangan during May 22 – June 7 with over 220 participants from almost all the provinces of Uzbekistan. The course consisted of a total of seven (7) modules. Four (4) visiting technical experts presented the material and answered both general and specific questions. Topics covered included; cold chain overview, refrigerated transportation, design and construction, and packing house operation. The event was the broadly covered by national and provincial television and newspaper media.



Photo 5: Participants of the recent Cold Chain Workshop during Q2

After the workshops, approximately 40 field visits to existing cold storage facilities in Samarkand, Namangan, Ferghana, Andijan and Tashkent provinces were made by the



Photo 6: Trainers provide information about cold chain facilities during recent training

trainers who provided specific recommendations to practitioners. A delegation also met with Mr. Alisher Shaykhov, Chairman of Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from IFC Europe & Central Asia to discuss mutual cooperation within the project aimed at sector development in Uzbekistan.

Both organizers and participants were greatly pleased with the workshop.

Participants and organizers stressed the importance and timeliness of this event, as well as the fact that it was taken to the regions, thereby facilitating the participation of

people from provinces of the country. Isokzhon Boimatov, a farmer from the Altirik District of Ferghana Province, said after the workshop that he previously did not know about the importance of humidifiers and disinfection, and paid little attention to food safety. He now hopes by following the recommendations in the manual that he can improve the quality and shelf life of his products as well as ensure that the consumer will receive safe food. Mahmud Haydarov, who plans to build a cold store, noted that the seminar provided him with the knowledge required for cold storage and that he could not have obtained anywhere else. He believes the training will keep him from making mistakes and ease the process.

A detailed report on the event and accompanying visits was submitted to MAWR in the beginning of June.

During the Cold Chain workshops, private companies involved in cold storage/export of fresh produce were identified, including Toshagroinvest from Tashkent city. As a result, one of the representatives from Toshagroinvest, Duliev Maksudjon, was nominated to participate in HEP02 focused on best cold storage practices.

B.3. Public Sector.

Advanced Irrigation. The project continued with the process of installing advanced irrigation systems at the Shreder Horticultural Research Institute. Last quarter ALP designed a demonstration system for the institute that showcases mist, spray, sprinkle, and drip irrigation techniques on about 2.5 ha at their central headquarters location just outside Tashkent. This quarter a supplier to install the system was identified and the installation process has started. This is a cost share activity. The Shreder Institute's contribution is in the form of excavation works while USAID/AgLinks Plus is providing equipment. The representatives from the Shreder Institute are very supportive and overseeing the process on a daily basis, providing necessary assistance when needed. We plan to launch the system in July 2012.

B.4. Issue(s).

The lack of a signed MOU between USAID and the MAWR giving authority to the project to enter new areas continues to be major issue.

Crop failure in cherry production due to extremely hot weather during cherry trees blooming period resulted in cancellation of annual Cherry Variety Contest.

A delayed reply from the MAWR regarding list of their nominees for HEP03 is also a concern. The delay resulted in a late submission of documents and the need to shift the dates of the HEP.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

C.1. Monitoring.

The list of activities that were completed during the second quarter of 2012 is given below with one exception, the Drip Irrigation Plot, which is in the process of being completed. All mitigation measures that were envisioned were followed and obeyed and no adverse affects from the activities were recorded.

1. Bee Pollination Activity in the Turakurgan district of Namangan Province: Category-3. Completed
2. Drip Irrigation Site at the Shreoder Institute: Category-3. In the process
3. Procurement of dwarf apple plants: Category-3. Completed.
4. Procurement of plant materials for private nurseries: Category-3. Completed.
5. Apricot Variety Contest: Category-1. Completed.
6. IPM Training by Frank Zalom: Category-2. Completed.
7. Cherry Production Assessment by Joseph Grant: Category-2. Completed.
8. Cold Chain Workshop: Category-2. Completed.
9. Grape Best Practices: Category-2. Completed.

PERSUAP. The project's Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) for Uzbekistan remains the basic guidance for most all environmental activities under the project. PERSUAPs are required of all USAID-funded projects and activities which have an agrochemical component. The PERSUAP was updated earlier this year and final version will be available next quarter.

AgLinks staff will use the PERSUAP guidance to inform decisions on equipment purchases (sprayers), reference materials (pesticide management, safety and use) from UC Davis and the resultant farm level trainings and additional support.

The draft PERSUAP was produced this quarter which was then edited and commented on by project staff. The final PERSUAP draft and accompanying Positive Determination Approval Sheet will be submitted to USAID at the beginning of next quarter. The draft PERSUAP provides recommendations for Aglinks Plus targeted crops of: stone fruits (apricots, peaches and nectarines, plums and prunes, almonds, and sweet and sour cherries); pome fruits (apples, pears, quince); Subtropical fruits (pomegranates, persimmons); nuts (walnuts, pistachio); table and wine grapes; mulberries; tomatoes; melon cucurbits (particularly melons) including watermelons, cucumbers; onions; plus additional crops requested by USAID or anticipated under future programs (e.g., wheat, rice and cotton).

The PERSUAP proposes 72 pesticides (active ingredients) of which 48 are proposed for use by producers, 18 are proposed for use by certified applicators in a transition period and 6 will be permitted when the Government of Uzbekistan documentation approves their use with no further review. Sixty three (63) out of 82 pesticides originally

requested by ALP were included in the final 72 proposed pesticides in the PERSUAP. The remaining nine (9) are pesticides recommended largely as replacements for Restricted Use Pesticides (RUPs). Project technical assistance will be provided to implement IPM and management practices that reduce the need for any pesticide, even those approved.

Because some RUPs are needed to achieve project objectives related to plant health and product quality, the Pest Evaluation Report (PER) will also recommend 18 RUPs to be applied only by pesticide applicators certified by the Uzbek crop protection agency or by the Uzbek crop protection agency itself. Fumigants and RUPs are only permitted to be applied by government licensed professionals. Total of 22 pesticides were rejected.

C.2. Mitigation.

AgLinks Plus promotes environmentally friendly agrotechnologies and techniques to mitigate possible adverse impact of agricultural activities. The proper use of agrochemicals as a means for pest and disease control in orchards is always on the project agenda. The basis for the mitigation of potential negative environmental impact of agrochemicals use is the PERSUAP and pest and disease control manual published by the project in cooperation with National Plant Protection Institute. In every single pest and disease control training program a special session is reserved for the safe use of agrochemicals. Trainers always highlight this key aspect. New project activities, such as using pheromone traps for optimal scheduling of chemicals application, also helps to mitigate undesirable environmental side effects. Farmers will know exactly when to apply chemicals and how much to apply, instead of using them blindly. Another activity of the project, promoting drip irrigation systems, is also directly linked to improving environmental issues of irrigated agriculture through the mitigation of water loss and water erosion of arable lands.

C.3. Issue(s).

No other major issues were identified during this quarter.

ANNEX A

- Monthly Report for April 2012
- Monthly Report for May 2012

USAID AgLinks Plus Project
Monthly Report #5 – April 2012

Contract # EDH-I-00-05-00004-00
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ADMINISTRATION. The month of April was characterized by the full onset of the spring 2012 season and affiliated horticultural activities. The project staff worked throughout the month to conclude the preparations for the second Horticultural Exchange Program (HEP02) to California scheduled to begin in early May. Like all HEP programs, HEP02 will cover a variety of topics but focus on fruit tree nursery best practices.

US Ambassador George Kroll Visits Samarkand Province. On April 27 Ambassador Kroll visited ALP sites in Samarkand Province including a fruit tree nursery and a major agroprocessor. The US Embassy delegation began the visit in Tayloq District with a visit to a farmer growing grapes, apples and pears who has expanded activities to include fruit tree propagation with ALP assistance. Ambassador Kroll witnessed ALP activities including trellising, intensive horticulture and sapling “mother” blocks.

The delegation followed up the on-farm visit with a tour of the modern agroprocessing facilities at Agromir in Samarkand District. Agromir is well known for its juice lines, including Bliss, which the Ambassador noted he drinks at home. The Director of the Agromir Samarkand plant explained the new “prism” packaging line and the new “juice boxes.” The delegation was also given the opportunity to try a variety of the juices produced in the plant from local produce and imported concentrates (citrus).



Photo : *Ambassador Kroll (center) examines Agromir products Samarkand Province, Samarkand District*

TECHNICAL. April is traditionally characterized by intensive seasonal activities for spring.

Bee Pollination. Estimates are that almost 80% of the fruit grown in the Ferghana Valley is exported with the principal markets being Russia and Kazakhstan. Fruit production and market sales are a major source of income for the local inhabitants of the Valley. Anecdotal evidence suggests that overall fruit tree yields are decreasing, especially for cherries, due to a variety of factors including poor orchard management, aging trees, lower yielding varieties and pests and disease. One of the main problems for cherries is the lack of pollinator tree varieties to increase fruit set during the flower bloom period. In addition, bees are required to assist the pollination process because most cherry varieties are not self-pollinators.

To combat this problem, ALP and the Ferghana Beekeeper’s Association collaborated during the spring 2012 flower bloom to provide pollination services to targeted farms. ALP contracted additional beekeepers to transport their hives to fruit orchards in Turakurgan District of Namangan Province and Kuvasoy District of Ferghana Province. Originally 50 bee hives were requested for each province. However, due to great interest from both farmers and beekeepers in Namangan Province, a total of 220 beehives were brought and distributed in three locales to pollinate up to 100 hectares (ha) of orchards. The results of the bee pollination program will be monitored and recorded during the fruit set and harvest seasons to document the expected impact.

New Demonstration Plots. The Uzbek government promotes creation of intensive orchards throughout Uzbekistan which require dwarf variety trees, trellising, reduced spacing and managed water systems. ALP established 4 intensive demo plots in Samarkand, Ferghana and Andijan provinces to provide locales for trainings and the promotion of best practices in intensive orcharding. Three different varieties of dwarf apples were provided to farmers in April and will be complemented with the installation of trellising systems during May.

#	Province	District	Farmer	Demo Crop & Technology	Area (ha)	# of trees
1	Samarkand	Payarik	Pardahol Dehkanova	Dwarf apples & intensive orchard	0.5	750
2	Andijan	Jalaquduq	Muhiddin Qodirov			
3	Ferghana	Kuvasoy	Shokir Karaev			
4		Kuvasoy	Muzaffar Hatamqulov			
TOTAL					2	3,000

Table 1: Intensive orchard demonstration plots

Advanced Grape Production Techniques. An international grape consultant, Andrew Teubes, provided trainings throughout April on grape production and grape nursery techniques including planting, pruning and irrigating. Pruning, fertilization and pest and disease management were of particular interest to farmers due to lack of knowledge on advanced technologies. New methods included “basket pruning” and a variety of trellising methods (“lyre” and “T”) for both raisin and table grape varieties. By increasing the height from the soil these trellises will reduce physical damage, dust and disease thereby increasing grape quality and decreasing losses. Almost 190 people were trained in 7 locales, including 3 in the Fergana Valley, 3 in Samarkand and 1 in Bukhara.



Photo : Andrew Teubes (center) conducts grape trainings

NEXT MONTH. The following major activities are anticipated for May 2012:

1st week – HEP 2 Orientation Program; IPM specialist arrives (Frank Zalom)

2nd week – Departure of HEP-2 group (nurseries) and IPM specialist

3rd week – Global Cold Chain Alliance consultants arrive

4th week – Cold Chain workshops begin in Samarkand; cherry specialist arrives (Joe Grant)

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ADMINISTRATION. The AgLinks Plus (ALP) project had a meeting with U.S. State Department representatives Mr. Daniel Rosenblum, Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, and Ms. Karin Rutledge, Country Development Officer for EUR/ACE to provide an overview of ALP project activities and shared their experiences on running the project in Uzbekistan. On May 14th the U.S. embassy hosted the Agriculture Donors Coordination Meeting where ALP COP Charles May presented the project activities to the donors. On May 16th UNDP Aid for Trade project representatives Joern Rieken, Team Leader, Daniele Gelz, Project Manager, and Kamolkhon Inomkhodjayev, Program Associate, visited the ALP office to learn about project experiences and discuss potential cooperation on overlapping areas. On May 29th representatives of the Japan Water Agency implementing an ADB project--Arino Osamu, Canal Engineering Division Director and Akiba Nobuyoshi, International Affairs Division Specialist--visited ALP to learn about project experiences in general and particularly on advanced irrigation demonstrations as they plan to set up drip irrigation site in Uzbekistan.

TECHNICAL. May was characterized by intensive training.

Horticultural Exchange Program (HEP). The second in a series of quarterly “Horticultural Exchange Programs” (HEPs) initiated by USAID within the AgLinks Plus project (ALP) took place from May 10 – June 2, 2012 in California. The main theme of HEP02 was “Best nursery practices” with a total of eight (8) participants. There were three public sector visitors including representatives from the Horticultural Research Institute (Shreder) and the provincial branches of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR). In addition, five private sector nursery owner participants traveled. The exchange visitors will participated in hands-on, touch and feel visits to over 25 sites in northern and central California including farms, private companies and organizations involved in nursery business.



Photo 1: Cold Chain Workshop
participants receive training by experts
from GCCA

The HEP03 exchange visit is scheduled for July and will focus on best cold storage practices. All necessary documents were prepared to be submitted to the VCS system.

Cold Chain Workshops. ALP, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) of Uzbekistan and the UNDP-funded Business Forum of Uzbekistan (BFU), conducted a series of Cold Chain workshops. Training was conducted by experts of Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA). Three (3) workshops were conducted in Samarkand, Tashkent and Namangan during May 22 – June 7 with over 200 participants from almost all the provinces of Uzbekistan. The course consisted of a total of seven (7) modules. Topics

covered included cold chain overview, refrigerated transportation, design and construction, packing house operation and other. In addition, visits to existing cold storage facilities in various provinces were made by the trainers who provided specific recommendations to practitioners. The event which

was broadly covered by National and provincial TV and newspaper was considered a success by both trainers and participants.

New plant material. Uzbekistan government has been promoting intensive and semi-intensive orchards. Clean propagation material is essential to produce "virus-free" saplings. To support this initiative and further develop the fruit industry in the Uzbekistan, ALP project procured and distributed 51,330 apple and cherry graftsticks, saplings and whips (See Table 1) from the Verbeek Company (Holland). Plant material will be propagated and then budded with local fruit varieties. This will make "virus free" and cheaper (than imported trees) planting material available for Uzbek farmers in coming years.

Table 1. Distribution of new plant material by location and partner

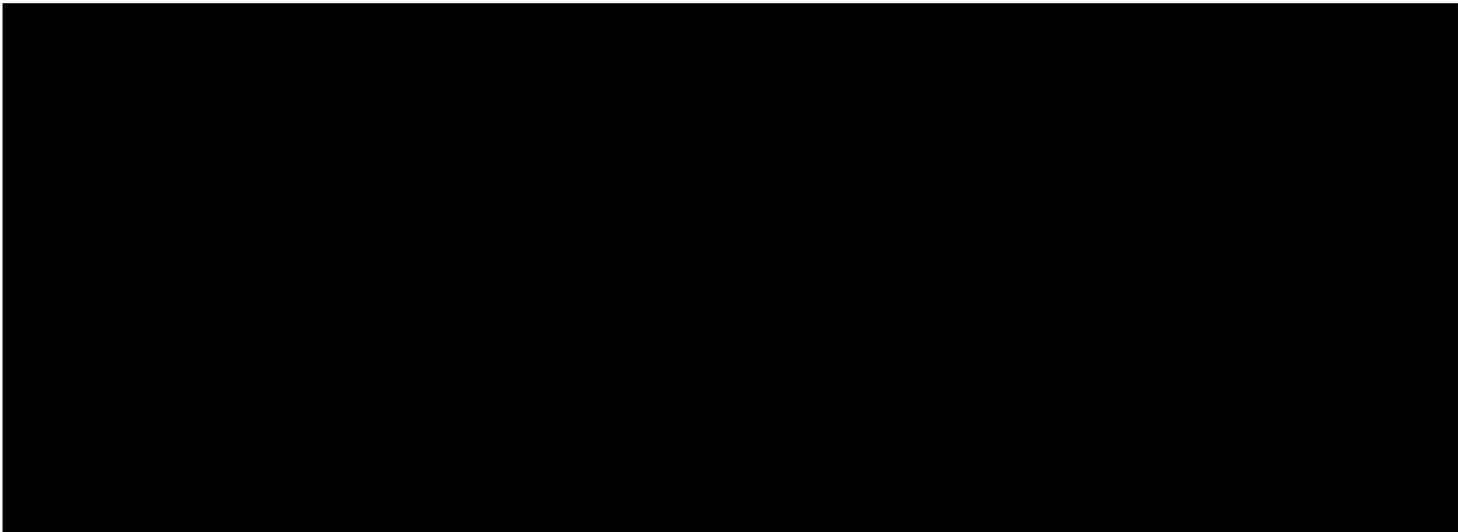
Name of recipient	Farm	District	Province	Colt 5-7mm	Colt 9mm	Gisela 5-7mm	Gisela 9mm	M9	MM106	Bench/gr aft Colt*5 varieties	Cherry whips on Gisela 5
Solihoji Mirzajonov	Turon Chashmasi	Ferghana	Ferghana	1500	3500	700	300	5500	3000	1000	50
Tashkent Shreder Institute		Zangiota	Tashkent	1000	2000	900	100	0	0	500	0
Asror Mallaev	Sardor Davlat tokzori	Toylok	Samarkand	2000	2500	900	300	5500	2000	500	50
Tojidin Toshpulatov	Private nursery	Turakurgan	Namangan	1500	1000	900	200	3000	0	2000	50
Sidikjon Botaboev	Private nursery	Turakurgan	Namangan	500	500	300	100	1000	1000	400	0
Tim Mitchell	Private nursery	Zangiota	Tashkent	0	2000	0	0	0	0	300	0
Bohodir Yusupjanov	Javohir Yangi bogi	Kuvasoy	Ferghana	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	180
Marco Polo Agro-Farm			Tashkent	500	1500	300	0	0	0	300	0
<i>Sub-Totals</i>				7,000	13,000	4,000	1,000	15,000	6,000	5,000	330
Total				51,330							

Cherry production consultations (Joseph Grant). Cherry harvest in recent years has been dropping. ALP received requests from cherry farmers for assistance so ALP contracted Cherry consultant Joseph Grant. Mr. Grant visited 20 cherry farmers in project's targeted districts to provide consultations on pruning, pollination and fertilizers. Mr. Grant also discovered that the main cause for decreasing cheery production is high temperature during the bloom time and absence or decreasing number of pollinizer cherry varieties. At this moment, Joseph Grant is working on the issue by analyzing the weather data, varieties and is going to develop report and provide solution.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE. The following five major activities were completed during the month of May of 2012. All mitigation measures that were written in IES/ER documents were followed, not significant impact were recorded from the activities. (1) Category-3: Plant Materials from Holland were brought and distributed among nurseries, (2) Category-2: IPM consultation for individual farmers,

(3) Category-1: HEP-2, (4) Category-2: Cold Chain Workshop, (5) Category-2: Cherry Production Consultation.

IPM consultations. Frank Zalom, an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) specialist from the University of California, Davis visited three (3) districts in Ferghana and Namangan provinces to meet with 36 farmers to conduct an assessment of most common target crops pests and diseases and to provide advice on pesticides for combating the identified pests and their proper application.



NEXT MONTH: The following major activities are anticipated for June 2012:

1st week – Arrival of Case-by-Case film crew;

2nd week – Arrival of tools and testers

3rd week – Grape specialist training programs (Andrew Tubes); Apricot Variety Contest

4th week - Grape specialist training programs (Andrew Tubes)