

**USAID AgLinks Plus Project**  
Monthly Report #22 – May 2014

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

**ADMINISTRATION.** ALP staff organized & accompanied an early May visit to project field sites in the Ferghana Valley by USAID's Regional Mission Director (Jonathan Addleton), Uzbekistan Country Office Director (John Riordan) & ALP Activity Manager (Shavkat Rakhmatullaev). The ALP Project Coordinator from the Ministry of Agricultural and Water Resources (MAWR, Mukhammadjon Kosimov) also assisted the 3-day visit to sites in Namangan, Andijan and Ferghana provinces. The visitors examined project activities along the entire fruit value chain including tree nurseries, orchards, vineyards, post-harvest packing, cold storage, marketing and sales (both local and international markets). ALP staff met with both multilateral (UNDP, 14<sup>th</sup> May) and bilateral (Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation, 27<sup>th</sup> May) donor representatives to share insights and experience in rural horticulture, marketing and water projects. The project received formal feedback on the USAID/CAR Limited Financial Review of December 2012 and provided input to the responses.



*New ALP Promoted Packing Materials - Oltariq District, Ferghana Province*

**TECHNICAL.** May highlights included preparations for the Cherry Variety Contest scheduled for 03 June (Mirzaev Horticultural Institute, Tashkent), multiple on-farm trainings and continued sample collection of cherry plant material for genetic testing to determine best pollinizer matches.

**Cold Stores.** ALP staff continued the packing conversion program to promote cardboard boxes over traditional wooden crates for fruit shipping to Russian and Kazakh markets. The program targets cold store partners and began with the late May cherry harvest. A local supplier of quality cardboard boxes was identified and linked to project partners. The vertically integrated orchardist/cold store/greenhouse partner in Oltariq District visited by the USAID delegation (see photo above) was also cited this month by the provincial khokimiyat and MAWR as a model farm enterprise. ALP has used his facility as a host demo site for the national exchange program (NEP) and the GOU similarly used his operation to host a group from Surkhandarya Province (a non-ALP Province).



**Advanced Irrigation Systems.** At farmer request ALP provided technical assistance in the design and installation of an advanced irrigation system for a vineyard in Payariq District, Samarkand Province. This demo vineyard will compare and contrast traditional and modern vineyard systems in a highly water-stressed and remote area with trellised grapes, traditional bush grapes and a grape nursery. Initial results are promising with a grape sapling survival rate of 98% with trellises compared to 80% with bush grapes.

*Trellised & Irrigated Grape Vineyard (background) & Nursery (foreground) - Payariq District, Samarkand Province*

**Cherry Chain.** University of California Cooperative Extension cherry expert, Joe Grant, continued work initiated during previous visits to improve cherry production prospects for the short and medium term. ALP staff and Mr. Grant developed outreach materials to disseminate findings and information on best cherry practices including planting, nutrient management, pollination and fruit handling. A fertilizer application guide and poster were produced based upon the foliar analysis (ALP-63) initiated in the previous season and derived from over 800 samples collected in 26 targeted districts. Similar guides and posters will be developed, as the season progresses, for other fruit crops based upon the foliar analysis. Additional cherry leaf samples were collected this month (total of 131 samples) for DNA analysis to complement the identification of matching pollinizer to producing varieties.

*Horticultural Exchange Program (HEP10) Selection.* On May 8 the HEP Selection Committee, consisting of USAID, MAWR and ALP representatives, conducted interviews with HEP-10 candidates. The 10<sup>th</sup> and final HEP will focus on “Fresh Fruit Storage and Marketing” with most representatives from the private sector (9) and 1 MAWR representative. The group is scheduled to depart on July 10 and return August 4. All supporting documents required for the J-1 visas were prepared this month.

*Other training programs.* Trainings and consultations conducted in May include: “Pest and disease control in vineyards and orchards” (3 trainings, Namangan Province, 42 participants), “Grape production in greenhouses” (2 trainings, Tashkent Province) and “Irrigation practices for orchards and vineyards” (18 trainings, Ferghana and Tashkent provinces, 174 participants). HEP participants continue to actively disseminate knowledge within their communities. Sayfutdinova Muhtaram (HEP9) helped organize and conduct the training of women leaders with 18 attendees, including 10 women.



*Grape Training - Ohangaran District, Tashkent Province*

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE.** No activities were conducted in May requiring an Environmental Assessment while Initial Environmental Reviews (IERs) were prepared as follows:

**Category-2: Categorical Exclusion for**



*Grape Greenhouse Training - Kibray District, Tashkent Province*

1. **Training:** Pest and Disease consultant, Zariq Pulatov, conducted “Pest and disease control and management” in Namangan Province. The consultant addressed all safety and health issues associated with pest and disease control.
2. **Training:** Best orchard irrigation practices training conducted in project districts by consultants Bakhtiyor Matyakubov and Anvar Toshaliyev. Consultants addressed environmental issues associated with orchard irrigation, especially measures against soil erosion.
3. **Training:** Grape best production practices in greenhouses conducted in Kibray District by ALP staff members.

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

- 1<sup>st</sup> week – Cherry Variety Contest (Tashkent); cold store presentation at USAID REC conference
- 2<sup>nd</sup> week – Construction of solar dryers (Andijan); cold store site consultations (Samarkand & Bukhara)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> week – Training on post-harvest fruit handling (Ferghana Valley)
- 4<sup>th</sup> week – Cold store monitoring & linking to brokers (Ferghana Valley); HEP pre-departure meeting