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# AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015**

## **OCTOBER 2015**

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# AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

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# USAID Moldova - MCC Moldova

## Agricultural Competitiveness & Enterprise Development Project

### Supplemental Report for Fiscal Year 2015

October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015

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## I. INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

The contract between USAID and Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) for the Agricultural Competitiveness & Enterprise Development (ACED) project was signed on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2011 and implementation of the project began in early April of 2011. The first six months of project activity (April - September 2011) were focused on start-up activities, which included staff recruitment, preparation of the initial Workplan, market survey work, and launching initial training activities. By the end of Fiscal Year 2011, the project team was in place and project deliverables were on schedule. During FY 2012 the project came into stride and full implementation of each of the project components, including the activities and sub-activities, were on schedule. During FY 2012 the ACED project also managed to launch Component 2 in Transnistria and by the end of FY 2012 this element was operating as intended.

FY 2013 marked an expansion of the level and scope of project activities, with each of the project elements implementing many more activities than they had during FY 2012. The Marketing activity completed its first major trade show in September 2012, the training activity was in full swing, the Value Chain support activity was providing assistance on financing and post-harvest handling and the Enabling Environment activity had provided new lab equipment to Moldova's national SPS lab. At this point the project had recorded some significant achievements and it was beginning to make progress on achieving the PMEP performance targets that were agreed to at the start of the project.

FY 2014 saw another year of ambitious implementation for the ACED project, with a high level of activity for each of the project Components and all of the sub-components. FY 2014 also saw the implementation of a major Gender Program (Women in Agricultural Networks) that covered the entire country with five regional WAN networks being implemented by four separate sub-contractors. The performance of the project in FY 2014 relative to the targets contained in the project's PMEP was also very good, with the project meeting, or exceeding, most of the performance targets in the plan. Performance was particularly good in the critical performance targets of HVA Sales (102% of target), HVA Exports (121% of target), Producers trained (113% of target) and Firms assisted leading to HVA investments (118% of target). All of these life-of-project performance targets have been exceeded with 25% of project life remaining to be completed.

FY 2015 continued previous implementations with even more success in all project Components and key target areas, with particular success in penetrating new markets. Highlights in this area included ACED helping to introduce the needed packing and sorting lines for producers to sell to these new markets; in addition to our active market linkages at trade fairs, this unlocked the door to new sales in non-traditional markets. In addition to selling 3 loads to Carrefour, Cordru ST exported to Egypt this year. They sent 7 loads to Egypt, as well as 7 loads to Bulgaria, and 10 to Romania. Viva Igna has shipped 3 loads to Mongolia, with the impression that this will continue with steady demand for product from Mongolia. Furthermore, Mialex Nord successfully sent a load to another buyer in Mongolia and sent 3 loads to the Romanian market. Domulterra exported \$23,000 (46 tons/ 3 loads) to Romania in the end of February. Additionally, Farm Prod exported two loads to Lidl Romania.

In addition, the Project experienced the following major results in FY 2015:

**Major Result 1: Sales & Exports.** During the 2015 Fiscal Year the ACED project has facilitated \$8.52M in sales by Moldovan producers and producer groups, with more than

\$1.1M of these sales coming from women owned or managed businesses. This total also includes nearly \$5.6M in exports of Moldovan fresh fruit & vegetables. Additional data is provided in the table below.

| 1. Sales facilitated Fiscal Year |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Total                            | \$8,528,710 |
| Women                            | \$1,133,786 |
| Value Chain                      |             |
| Veg                              | \$571,530   |
| TG                               | \$1,210,667 |
| A                                | \$4,365,926 |
| SF                               | \$1,788,583 |
| Other                            | \$592,004   |

**Major Result 2: New Investments.** The ACED project has facilitated new investments in the HVA value chains totaling more than \$5.2M during FY 2015, with \$1.1M of those investments being made by women owned or managed businesses. Additional data is provided in the table below.

| 2. Investments Fiscal Year |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Total                      | \$5,210,634 |
| Women                      | \$1,100,000 |
| Value Chain                |             |
| Veg                        | \$288,877   |
| TG                         | \$1,340,337 |
| A                          | \$2,059,125 |
| SF                         | \$457,890   |
| Other                      | \$1,064,405 |

**Major Result 3: Improved Techniques/Practices** - During Fiscal Year 2015 ACED project training and technical assistance has led to the adoption of improved techniques or practices on the part of 963 project beneficiaries. Out of this total, 372 of these beneficiaries were women (39%).

The following paragraphs in the following section of the report will provide brief highlights of the activities and events that were organized by each component and sub-activity of the project. Further details of these activities and events will be contained in Sections II and III of this report. Information on Donor Collaboration and Coordination will be contained in Section III and the Lessons Learned during FY 2015 are contained in Section IV.

## **II. PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Activities undertaken by the ACED project are organized under two Components, each of which has distinct goals and objectives. Component 1, which is the largest of the two (representing 85% of project funding), seeks to assist Moldovan farmers and processors to become more competitive with their High Value Agriculture (HVA) production and expand sales in new markets, particularly exports. Component 2 is focused on the Transnistrian region of Moldova (referred to as the Left Bank); activities in this component seek to foster development of private enterprises-- particularly micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises-- and create a network of private Business Service Providers (BSPs) within the Left Bank that can support the private sector.

The main accomplishments of ACED over the course of FY 2015 are listed below, organized by Project Component and Activity as laid out in the Project Contract.

### **COMPONENT 1: GROWING MOLDOVAN HVA SALES & EXPORTS**

Component 1 provides market development support and technical assistance and training to help Moldovan producers and agribusinesses leverage Moldova's comparative advantage in HVA production, and to overcome fundamental constraints and obstacles they face in meeting buyer expectations and attracting private sector investment.

The work builds on past USAID assistance and also supports the \$102 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) investment in Moldova's Centralized Irrigation Systems (CIS). This support seeks to facilitate a transition to high value agriculture (THVA) by farmers operating in the rehabilitated CIS zones and to increase rural incomes.

#### **Activity 1.1: Develop and Expand Market Opportunities**

##### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q3: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

- During the month of October the Marketing Team completed all the necessary preparations for the IndAgra show which took place in Bucharest from October 29<sup>th</sup> to November 2<sup>nd</sup>. This was the first time that ACED and Moldova Fruct had participated in this show as an effort to evaluate the value of this show regarding attendance. On the positive side, based on previous shows and contacts made at this show, shipments have now been made to Carrefour Romania with golden delicious apples and there discussions under way with Metro Romania. One of the items that commanded a lot of interest were the Moldovan dried plums and dried plums with chocolate that buyers responded to very positively once they tasted the product.
- On the evening of the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, in conjunction with the IndAgra show, the ACED team coordinated a very upscale B2B event at the American Ambassador's Residence, in close collaboration with the US embassy in Bucharest. The concept of this event was to promote Moldovan fruit and wine to Romanian retailers and supermarkets, and to have key buyers from Romania connect directly with Moldovan producers in a relaxed atmosphere. There were 140 attendees on hand including government dignitaries, local press, retail buyers, open market buyers, food blog writers, the Moldovan producers, as well as five ACED staff members on hand who all worked together to make sure all possible connections could be realized. The Moldovan Ambassador saw some of the clips on TV that evening and conveyed his thanks to ACED the next day when he visited the ACED booth at IndAgra.

- In October ACED also arranged for a visit to Moldova by Chris White (the Managing Director for the company that publishes EUROFRUIT magazine) from October 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup>. ACED arranged for meetings with the World Bank, the Ministry of Agriculture (meeting with Minister Bumacov), the US Ambassador, and local retail chains, along with field visits to one of the MCC irrigation zones and various cherry and apple producers. Based on his visit to Moldova he has also written a very positive four-page article on the agricultural potential of Moldova that appeared in the January edition of EUROFRUIT.

- From the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, the project sponsored a booth at the World of Perishables trade show in Dubai along with nine producers and Iurie Fala from Moldova Fruct. This was the first time that Moldova has exhibited at this trade show in the Gulf region, which is focused on fresh produce only. The show at about 130 booths in total, and it is estimated that there were about 5000 visitors at the show. The picture



shows Lilian Cipciruc and Peter White at the World of Perishables show with Chris White (on left). Some of the countries that have expressed serious interest in Moldovan products were Oman, Lebanon, India, and Egypt. There have already been two shipments of apples to the Gulf that have taken place and there are buyers who are very keen on grapes (Moldovan variety) with discussions currently under way on payment terms and box sizes being the challenge. In summary the WOP show was the most positive show that ACED has participated in to date when it comes to generating new commercial leads and identifying serious buyers who want to take the initiative and place their first order if requirements could be met. The Gulf presents a tremendous opportunity in the future but certainly the producers will need to make changes regarding sorting, grading and packing to meet the market requirements.

### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

This quarter was highlighted by the two international shows that took place in February - the Fruit Logistica (FL) show in Berlin and then the GulFood (GF) show in Dubai:

#### **Fruit Logistica Berlin – February 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>**

- This is the largest fresh produce show in Europe and one that the ACED project has participated in for the last three years. FL offered a tremendous platform for the producers to exhibit their products as well as to educate and inform themselves on the latest technological advancements in machinery, packaging and labeling. This year we had seven producers in the “Moldova” booth (Domultera, Codru, Basan Agro, Darurile Basarabiei, Viva Igna, Lefrucom and ComFruitFresh Coop). In addition to the producers themselves there was representation from the Moldova Fruct association (with Iurie Fala) along with five ACED project staff members. This year, as in previous years, ACED had arranged for a 39 square meter booth. For the first time the ACED project arranged for Moldovan TV press coverage of the FL show and overall this coverage was very well received, with the report on the Fruit Logistica show aired

on the Moldova 1 TV channel on Saturday evening, the 7<sup>th</sup> of February. From a commercial perspective the results were mixed because of the reduced foot traffic, but the quality of the visitors to the booth was better than in previous years. The overall level of exposure for the producers at this show was not that great, however the sustained presence and involvement of Moldova in this show is still very important. There was definite interest in Moldovan apples from many countries, such as Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Mongolia, Romania, Algeria, India and other select markets.

### **GulFood Dubai – February 8<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>**

- GulFood Dubai has become the world's largest food and hospitality show and for the second consecutive year ACED, and its producer partners, proudly exhibited a full range of Moldovan products under the country banner "Moldova - Tastes makes the difference". In a difference from the show last year ACED had a much larger (57 m<sup>2</sup>) customized booth with 11 individual podiums set up for each of the participating companies/organizations. A wide range of products were shown, including apples, table grapes, honey, dried fruit (both plain and chocolate/yoghurt covered), compotes, canned fruit and vegetables, fruit juices, sugar added nectars and a full range of dried apple chips. The participating companies included some of the major food processors from Moldova, such as Orhei Vit and Alfa Nistru, MMD (owners of the Tiraspol Baby Food Factory), Vioniservice, Coval&Co, Rustas, Apinatur, Casa Albini, along with the Moldova Fruct association. As with FL there was a Moldovan press team at the show and they covered the event, and most importantly, the impressive range of interest in Moldovan products. The TV report on the GF show appeared on the Moldova 1 TV channel immediately following the show and it was informative and captured the high level of interest generated by the fresh and processed Moldovan products. This also reinforced the wide recognition and appreciation for the taste of Moldovan fruit and processed items in many countries and the use of the "Taste makes the difference" approach. The number of countries that participate in the GulFood show is very extensive and the interest generated by the Moldovan products came from a number of countries, including India, Egypt, Georgia, the UAE, Iraq, Pakistan, Lebanon, Yemen, Algeria, Tunisia, and even Canada. The interest generated in Moldovan brands and producers was fantastic with the underlying appreciation of the taste was very obvious across all of the products shown. During the GF show ACED was invited to give a presentation on a number of Moldovan products to the Al Maya supermarket chain which is one of the largest retail chains in the Gulf region.
- During the month of February the ACED Marketing Team facilitated a visit to Moldova by Mr. Sanjeev Gulati (from the company IG international) from India who visited to review the potential for shipments of apples that he would like to have begun at once. He visited five Moldovan producers and specifically had a strong interest to work with Anatolie Trincano for the supply of Braeburn and Florina apples.
- In February the situation with the Russian ban changed again with select producers on the Right bank (10 have been approved) now being able to ship to Russia along with all companies on the Left Bank. This shift, with the partial lifting of the ban for some producers, takes on a psychological meaning to the producer community that is important to note. The commercial landscape of Russia has now changed forever, and although shipments continue to take place and many producers are relieved that the situation is changing, the push for new markets must now be stronger than ever within the producer community.
- New market expansion, and the development of additional long term market linkages, is the focus for the ACED Team as the answer to reducing Moldova's dependence on

the Russian market that is a slippery slope.

### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q1: APRIL TO JUNE 2015**

- During the month of April there was a visit to Mumbai, India to gather additional information on the Indian market requirements and to meet with traders who have been met at the various trade shows and have expressed a strong interest to start importing apples into India. In addition to the commercial side, further clarification was needed as to what are the administrative documents that are required to move ahead and set up a bi-lateral commercial agreement between Moldova and India.

The intention was to get all of the necessary documents signed before, or shortly after, the new harvest begins so that India can be a viable market for Moldova to export to in 2015 and 2016. Commercially, in India there were visits to traders such as IG International, Yuppa Group and Yoshi Produce Market, as well as to the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO). The picture at the right shows Peter White meeting with the Chairman of Yoshi Produce Market in Mumbai. As is well known the Indian market, with 1.2 billion people, is a tremendous market and it is continuing to grow. Currently 10 million boxes of fruit and vegetables are imported per year into India, with the first imports having taken place as recently as 1999, and this number will continue to increase.



- During the quarter the Marketing Team confirmed the international trade shows that the project will participate in, along with the corresponding booth sizes and other arrangements. Shows included **World Food Istanbul** from Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup>; the **World of Perishables show in Dubai** October 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup>; the **Anuga 2015** show in Koln Germany between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> of October; the Indagra show on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October; and **Gulfood Dubai** in February of 2016.



- During the quarter the ACED Marketing Team, along with Moldova Fruct staff, hosted a two and a half day Inward Buyer Visit from a representative of FRUITSERVICE LLC, Mr. Hannes Lintner, which is one of the main suppliers of fresh produce for the Lidl supermarket chain. The Lidl chain has over 10,000 supermarkets throughout Europe and FRUITSERVICE LLC is considering Moldova as a potential supply country for fresh fruit and vegetables for the 200 Lidl supermarkets in Romania and the 72 Lidl supermarkets in Bulgaria. The scope of his visit was to assess the quality and quantity of the products that Moldova could supply. He was impressed with what he saw, pointing out such advantages as the proximity to Romania and Bulgaria, simplified logistics and producers being large in size compared to other countries that he has recently visited.

- During the quarter the ACED Marketing Team met with two representatives from the USA who are interested in importing frozen sweet and tart cherries from Moldova for their juice and drink products marketed under the Cheribundi name ([www.Cheribundi.com](http://www.Cheribundi.com)). The visitors were the CEO of the company, Mr. Steve Pear, and Mr. Vadim Zverev who represents the venture capital investment company Emil Capital Partners. Presently they purchase more than 85% of the cherries from New York and Michigan, and the balance comes from Poland. The ACED team spent two days with them and visited Rustas in Transnistria, Cojocaru in Criuleni and Alfa Nistru in Soroca, with all of them having positive aspects to their operations that created interest.



- During the course of the quarter there have been a number of meetings with the Linella supermarket chain on how ACED can work with them to further improve their produce department, increase the range of locally procured items and minimize import substitution. Preliminary meetings were held with Mr. Cristian Morath, the CEO of Linella, identifying his overall strategy and the level of commitment to implement local supply contracts and drive the message of “Made in Moldova” to the consumer base, with their main competition being the open markets and other domestic retailers. Linella is now a chain with clear direction from the top that supports locally grown products with a definite sense of urgency which is congruent with our strategy for the balance of the ACED program.



### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q2: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015**

- The **World Food Istanbul** show took place between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> of September where Moldova had a country booth of 36m<sup>2</sup> (see picture at the right) with podiums for the individual producers and/or associations participating to provide them company distinction, yet project one collective country image. The producers that participated in the booth included Orhei Vit (Oleg Cojuhari), Vitalie Druta (hazelnuts), Mr. Condratiuc (honey) and Mr. Matchovski who showed apples. The associations were represented by Iurie Fala from Moldova Fruct and Sergui Zabolotni from the Table Grape association. In addition there was a representative from GIZ (Maxim Popov), Aliona from Dalsler Logsitic and two traders, namely Elite Fruct and Mialex Nord.
- During the quarter the Marketing Team was very focused on all of the details regarding the two shows that will take place in October, with the first one being the World of Perishables (WOP) show in Dubai (Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>), followed immediately by the Anuga show in Cologne (Oct 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>). The Anuga show in Cologne Germany was the first time for Moldova to showcase their products in this venue and this huge international show has been viewed as a “must participate” by the processor community.

- During the quarter there was good progress made with Linella in setting strategic objectives for the next six months. The focus of their efforts in the coming months was to enhance the image of their produce sections, while promoting locally grown fruit and vegetables featuring local producers. Longer-term Linella wants to improve their distribution cold chain and to differentiate themselves from the open markets by promoting their quality assurance, and the overall shopping experience, where the customer has greater confidence compared to the open market.
- During the quarter Lilian Cipciriuc from the Marketing Team presented a seminar targeted at a group of women from rural Causeni which also included speakers from Linella and Politrans. Linella introduced its requirements for the delivery of fresh produce to their retail stores and Politrans outlined the various requirements relative to fresh produce export regulations. ACED updated the participants on the key things needed to be well informed about relative to external markets, such as product requirements, certification requirements, competition, packaging, price points and other general information that is imperative before considering new market entry.

## **Activity 1.2: Upgrade Production to Meet Buyer Requirements**

The objective is to increase Moldovan farmer HVA incomes by lowering production costs, increasing marketable output, increasing the quality of their production, and capturing better prices. ACED training and demonstration activities prepared producers, farmer-based groups, and cooperatives to respond competitively to market opportunities.

### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q3: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

#### **Sub-Activity 1.2a - Upgrade Production to Meet Market Requirements**

During this quarter the Training Team, in collaboration with sub-contracted Regional Training Service Providers (RTSPs), organized twelve technical seminars that were attended by more than 280 individual farmers. These events were as follows:

- ✓ Setting up New Table Grapes plantations in Cahul town
- ✓ Setting up New Modern Sweet Cherry Orchards in Cahul town
- ✓ Strawberries seedling production and setting up new plantations in Copanca villages
- ✓ Plum processing drying/freezing in Vălcineț town
- ✓ Strawberries seedling production and setting up new plantations in Ungheni town
- ✓ Plum processing drying/freezing in Vărzărești village
- ✓ Specifics of greenhouse construction for the Republic of Moldova in Vadul lui Isac village
- ✓ Setting up New Apple Orchards in Ungheni town
- ✓ Setting up New Table Grape plantations in Sadaclia village
- ✓ Setting up new plum orchards in Vărzărești village
- ✓ Setting up new modern apple orchards in Zgurița village
- ✓ Setting up a new plum orchards in Vălcineț village

#### **Sub-Activity 1.2b - Enhance Field Demonstration Plots**

During this quarter the Training Team also began to organize the Farmer Field Days, which take place at the ACED demonstration activity sites, at the demo activity sites that have been established over the past year. During this quarter the Training Team organized the

following Farmer Field Days:

- ✓ Setting up a New Modern Sweet Cherry Orchard in Năvîrneţ village
- ✓ Plum processing drying/freezing in Edineţ town
- ✓ Energy conservation techniques Double-layer cover film in Puhăceni village
- ✓ Setting up table grape vineyard and introducing drip irrigation systems in Ermoclia village
- ✓ Setting up a new modern cherry orchard in Olăneşti village
- ✓ Soil mulching and raised beds on strawberry plantation in Hristoforovca village



During the quarter these events attracted more than 170 participants who have been introduced to these new practices and technologies that have been demonstrated at the demo activity sites, and explained during the Farmer Field Days.

#### Organization of International Study Tours

One of the most important events for the quarter was the Study Tour to Turkey on Advanced Technologies in Tomato Production and post-harvest handling, which was organized by the ACED Training Team for 13 tomato producers who were accompanied by national consultants and an ACED technical team member.

#### **Sub-Activity 1.2b - Enhance Field Demonstration Plots**

The Training Team has also begun to organize field days, which take place at the ACED demonstration activity sites, at the sites that have been established over the past year. During this quarter the Training Team organized the following field days:

- ✓ Specifics of fruits harvesting & pre-cooling. New peach varieties in Găgăuzia, Comrat
- ✓ Energy conservation techniques: Double-layer cover film in Anenii Noi, Puhăceni
- ✓ Plum: harvesting, storage, new cultivars in Edineţ
- ✓ New Table Grapes Cultivars and Using Gable System in Vineyard in Cahul, Burlacu
- ✓ Cucumber production in open field, using a support system in Sîngerei, Sîngereii Noi
- ✓ Harvesting Techniques and Quality Parameters for Table Grapes in Cahul, Colibaşi
- ✓ Harvesting Techniques and Quality Parameters for Apples in Ocnîţa, Bîrlădeni
- ✓ Cucumber production in open fields and IPM in Sîngerei, Sîngereii Noi
- ✓ Harvesting Platforms and Quality Parameters for Apples in Edinet
- ✓ Harvesting Techniques and Quality Parameters for Table Grapes in Cahul, Pelinei
- ✓ Harvesting Techniques and Quality Parameters for Table Grapes in Vulcăneşti

During the quarter these events attracted more than 250 participants who have been introduced to these new technologies that have been demonstrated, and explained, at the ACED demo sites.

#### Other Training Team Related Activities:

During this quarter the Training Team, with assistance from local national consultants, along with two international consultants (Lynn Long and Marlene Long) completed the preparations for the Cherry Production Guide and this new technical manual has been added to the long list of guides and manuals produced by the ACED project over the past 3+ years.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

##### **Sub-Activity 1.2a - Upgrade Production to Meet Market Requirements**

During this quarter the Training Team, in collaboration with the sub-contracted Regional Training Service Providers (RTSPs), organized fifteen technical seminars which were attended by more than 382 individual farmers. Details of these events are as follows:

- ✓ Peculiarities of Pruning on Apple Trees for the 2015 season in Edineț, Ruseni
- ✓ Plum Tree Pruning and Training in Drochia, Zgurița
- ✓ Peculiarities of Pruning on Apple Trees for 2015 season in Soldănești town
- ✓ Peculiarities of Pruning on Apple Trees for 2015 season Rîșcani, Văratîc
- ✓ Tomato Seedling Production on Pallets in Anenii Noi, Roșcani
- ✓ Peculiarities of Pruning on Apple Trees for 2015 season in Briceni, Corjeuți
- ✓ Tomato Seedling Production on Pallets in Ungheni town
- ✓ Pest Management in Plum Orchards in Șoldănești town
- ✓ Winter Pruning in Table Grape Vineyards in Cahul, Cucoara
- ✓ Winter Pruning in Table Grape Vineyards in Căușeni, Taraclia
- ✓ Winter Pruning in Table Grape Vineyards in Cimișlia
- ✓ Winter Pruning in Table Grape Vineyards in Găgăuzia, Chirsova
- ✓ IPM in Apple Orchards in Briceni, Corjeuți
- ✓ IPM and Winter Pruning in Peach Orchards in Ștefan Vodă
- ✓ IPM in Apple Orchards in Șoldănești

##### **Sub-Activity 1.2b - Enhance Field Demonstration Plots**

During this quarter the Training Team organized the following Farmer Field Days:

- ✓ Training on Manual and Mechanized Pruning on Apple Trees at Scutaru Victor FF in Edinet
- ✓ Peculiarities of Pruning Sweet Cherry Trees for the 2015 Season at Farm Prod LLC in Ștefan Vodă, Olănești
- ✓ Winter Pruning in Table Grape Vineyards at Pelinita Loghin LLC in Cahul, Pelinei
- ✓ Winter Pruning and Canopy Training for Sweet Cherries at Andrian Davidescu GT in Anenii Noi

These events attracted more than 110 participants who have been introduced to the new practices and technologies that have been demonstrated, and explained, at the ACED demo site Farmer Field Days.

## **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q1: APRIL TO JUNE 2015**

### **Sub-Activity 1.2a - Upgrade Production to Meet Market Requirements**

During this quarter the Training Team, in collaboration with sub-contracted Regional Training Service Providers (RTSPs) organized more than 24 technical seminars which were attended by more than 541 individual famers. These seminars were organized at multiple locations around the country, with the seminars being concentrated the regions where the particular fruit or crop is one of the key crops of the area. The various topics that were addressed in the technical seminars organized this quarter are as follows:

- ✓ INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) IN CHERRY ORCHARDS
- ✓ CUCUMBER PRODUCTION IN GREENHOUSES
- ✓ INCREASING APPLE QUALITY BY MEANS OF CHEMICAL THINNING
- ✓ THINNING OF FLOWERS/FRUIT TO ENSURE QUALITY FRUIT
- ✓ TOMATO PRODUCTION IN THE FIRST CYCLE
- ✓ IPM AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN CUCUMBER PRODUCTION
- ✓ TOMATO FERTILIZATION AND IPM
- ✓ GREEN OPERATIONS IN TABLE GRAPE VINEYARDS
- ✓ FERTILIZATION OF APPLE TREES
- ✓ GREEN OPERATIONS, IPM AND ANTI-HAIL SYSTEMS IN CHERRY ORCHARDS
- ✓ GREEN OPERATIONS AND MANUAL THINNING IN PEACH ORCHARDS
- ✓ CUCUMBER PRODUCTION IN OPEN FIELDS
- ✓ GREENHOUSE CONSTRUCTIONS SPECIFICS FOR MOLDOVA
- ✓ TABLE GRAPE CROP QUALITY MANAGEMENT
- ✓ NEW SWEET CHERRY VARIETIES AND HARVESTING PROCESSES

### **Sub-Activity 1.2b - Enhance Field Demonstration Plots**

During this quarter the Training Team also continued to organize Farmer Field Days, which take place at existing ACED demonstration activity sites, and at demo activity sites that have been established over the past year. During this quarter the Training Team organized the following Farmer Field Days:

- ✓ LED LIGHTING IN CUCUMBER SEEDLING PRODUCTION
- ✓ MECHANICAL PLANTING OF SEEDLING MATERIAL IN FRUIT NURSERIES
- ✓ GREENHOUSE CONSTRUCTION WITH IMPROVED DESIGNS
- ✓ MODERN STRAWBERRY PRODUCTION AND IPM METHODS
- ✓ GREEN OPERATIONS AND ANTI-HAIL SYSTEMS IN CHERRY ORCHARDS
- ✓ STRAWBERRY HARVESTING AND POST-HARVEST HANDLING

During the quarter these events attracted more than 120 participants who have been introduced to these new practices and technologies that have been demonstrated, and explained, at the ACED demo sites.

### **International Study Tour:**

The highlight of this quarter was a Study Tour on Advanced Technologies in Sweet Cherry



Production organized by the Training Team in Turkey for 13 cherry producers and national consultants. The group attended a seminar that covered all of the important components of cherry production and they visited several cherry orchards with both traditional and modern management techniques. Also, the largest cherry packing house in Turkey, owned by the Alara Company and other smaller ones, were visited by the group. The picture shows the group during their visit to the Alara packing house.



### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q2: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015**

The Activity 1.2 Team organized three high profile events during the quarter, two international study tours and one national forum, as follows:

➤ International Study Tour - Advanced Technologies in Cabbage & Cucumber Production for Processing was organized during the period between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> of July and the group made field visits in both Hungary and Germany. This study tour had a total of 16 participants who were cucumber producers, processors and local national consultants. The picture at the right shows the Moldova delegation observing an advanced model of a cucumber planting machine during the visit at a cucumber production company.

➤ **International Study Tour** - Modern Practices in Vegetable Production was organized during the period between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> of July in Kiev, Ukraine, for 17 vegetable producers and national consultants. During the event the participating vegetable growers from Moldova gained knowledge regarding new innovations in modern vegetable production (new hybrids, irrigation equipment, and greenhouse design). The photo at the right shows the vegetable producers on this study tour visiting an experimental greenhouse of the Rijk Zwan company in Kiev.



➤ **National Producers Forum** – The Plum Producers & Processors National Forum was organized in Nisporeni with the participation of 60 participants, including plum producers, plum processors, national consultants, producer and processor input suppliers, local scientific researchers and Ministry of Agriculture representatives. The photo at the right shows many of the participants at the forum, along with the



ACED team that implemented the event and Rodica Miron.

In June, the ACED Training Team continued its ongoing series of technical training seminars aimed at producers from the various value chains, having as training subjects the production processes that are being undertaken by farmers during this time of year. In this context, the following seminars were been delivered at different ACED locations around the country and they have been attended by more than 130 HVA producers:

- ✓ One seminar was delivered on Apricot Production in Chişinău
- ✓ Two seminars were delivered on Peach Harvesting and Pre-Cooling/New Peach Varieties in Ştefan Vodă and Cahul towns
- ✓ Three seminars were delivered on Harvesting and Post-Harvest Technologies for Table Grapes/New Varieties of Table Grapes in Soldanesti and Floresti towns and Zgurita village
- ✓ Two seminars were delivered on New Table Grape Varieties/Quality Standards and Harvesting Specifics for Table Grapes in Causeni and Cucoara villages.
- ✓ One seminar on New Apple Varieties/Apple Harvesting and Storage in Vărătic village, Rîscani district
- ✓ One seminar on New Table Grape Varieties/Quality Standards and Harvesting Specifics for Table Grapes in Cimislia town.

The ACED Training Team also continued to implement Farmer Field Day training events that were organized at ACED demo activity sites. During this quarter the following Farmer Field Days were organized by the Activity 1.2 Team:

- ✓ Feathered Method of Apple Seedling Material for use in a Tree Fruit Nursery in Jora de Mijloc, Orhei district
- ✓ Greenhouse Construction with Improved Design in Pîrîta village, Dubăsari town
- ✓ White Reflective Film usage in Apple Orchards for Fruit Color Improvement in Jora de Mijloc village, Orhei district

During this quarter, ACED also hosted an international consultant who undertook an Apricot Production STTA assignment – Pavel Voracek from the Czech Republic. Pavel visited, and provided on-site consultancy assistance, for 10 apricot producers through the country during his time in Moldova. At the end of the assignment, he delivered a Training of Trainers seminar to provide training for 19 participants.

### **Activity 1.3: Upgrade the Moldovan HVA Value Chain**

The objective of Activity 1.3 – Demand-driven Technical Assistance to Upgrade the HVA Value Chain – is to identify and support entities across the targeted HVA value chains that will drive the upgrading of production and processing capabilities in order to ensure that high-quality produce is delivered to the market. To support this goal the ACED project has created a Value Chain Support Center which provides technical assistance, using local service providers on a cost-sharing basis, for producers, producer groups and agribusinesses considered ready to expand and develop new and existing businesses in the HVA sector.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q3: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

- On October the ACED Value Chain Team organized a visit by Kent Larson, the USAID Country Representative for Moldova, to Basan Agro (Cimislia district), a

cooperative with six table grape producers that has actively participated in the ACED production training and joint marketing programs.

**Sub-Activity 1.3(a): Develop the Value Chain Support Center (VCSC)**

- The team of national experts that provided support to growers within pilot implementation of gibberellins in their vineyards has delivered the final report. For most of the varieties in the trial the results were very encouraging, with measurable increases in fruit quality, which can bring a price premium for the growers.
- The Value Chain Team provided guidance to Lolly Berry Ltd to obtain all of the necessary Ministry of Agriculture and National Food Safety Agency permits for the import of blueberry plants for the establishment of the first commercial blueberry production fields in Moldova.
- The Value Chain Team prepared a demo activity concept paper for a modern post-harvest research laboratory that will be established in partnership with the Technical University of Moldova (UTM).
- Following the successful ACED-supported registration of gibberellins (GA3 and GA4+7) in Moldova, for use on Apples and Table Grapes, a team of national consultants has been engaged to support growers that will pilot the use of this technology in their orchards and vineyards.
- During the previous quarter, through its training events and field visits, ACED supported the implementation of fruit maturity assessment techniques at more than 30 apple growers, including Petru Maler and Filip Beiu farms, two AAF-loan recipients from the Jora de Jos MCC irrigation zone.
- The ACED Value Chain Team continued to link HVA value chain companies with local and international Business Service Providers (BSPs) for the provision of business development services. Over the course of this past quarter, ACED co-financed the development of investment plans, business plans and environment management plans for numerous client companies, many of them planning to apply for AAF financing:
  - ✓ TerraVitis SRL from Burlacu, Cahul – this plan covers a \$500,000 investment in a new apple and table grape cold storage facility (a potential AAF applicant);
  - ✓ AMV-Grape SRL from Cahul – this plans covers investments in extending table grape production and the installation of a drip irrigation system (a potential AAF applicant);
  - ✓ Pronat-Agro SRL from Sofia, Drochia – this plan covers investment in extending their berry production fields and the development of the post-harvest infrastructure needed for their crops (a pre-cooling chamber and a drying tunnel);
  - ✓ Tertiuc Simion FF from Sadova, Calarasi – this plan covers planned investments in a strawberry production greenhouse (a potential AAF applicant).

**SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

**Sub-Activity 1.3a – Develop the Value Chain Support Center (VCSC)**

- During the month of January the Value Chain Team, working through the Value Chain Support Center (VCSC), signed MoUs with two groups of Moldova-Fruit members to cost-share the season-long assignments of international fruit production advisors from the foreign companies Avenir-Qualite (from France) and Griba (from Italy). During this quarter, the first assignments were carried out. Two Italian fruit production experts from Griba worked with a group of eight members of the Moldova-

Fruct Association, while a consultant from Avenir-Qualite came to Moldova to work with three other MF members. The state of each orchard plot was assessed, and based on this assessment individual pruning and nutrition strategies were developed.

- A similar agreement was signed through the VCSC with the Moldova-Fruct Association itself regarding the organization of a series of technical training sessions that were led by three European experts. Training events were held on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> – Thinning and Calcium Nutrition seminars with experts from L.Gobby (from Italy), and March 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> – Irrigation and Crop Nutrition with experts from Acquagri (from Portugal).
- The MoU for ACED consulting support for the upgrade, to the requirements of IFS Food standard, of the food safety system was signed with Orhei-Vit SA, as part of the processor's strategy to enter the EU market with their retail products.

#### **Sub-Activity 1.3b - Improve Access to HVA Financing**

- Based on the experience of Post-Harvest Handling demo activities, and the already accomplished Access to Agricultural Finance assignments, the VCSC has provided guidance for the following project clients:
  - ✓ **Ceteronis SRL** (Gura-Bicului division, Roscani MCC CIS) – this company plans investments in a new greenhouse which will cover two hectares;
  - ✓ **Amonti-Agro SRL** from Navirnet, Floresti – this company plans investments in a new cold storage facility, with a hydrocooler and grading line, for sweet cherries;
  - ✓ **Rusmiliud SRL** from Jora de Mijloc, Orhei – this company plans investments in a new large-scale fruit drying facility.
- Two producer groups established in 2014 through the ACED Joint Marketing Program defined their investment plans, become officially registered as cooperatives of entrepreneurs and they have applied for investment assistance from the World Bank-funded Moldova Agriculture Competitiveness Project (MAC-P).

#### **Sub-Activity 1.3c - Business Models for HVA Value Chain Investments**

- After a positive environmental review (from the Mission Environmental Officer – Peter Luzik), the MoU with Lolly Berry Ltd has been prepared for the implementation of the “Blueberry Production” demonstration activity that includes the establishment of the first commercial blueberry plantation in Moldova. Procurement of the needed inputs (to be used as the ACED cost-share) has been completed and the items have been delivered to the demo host farmer. An application for the official testing and registration of six blueberry varieties, in the National Catalogue of Plant Varieties, was submitted to the State Variety Testing Commission.
- After the positive environmental review, the MoU with the Technical University of Moldova, and the Moldova Fruct Association, established a modern Fresh Produce Post-Harvest Biology and Technology Laboratory (PHH Lab). The lab accelerates the piloting, and the adoption of, modern post-harvest techniques and technologies that are required for the Moldovan HVA sector to become more competitive in export markets.

#### **Sub-Activity 1.3d - Association Development for Value Chain Entities**

- ACED has worked with USAID and nominated seven young growers for participation in the Open World Program on Marketing through Producer Organizations.

## **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q1: APRIL TO JUNE 2015**

### **Sub-Activity 1.3a – Develop the Value Chain Support Center (VCSC)**

- During this quarter, two Italian fruit production experts from Griba worked with a group of eight members of the Moldova-Fruite Association, while a consultant from Avenir-Qualite came to Moldova to work with another three Moldova Fruite members. The key topics of the assignments were flower & fruit thinning strategies to achieve target fruit sizing and improved fruit appearance.
- On April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, Mr Alessio Zanasi, from the Italian firm L.Gobbi, conducted two seminars on *Thinning and Calcium Nutrition for Fruit Orchards*, followed by two seminars on April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> by Marc Trapman, from the Dutch consulting firm RIMpro, regarding *Decision Support Systems for Crop Protection*. Each of these events was attended by more than 25 growers who are members of the Moldova Fruite association.
- The contract for the consulting and training services to be provided to Orhei-Vit SA, to help them upgrade their quality and food safety system, has been completed and the activity launching event was held in late April.

### **Sub-Activity 1.3b - Improve Access to HVA Financing**

- Two marketing cooperatives, established with ACED support as part of the Joint Marketing Program - the Dammag Grup from Rezina and Grape Line from Cahul - were selected by the World Bank-financed Moldovan Agricultural Competitiveness Project (MAC-P) for matching grant financing of their post-harvest infrastructure projects. The total investment planned by these two groups will exceed 18 million MDL (which is approximately \$1.0M at the current MDL/USD exchange rate). The development of business and environmental management plans, with ACED co-financing, was initiated for two VCSC applicants:
  - ✓ Plaiul Birladean SRL intends to apply for an AAF loan (~200 thousand EUR) to procure an apple grading line and a tray former that will be installed in the packing area built as part of an ACED PHH demo implemented in 2013 - 2014;
  - ✓ TG-Forest SRL intends to apply for financing to the Polish Ag Development Loan Program (~1 million EUR) to construct a table grape cold storage in Suruceni.

### **Sub-Activity 1.3c - Business Models for HVA Value Chain Investments**

- The first Farmer Field Day at the “Blueberry Production” demonstration activity at Lolly Berry farm was held on May 14<sup>th</sup> and was attended by more than 65 participants, more than double what was expected. The event was very well covered by the national press, and it was featured in the monthly MCC Compact Newsletter. The picture shows Iurie Tarai explaining to the participants at the Farmer Field Day the process he went through to prepare the soil and to plant the blueberry seedlings that he had imported from Poland on his farm.
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- The Davidescu FF successfully installed a sweet cherry hydro-cooler and a sorting line as part of “Sweet Cherry Sorting and Packing for Export Markets” demonstration activity implemented by ACED in partnership with this MCC CIS zone grower. The picture above shows Adrian Davidescu in front of the hydro-cooler with a picking basket for the cherries which was also part of the demo.



### **Sub-Activity 1.3d - Association Development for Value Chain Entities**

- Three young growers nominated by USAID and ACED (Baban Marin, Balan Maxim, and Viorel Bezman) have participated in the US Embassy organized Open World Program on Marketing through Producer Organizations. The nominations came from the producer groups that are actively working with ACED on joint marketing activities.
- During a meeting held on June 4<sup>th</sup> and subsequent exchanges of emails, ACED shared its experience with the development of producer marketing groups (cooperatives) with the People in Need NGO (Czech Republic), which runs a cooperative development project in Moldova which is funded by the Czech Development Agency (CZDA).
- Terms of Reference were developed for services needed to develop the new website for the Moldova-Fruit Association that will better communicate the increased level of training, lobbying and marketing activities that the Association now offers to its members.



### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q2: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015**

#### **Sub-Activity 1.3a – Develop the Value Chain Support Center (VCSC)**

- During this quarter, two Italian fruit production experts from Griba worked with a group of eight members of the Moldova-Fruit Association (MF), while a consultant from Avenir-Qualite came to Moldova to work with three other MF members. The key topics of the assignments were irrigation management and foliar calcium applications to improve fruit shelf-life. The results of the Avenir-Qualite technical assistance were presented to more than 40 apple growers from northern Moldova during a seminar which was hosted by ACED client Darurile Basarabiei (pictured).
- During the reporting quarter, Stone House has finalized the development of the logo and packaging design for a new range of fruit juices to be marketed by Orhei-Vit SA, the largest Moldovan fruit processor and juice bottler. An ACED-hired local national consultant continued to assist Orhei-Vit SA with the upgrade of their food safety and quality systems to meet the requirements of the IFS Food standard.
- The Value Chain Support Center has finalized the work on the business and environmental management plans for the Vladimir Popovici FF from Scaieni, Donduseni and Lidia Musteata II from Cainari, Causeni, with both companies

planning to invest in the construction of new fruit cold store facilities based on the plans prepared with ACED assistance.

#### **Sub-Activity 1.3b - Improve Access to HVA Financing**

- The Aspect Fruct marketing cooperative from Edinet, established with ACED support as part of the project's Joint Marketing Program, was selected by the World Bank-financed Moldovan Agricultural Competitiveness Project for matching grant financing of their planned investments in fruit drying operations.
- The ACED-supported Access to Agricultural Finance (the Ag finance part of the MCC Compact for Moldova) loan application submitted by the Vladimir Popovici FF from Scaieni, Donduseni, was approved by the partner bank for finalization of the construction of their apple storage facility.

#### **Sub-Activity 1.3c - Business Models for HVA Value Chain Investments**

- The impact of the ACED & Lolly Berry "Blueberry Production" demonstration activity continued to be shared with the Moldovan HVA community and other interested parties. Iurii Tarai, the owner of Lolly Berry, made a presentation on his investment in blueberries in July at an investor's roundtable organized by the MCC Compact in Moldova. The picture at the right shows Lurie (on the right), speaking about his blueberry operation with the American Ambassador to Moldova (Mr James Pettit, on the left) and the Director of the Millennium Challenge Account in Moldova, Ms. Valentina Badrajan.
- On August 20<sup>th</sup>, the Lolly Berry fields were inspected, and approved by, representatives from the State Variety Registration Commission of Moldova. During the month of September, with support from ACED's local national consultant Parascovia Sava, Lolly Berry submitted the field and crop monitoring report which is required by the State Variety Registration Commission as part of the new blueberry variety registration process.
- Dissemination of the experience gained from the "Sweet Cherry Sorting & Packing for Export Markets" demonstration activity continued following the launch of this activity in June. The Andrian Davidescu FF, an MCC CIS grower and ACED partner, hosted visits by several of the larger Moldovan sweet cherry growers to the Agrovit-Exim cold storage facility where the hydro-cooler and the sorting line had been installed for use on the demo activity.
- During the reporting quarter, the refrigerated cabinets being provided by the ACED project were installed at the Technical University of Moldova as part of the plan to establish a modern Fresh Produce Post-Harvest Biology & Technology Laboratory, an activity that is being implemented by ACED in partnership with the Technical University of Moldova and the Moldova Fruct Association.

#### **Sub-Activity 1.3d - Association Development for Value Chain Entities**

- Web Total Soft developed the technical and graphical design of the new website for the Moldova Fruct Association and began the coding phase.
  - The VCSC provided assistance to the National Table Grape Association in developing their application for the Call for Proposals issued by the Official Development Assistance Department of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With the grant funds, the Association plans to assist the Horticultural Research Institute in upgrading of their in-vitro micro-propagation laboratory and to establish a
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pilot vineyard using the pergola vine training system observed during the ACED table grape study tours to Italy and Spain.

## **Activity 1.4: Improve the Enabling Environment for Moldovan HVA**

The objective of this project activity is to improve the competitiveness of the Moldovan HVA value chain and to increase access to markets by creating a market-responsive local policy environment. Challenges for the HVA industry include restrictions on the imports of new plant varieties, tariffs applied to important inputs for the HVA industry and restrictions on the use of surface and ground water for agricultural irrigation. Previous donor work in the policy area has been extensive, therefore ACED has been building on previous efforts by targeting two or three tangible high return policy refinements. In the interest of building local capacity and ensuring sustainability, ACED works with HVA producer associations, responsible government agencies, and other stakeholders in efforts to effect changes in the legislation and to turn high-potential, high-return policy concepts into real reforms.

### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q3: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

#### **Sub-Activity 1.4a - Improving the Enabling Environment for Moldovan HVA**

- International Consultant Rick Ernst spent three days with the ACED project while he was in country on an assignment with the World Bank during October. The main activities and objectives of the assignment were to review the progress on reforms relative to the key regulatory issues identified by ACED and to provide advice on planning and implementing future advocacy campaigns. During round table discussions organized by ACED on October 23<sup>rd</sup> the following constraints for HVA development were debated:
  - ✓ Access to underground water for irrigation purpose;
  - ✓ The process for testing & registering new types of fertilizers;
  - ✓ Double taxation imposed on producer group members;
  - ✓ Phytosanitary export certification procedure.
- The ACED DCoP Ion Perju had a meeting with Gheorghe Gaberi, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, during a business lunch offered by ACED in Bucharest, Romania. Among the most important subjects discussed during the meeting, the testing and registering of the new plant varieties issue was one of the most important. Mr. Gaberi promised to create a specific commission with involvement of the agriculture producers' representatives in order to find a way to legalize the varieties that are under production but are not registered yet.
- The public-private dialogue organized during a session of the MAFI's Commission for Horticulture Development was chaired by Deputy Minister Gaberi on December 11<sup>th</sup>. The representatives from the Horticulture institute, the State Agriculture University, the State Commission for Testing and Registering of new plant varieties as well as private sector representatives debated the issue related to the procedure of testing and registering of new plant varieties for more than two hours.

#### **Sub-Activity 1.4b - Establish SPS Systems & Procedures to Support Exports**

- The business enabling environment team continued their work on Laboratory preparation for ISO 17025:2005 accreditation. After discussions with Dr. Leaota, the head of Romanian Phytosanitary Inspectorate, ACED requested a technical and financial offer from Biolab SRL – the company which evaluated the laboratory Quality Management System relative to its compliance with the requirements of ISO 17025:2005.

- A contract for training & mentoring services for the Moldovan phytosanitary laboratory experts on validation methods was awarded to Biolab SRL at the end of November. According to the activity calendar for this assessment, during the month of December 2014, eleven specialists from the Moldovan Phytosanitary Laboratory benefited from a specific training program at the phytosanitary laboratory in Bucharest, Romania.
- ACED Food Safety Specialist, Andrei Cumpanici, provided several presentations regarding the quality requirements of dried and frozen fruit in the Nisporeni district, the village of Varzărești and in the Edineț district. Also, several consultation meetings regarding the implementation GlobalGAP were held with the producers Basan Coop and the Scutaru Victor FF.

## **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

### **Sub-Activity 1.4a - Improving the Enabling Environment for Moldovan HVA**

- Following the debates and discussions under the advocacy campaign, organized by the ACED project and the industry associations with the Ministry of Agriculture, all of the socio-economic and economic arguments and analyses were presented to the Ministry for the elimination of the existing constraints with a view to enhancing the environment for high-value agriculture in Moldova. According to the Law on Customs Tariffs No. 1380 of 20.11.1997, which was recently amended and became effective on 01.01.2015, the following tariff positions were modified.

| <b>Tariff Code</b> | <b>Goods</b>   | <b>Tariffs before amendments</b> | <b>Starting with 01.01.2015</b> |
|--------------------|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 7308 90 510        | insulated panels (metal-faced insulated panels)                | 15%                              | 0%                              |
| 9406 00 310        | greenhouses and accessories thereof (prefabricated structures) | 10%                              | 0%                              |
| 4819 10 000        | cardboard boxes and cases                                      | 12%                              | 11%<br>(from 01.01.14)          |

- On December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014 the Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry, Mr Vasile Bumacov, signed an order for the establishment of a working group responsible for the improvement of the system to assess new plant varieties to be included in the national variety catalog. The ACED Deputy Chief of Party, Mr Ion Perju, as a member of this working group, attended working group meetings organized on January 13<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup>. Minister Bumacov approved the minutes of the working group that was signed by all of the members, including Mr. Ion Perju of ACED, and at the beginning of March the revised National Catalog was published.

### **Sub-Activity 1.4b - Establish SPS Systems & Procedures to Support Exports**

- The business enabling environment team continued their work on preparation of the Moldovan Central SPS Laboratory for ISO 17025:2005 accreditation.
- Two Romanian specialists came to Moldova to provide the last part of a five day training program for the laboratory staff in Chisinau March 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>.
- During this quarter Dr. Cumpanici, the ACED Food Safety Specialist, continued work on developing training materials for a four-day training seminar on GlobalGAP Implementation and a two-day training seminar on Food Safety/HACCP, with both seminars being implemented in February. The training offered by ACED on the 24<sup>th</sup>

to the 27<sup>th</sup> of February on GlobalGAP included Fruit & Vegetable Standards and covered all the stages of production, from pre-harvest activities such as soil management and plant protection product application to post-harvest handling, packing and storing. The seminar was organized mainly for agricultural producers and it was attended by specialists from the Central Phytosanitary laboratory, NFSA and MAFI.

- On February 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Dr. Cumpanici provided two presentations, on GMP and GHP (which are based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system), at the Food Safety Management Systems training session which was implemented by the FAO Project TCP/MOL/3402 - “Support to Strengthening the Food Safety System in Moldova”.

#### **Sub-Activity 1.4c - TV and Radio talk shows**

- On February 19<sup>th</sup>, the ACED Deputy Chief of Party, Mr Ion Perju, was invited by the local TV Channel, Vocea Basarabiei, to participate in the talk-show "Marketing European". Perju described how the main activities of the ACED project were oriented towards increasing the competitiveness of Moldovan HVA within the context of the signing of the DCFTA treaty.



- The same subject was debated during a talk show “Jurnal Actual” on Radio Jurnal FM on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, and this interview can be found at the following web site: [http://jurnalfm.md/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2955&catid=295&Itemid=72#.VPRSq\\_9GA5I.facebook](http://jurnalfm.md/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2955&catid=295&Itemid=72#.VPRSq_9GA5I.facebook)

### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q1: APRIL TO JUNE 2015**

#### **Sub-Activity 1.4a - Improving the Enabling Environment for Moldovan HVA**

- The ACED COR Rodica Miron accompanied the ACED DCoP to meet with the newly appointed Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Ion Sula, on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. This meeting had an introductory objective and Mr. Perju offered a brief description of the most important ACED achievements for the last year of project a summary of the Year Five workplan.
- On May 7<sup>th</sup> the ACED team, accompanied by Rodica Miron, organized a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MAFI, and the NFSA to discuss actions needed on the institutional and private level in order to penetrate the India market. Earlier, a Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) application for apples (*Malus domestica*) had been developed by an external consultant (with ACED support) and this was submitted to the Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine & Storage in New Delhi, India. As result of the discussions at the NFSA it was decided to re-send the pest risk analysis to the Indian Directorate of Plant Protection using official channels

#### **Sub-Activity 1.4b - Establish SPS Systems & Procedures to Support Exports**

- The Business Enabling Environment Team continued their work on preparation of the Central SPS Lab for ISO 17025:2005 accreditation. During this month the DCoP and the ACED Food Safety Specialist organized several meetings with representatives of the Central Phytosanitary Laboratory in order to make all of the necessary

arrangements for the final application to RENAR (the Romanian accreditation body) for ISO 17025 accreditation.

- As part of the ACED activity to increase the monitoring and testing capacity of the NFSA (National Food Safety Agency) and to assist the phytosanitary inspectors to carry out their inspection duties around the country, the ACED project has purchased 200 Entomology Dissection kits (see the image at the right) that were distributed to the Phytosanitary Inspectors around Moldova.



- According to discussions, and an agreement with USAID, the ACED project will purchase 45 sets (each set will have nine items) of additional equipment to provide the ANSA field inspectors with a more complete range of tools for their food safety inspection functions. The ACED Food Safety Specialist has developed a list, which includes items such as a Refractometer, Fruit sizer sets, a Pocket scale, a Penetrometer and a Digital thermometer.
- During this month the ACED Food Safety Specialist organized several consultation meetings with producers Darurile Basarabie Ltd, Agrodenidan Ltd, Victor Scutaru FF and others regarding the GlobalGAP implementation within their organizations.

#### **Sub-Activity 1.4c - TV and Radio talk shows**

- On May 25<sup>th</sup> the ACED Deputy Chief of Party, Mr Ion Perju, was invited by the local TVRAIN station to participate in the talk-show "Author Program Ostaf". The main subject of discussion during this program was SME development policies in Moldova and the technical assistance available for the agro-industrial sector. The ACED DCoP presented information on the ACED support that has been provided for Moldova HVA producers.



### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q2: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015**

#### **Sub-Activity 1.4a - Improving the Enabling Environment for Moldovan HVA**

- An international Study Tour was held with the Research Centre for Cultivar Testing (COBORU) in Slupia Weilka, Poland in the period between August 29<sup>th</sup> and September 6<sup>th</sup>. It included three travel days (by minibus) and five days in Poland for theoretical and practical training program. The Moldovan group was accompanied by two COBORU experts and consisted of 15 participants, including Ion Perju as the ACED coordinator, one representative each from the Ministry of Agriculture, AGEPI and the Moldova Fruct Association and 13 representatives from the State Commission for Plant Testing.
- On July 28<sup>th</sup> the ACED Deputy CoP had a meeting with Mr. Vladimir Loghin, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, on the most important ACED achievements to date and the most important activities related to MAFI and NFSA – regulatory reforms, food safety and phytosanitary assistance.

### **Sub-Activity 1.4b - Establish SPS Systems & Procedures to Support Exports**

- The DCoP and the ACED Food Safety Specialist organized several meetings with representatives of the Central Phytosanitary Laboratory in order to make all the necessary arrangements for applying to RENAR (the Romanian accreditation body) for ISO 17025 accreditation.
- As part of the ACED activity to increase the testing capacity of NFSA (National Food Safety Agency) and assist phytosanitary inspectors to carry out their inspection duties around the country, the ACED project offered 45 sets (with each set having nine items) of additional equipment to provide the field inspectors of ANSA with a more complete range of tools for their food safety inspection functions.
- Besides the donation of the physical equipment, ACED provided support during September 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> for training seminars in Edinet, Balti, and Hincesti for the phytosanitary inspectors on testing methods for fruit/vegetable quality and developing guides and information bulletins, regarding quality control measures. Two other training seminars will be organized in Chisinau (September 28<sup>th</sup>) and Comrat (September 30<sup>th</sup>).
- During this quarter Dr. Cumpanici organized several consultation meetings with producers Darurile Basarabie Ltd, Agrogenidan Ltd, Victor Scutaru FF and others regarding GlobalGAP system implementation at their facilities. Mr Cumpanici also had several meetings with Natur Bravo representatives to discuss their plans for IFS standard implementation.



### **Activity 1.5: Sequencing with the MCC Compact THVA**

For project Years Four and Five the ACED team has added a fifth “Activity” to the program – Sequencing with the MCC Compact THVA. An important part of the contract for implementation of the ACED project is the support for farmers located in the MCC CIS zones to assist them with the adoption of, or transition to, HVA production in the irrigated zones being rehabilitated by the Compact.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q3: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

- The ACED Farmer Festival organized in Criuleni town, which was held on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014 was a very successful event as it brought together many of the farmers who will be using the irrigation system in the Criuleni irrigation zone for interactions with input and equipment suppliers, banks and other sources of finance, agricultural development agencies and projects and government officials. During the day the ACED team distributed about 1,000 copies of the various technical publications that the project has prepared regarding fruit and vegetable production, irrigation and soil management. Around 700 community members and local and central administration officials attended the event. Within the framework of this event, the ACED team organized a local study tour, in the Criuleni CIS zone, for ten agricultural producers from the Jora de Jos and Lopatna CIS zones. These producers visited three individual companies in the Criuleni raion which are involved in intensive apple production, greenhouse production and intensive cherry production.

- During late October to early November, the ACED Activity 5 Team organized several meetings with the Water Users Association "Jorile" and the Water Users Association "Criuleni" in order to discuss and finalize the training implementation plans which will be implemented in these three CIS zones. Besides planning, the ACED Activity 5 Team held orientation trainings for the "Criuleni" and "Jorile" Water Users Associations.
- During November ACED organized five separate training seminars on the topic of Irrigation Water Quality & Irrigation Systems:
  - The first seminar was organized on November 13<sup>th</sup> in Jora de Mijloc village and it was targeted at the Jora de Jos CIS Zone farmers. 35 participants attended this event.
  - The second training seminar took place on November 14<sup>th</sup> in Criuleni town, targeted at the Criuleni CIS Zone farmers, and 22 participants attended.
  - The third training seminar was organized on November 21<sup>st</sup> in Slobozia-Dusca village, targeted at the Criuleni CIS Zone, with 38 participants.
  - The fourth seminar was organized on November 25<sup>th</sup> in Jora de Mijloc village, for the Jora de Jos CIS Zone, and 33 participants attended it.
  - 33 participants were recorded at the fifth and final training event for the month, on November 27<sup>th</sup> in Jora de Sus village, which was targeted at the Lopatna CIS Zone.
- Starting with December 8<sup>th</sup>, ACED launched the series of five training seminars on Soil Quality & Establishing the soil's irrigation need in the Jora de Jos, Lopatna and Criuleni CIS zones:
  - The first training seminar took place in Slobozia-Dusca village, targeted at the Criuleni CIS Zone, with 35 participants.
  - The second training seminar was organized on December 9<sup>th</sup> in Criuleni town, targeted at the Criuleni CIS Zone, and 20 participants attended it.
  - The third training seminar was organized on December 13<sup>th</sup> in Jora de Sus village, targeted at the Lopatna CIS Zone, with 31 participants.
  - On December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> ACED organized two additional seminars in Jora de Mijloc, targeted at the Jora de Jos CIS Zone. 31 participants attended the training that took place on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 31 participants attended the training seminar that took place on December 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- The ninth through seventeenth editions of the CIS Zone Technical Bulletins, covering subjects related to the development of irrigation systems for fruit and vegetables, plant protection for plums, cucumbers and tomatoes, investments for tomato production and investments for raspberry production were mailed to farmers in the zones.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

- Starting with January 20<sup>th</sup>, ACED launched a series of five training seminars on Vegetable Production in Greenhouses in the Jora de Jos, Lopatna and Criuleni CIS zones:
  - The first training seminar took place in Slobozia-Dusca village, targeted at the Criuleni CIS Zone, with 41 participants.
  - The second training seminar was organized on January 21<sup>st</sup> in Criuleni town, targeted at the Criuleni CIS Zone, and 20 participants attended it.

- The third training seminar was organized on January 23<sup>rd</sup> in Jora de Mijloc village, targeted at the Jora de Jos CIS Zone, and 31 participants attended it.
- On January 27<sup>th</sup> ACED organized the fourth seminar on Vegetable Production in Greenhouses in Jora de Sus, which was targeted at the Lopatna CIS Zone, attended by 32 participants.
- The fifth, and last, training seminar on Vegetable Production in Greenhouses was organized on January 28<sup>th</sup> in Jora de Mijloc village, targeted at the Jora de Jos CIS Zone, and 31 participants attended it.
- Starting on January 29<sup>th</sup>, ACED launched a series of five training seminars on Establishing Super-intensive Apple Orchards. The first training seminar took place in Criuleni town, targeted at the Criuleni CIS Zone, and 28 participants attended it.
- The ACED program in the Leova Sud, Grozești, Roscani, Puhaceni, Blindesti, Cosnita and Chircani Zirnesti CIS Zones started with an informational campaign, which included mailing out the 1<sup>st</sup> issue of CIS Technical Bulletin on Irrigation Water Quality to 2,930 CIS beneficiaries. The training program also began in the Leova Sud, Grozești, Roscani and Puhaceni CIS Zones.
- The ACED program implementation in the Criuleni, Lopatna and Jora de Jos CIS Zones continued with the delivery of four separate training sessions on Establishing Super-intensive Apple Orchards:
  - The first training seminar was organized on February 5<sup>th</sup> in Jora de Mijloc village, targeted at the Jora de Jos CIS Zone, and 31 participants attended it.
  - The second training seminar took place in Slobozia-Dusca village, targeted at the Criuleni CIS Zone, with 35 participants.
  - The third training seminar took place in Jora de Mijloc village, targeted at the Jora de Jos CIS Zone, and 32 participants attended it.
  - On February 19<sup>th</sup> the fourth seminar on Establishing Super-intensive Apple Orchards took place in Jora de Sus, targeted at the Lopatna CIS Zone, and 21 participants attended it.
- On February 2<sup>nd</sup> and on February 13<sup>th</sup> the ACED CIS Zone Activity Coordinator, Oxana Borza, conducted separate orientation trainings for the Water Users Associations “Filipeni”, “Blindesti”, “Agroacvila” and “Acvagrup”. These training sessions were oriented towards assisting the WUAs to properly implement and manage their functions as Regional Training Service Providers for the ACED training program, following their selection as the RTSPs for some of the CIS zones that will be targeted by the ACED program.
- Starting on February 14<sup>th</sup>, ACED launched a series of four training seminars on Soil Quality & Establishing Soil Irrigation Needs in the Leova Sud, Grozești, Roscani and Puhaceni CIS zones:
  - The first training seminar took place in Filipeni village, targeted at the Filipeni CIS Zone, with 32 participants.
  - The second training seminar was organized on February 20<sup>th</sup> in Puhaceni village, targeted at the Puhaceni CIS Zone, and 32 participants attended it.
  - The third training seminar was organized on February 26<sup>th</sup> in Grozesti village, targeted at the Grozesti CIS Zone, and 39 participants attended it.
  - On February 27<sup>th</sup> the fourth technical seminar on Soil Quality & Establishing Soil Irrigation Needs took place in Roscani village, targeted at the Roscani CIS Zone, with 18 participants.
- Starting on March 4<sup>th</sup>, ACED launched a series of training seminars on Setting up and Using an Irrigation System in the Grozesti and Puhaceni CIS zones:
  - The first training seminar took place in Grozesti village, targeted at the Grozesti CIS Zone, and 31 participants attended it.
  - The second training seminar was organized on March 6<sup>th</sup> in Puhaceni village, targeted at the Puhaceni CIS Zone, and 26 participants attended it.

## **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q1: APRIL TO JUNE 2015**

- ACED conducted seven Technical Training Seminars and one Farmer Field Day, with the average attendance being 28 participants per event.
- Starting on April 8<sup>th</sup>, ACED launched a series of two separate training seminars on Irrigation Water Quality and Irrigation Systems, the first training seminar took place in Cucoara village targeted at the Chircani-Zirnesti CIS Zone. The second training seminar was organized on June 11<sup>th</sup> in Pirita village, targeted at the Cosnita CIS Zone.
- On April 24<sup>th</sup> ACED launched the series of four separate training seminars on Vegetable Production, with the event being organized in Cucoara village, targeted at the Chircani-Zirnesti CIS Zone. On April 28<sup>th</sup> in Filipeni village, Leova-Sud CIS Zone, ACED organized the second training seminar. The first two training seminars on Vegetable Production were followed by another two, one on April 29<sup>th</sup> in Roscani village, targeted at the Roscani CIS Zone and then in Petresti village, targeted at the Blindesti CIS zone, on June 12<sup>th</sup>.
- On April 24<sup>th</sup>, the ACED Activity 5 Team organized a training seminar on Super-Intensive Apple Orchard Establishment, with the training seminar taking place in Grozesti village, targeted at the Grozesti CIS Zone.
- The Farmer Field Day on Irrigation in Fruit Nurseries & Setting up a Drip Irrigation System was held on May 19<sup>th</sup> 2015. The farmer field day was organized as part of the ACED Demonstration Activity on using drip irrigation in fruit seedling production, which is located in Lopatna village, Lopatna CIS Zone. 32 participants attended this event.
- During the reporting period, ACED conducted two international study tours for CIS zone farmers, the first one in Romania and the second one in Italy. These study tours were focused on Irrigation in Agriculture, Approaches and Technologies. The Study Tour to Romania took place between May 25<sup>th</sup> and May 29<sup>th</sup> and was organized for a group of 16 participants, with 13 of them being landowners from the MCC CIS Zones. The Study Tour to Italy took place between June 14<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> and was organized for a group of 16 landowners from the MCC CIS Zones and WUA's board members.
- During the reporting period, the Information campaign continued with the development and mailing out of the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and the seventh issues of the CIS Technical Bulletin on "Soil Quality in Irrigated Vegetable Production" and "Irrigated Fruit Production". These bulletins were sent out to 2,994 CIS zone beneficiaries from the Blindesti, Grozești, Leova Sud, Chircani-Zirnesti, Roscani, Puhaceni and Cosnita CIS Zones.



## **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q2: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015**

- On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 the ACED Activity 1.5 Team organized a technical training seminar in Petresti village, targeted at the Blindesti CIS Zone, on Setting-Up Super-Intensive Apple Orchards. 10 participants attended the seminar.
- On July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the Activity 1.5 Team conducted the first local study tour in Speia and Puhaceni villages, Anenii Noi district, focused on Vegetable Production in

Greenhouses. The study tour was organized for a group of 16 agricultural producers and land owners from the Chircani-Zirnesti CIS Zone in southern Moldova on the Prut river. A second local study tour was organized in Tipala village, Ialoveni district, on July 19<sup>th</sup> and this one was focused on the topic of Blackberry Production. This local study tour was organized for 10 agricultural producers and landowners from the Puhaceni and Roscani CIS Zones.

- On August 4<sup>th</sup> the Activity 1.5 Team organized another local study tour, this time for ten agricultural producers and landowners from the Jora de Jos CIS Zone. These farmers had the opportunity to visit a berry producer from Cucuietii Vechi village, Riscani district. These farmers observed Irrigated Strawberry, Raspberry and Currant Production.
- The fourth local study tour was organized in Hristoforovca village, Ungheni district, on August 21<sup>st</sup> and it was focused on Irrigated Vegetable Production. 14 agricultural producers attended this study tour from the Grozesti CIS Zone.
- The fifth local study tour took place in Mihalovscoe village, Riscani district on August 26<sup>st</sup> and it was focused on Irrigated Fruit Production and Post-Harvest Handling. This tour was organized for seven agricultural producers from the Jora de Jos and Lopatna CIS Zones.
- On August 19<sup>th</sup> ACED's Training and CIS Zone Assistance Teams organized a national level Irrigation Technology Forum which was an event focused on the farmers operating within the central irrigation zones being rehabilitated by the MCC Compact in Moldova. ACED arranged for about 80 farmers, representing all of the ten irrigation systems included in the Compact program, to come to Chisinau and participate in this Forum. Leslie McCuaig, the Country Representative for MCC in Moldova, and Vasile Bumacov, the former Minister of Agriculture, along with representatives from agricultural development projects participated in this event.
- During this reporting period, the Activity 1.5 Information Campaign continued with the development, and mailing out of the CIS Technical Bulletins. These bulletins covered the following topics: "Support Systems for Fruit Production", "Mulch Technology for Vegetable Production", "Modern Greenhouse Construction", and "IPM for Plum, Tomato and Cucumber Production".



## **Activity 1.6: Support for the Costesti Packhouse Project**

### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q3: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

- The Romanian company Horeco, which is the contractor for construction of the packhouse building, and its Moldovan subsidiary Frigoclima, have continued work on the construction of the building. The picture at the right shows the status of the construction on the building as of mid-January 2015.
- ACED-hired consultants continued to provide support to the Costesti Primaria to prepare the open tender for documents for the sub-contract that they will enter into for the management of the packinghouse. The tender announcement itself was published in the Moldovan Monitorul Oficial on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015.

- The Costesti Association of Grape Growers and Exporters are regularly organizing visits of Government officials to discuss progress on the project, but typically they manage to raise more broad industry development issues. The last important visit was that of the Director of the National Food Safety Agency (Mr. Sula) and the former Prime Minister (Mr Filat), and news of this visit was broadcast on the national television station. The video report on this visit can be seen at this web site: <http://goo.gl/1N6KOA>.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

- ACED initiated a coordination meeting of all the partners in the Costesti Packinghouse Project that took place in February and was chaired by the President of the Ialoveni district. After the coordination meeting, ACED extended the consulting contract for Onoris-Legis to assist the Costesti local authorities in finalizing the tender launching procedure. The updated tender announcement was published in the Monitorul Oficial on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q1: APRIL TO JUNE 2015**

- On May 12<sup>th</sup> the Costesti Primaria and the Fructbioimpex Cooperative, which was established by 13 members of the Costesti Table Grape Association for this specific purpose, signed the facility pre-lease contract for the Costesti Packhouse. This event has now set the stage for the next phase, the private investments in the project.

- ACED finalized the design of a demonstration activity to be implemented at the Costesti Packinghouse in August-September that will promote the adoption of improved packaging for plums and table grapes in order to meet the requirements of distant export markets.



- ACED launched an RfP for the provision of services for a July study tour to Italy for Costesti Packinghouse Project participants to learn about best grape harvest and post-harvest practices and to learn from Italian experiences in organizing joint marketing of fresh produce.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q2: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015**

- During the period between July 19<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup>, ACED and its sub-contractor Italian Consulting Ltd, organized an international study tour to Italy for Costesti Packinghouse Project participants to learn about the best practices being used in table grape harvesting, post-harvest handling and packaging, and to learn from the Italian experience in organizing, managing and operating joint packaging and marketing of fresh produce.
- Following approval by the USAID BEO of the environmental mitigation measures for the ACED demonstration activity “Improved packaging for export marketing of fresh fruits and table grapes”, ACED provided to the Costesti Table Grape Association modified atmosphere bags for improved plum storage and liners with SO<sub>2</sub> pads for improved table grape storage.
- Following the signing of the facility lease contract between the Costesti local

authorities and the Costesti table grape grower's cooperative, the construction work has picked up steam. The refrigeration equipment has been installed and all cold rooms have been finalized.

- A monitoring visit with the USAID COR and a representative from the Romanian Embassy took place on July 29<sup>th</sup>. He was pleased with the progress on the construction and with the assistance that the ACED project has been providing to the group.

## **COMPONENT 2: ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT IN TRANSNISTRIA**

The objective of this component is to support the development and competitiveness of Transnistrian micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the HVA and non-HVA value chains. This component is also designed to integrate Transnistrian enterprises into the broader Moldovan economy by establishing linkages and/or relationships between Left Bank and Right Bank MSMEs and Business Services Providers (BSPs).

### **Activity 2.1: Build BSP Capacity to Improve MSME Competitiveness**



#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q3: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

- During this quarter the cross-bank group or participants enrolled in the University of Georgia on-line course Principles of Market Research continued their hard work on this program. The second (and final) proctored exam for the course took place on December 12<sup>th</sup> in Chisinau for the cross-bank group.
- This quarter the Component 2 Team began carrying out several activities with a beekeeper producer group. Grigore Daraban (an ACED consultant) provided them with a training seminar, on "Forms and Aspects of Farmer Cooperation", on December 17<sup>th</sup> in order to help them with this journey. The training covered the positive and negative aspects of working together, international and Moldovan lessons learned with group formation, the forms of group management and the financing of associations and cooperatives. The picture shows the Transnistrian honey producers visiting a Right Bank honey producer to learn about his methods of collecting, processing, and marketing his honey.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

- This quarter the cross bank group enrolled in the University of Georgia online course Principles of Market Research officially finished this one year course. The majority of the students have successfully completed the course within the original one year timeframe, ACED is reporting this "BSP training"
-

in the PMEP system this quarter.

- ACED also continued the capacity building assistance for the beekeeper producer group and the tree-fruit producers group. ACED expects that both are likely to become formal organizations during the coming year, and certainly before the end of the project. Both Grigore Daraban and Iurie Fala have submitted final reports regarding this first phase of group formation for these two groups, with each of them providing similar recommendations regarding their starting and creating an association.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q1: APRIL TO JUNE 2015**

- Component 2 continued to provide capacity building assistance to the newly formed tree-fruit producers group. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, local trainer Iurie Fala provided the tree-fruit association with an Interactive Training and Workshop titled Association Management, Roles and Critical Success Factors. Representatives from eight of the leading tree-fruit companies in the Transnistrian region participated in this training activity.
- On the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of April Component 2 sponsored a group of seven Transnistrian consultants, all of whom work at regional BSPs, and the ACED Coordinator in Transnistria to participate in the Sales and Marketing 360 training event in Chisinau. The two-day event included a series of seminars and master classes on modern tendencies in marketing, sales audits, sales scripts, and how to organize work with clients.
- The three remaining students in University of Georgia online course Principles of Market Research took one test each. One of the three completed the course, one will need to retake the final written proctored exam, and the third is mid-way through the course as a replacement student.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q2: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015**

- One highlight of the quarter was the training provided by the Slovenian CEO of a small local market research company, Janko Hocevar, on Sales and Strategy for Market Research Companies in Small Markets to a cross-bank group of BSP participants. The BSPs also received some practical tips about different approaches to selling their services, such as marketing to a whole industry which needs information with multiple companies splitting the cost, and highlighting key market research services in trade journals.
- Of the three remaining students in the University of Georgia online course Principles of Market Research two have officially graduated, and the only remaining replacement student will be taking the second written proctored exam on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October.

### **Activity 2.2: Support the Development of MSMEs in Transnistria**

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q3: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

- One highlight of the results achieved this quarter is that one small farmer member of the Belii Most Association signed a contract with the Greenhills supermarket chain for 78,000 MDL (\$5,200) for 12 tons of Chinese cabbage. This farmer (a woman farmer) reported to ACED that the linkage with the buyer was due to a promotional flyer that she distributed to the buyer at the Belii Most exhibit booth, sponsored by ACED, at

the Farmer Expo in Chisinau.

- The Component 2 Team organized the training seminar “Planting New Stone Fruit Orchards (plums, peaches, and cherries) and Preparing for Winter” in Tiraspol on the 17th of October, which was presented by National Consultant Pesteanu. This seminar attracted 10 participants representing the main Transnistrian fruit tree producing companies.
- On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, ACED organized a berry production technical seminar titled “Strawberry and Raspberry Production” that was a follow-up to the recently completed UK Study Tour. British berry fruit expert Jeremy Darby presented the training materials for a cross-bank group that included seven producers from Transnistria, which including four interested parties who hadn’t been able to participate in the study tour.
- The ACED Food Safety Specialist, Andrei Cumpanici, provided on-going consultations, and a site visit, on October 29<sup>th</sup> to the Transnistrian company, Fkusnyashki, to assist them with their efforts to become HACCP certified.
- Also on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October Andrei Cumpanici and Natalia Murahovscaia held a meeting with representatives from Rustas regarding their request for consultations on building a warehouse for pesticides. During the visit Mr. Cupmanici said that more than 50% of the work is done, as Rustas has all of the necessary documentation for the storage facility for pesticides.
- On November 12<sup>th</sup>, ACED organized a roundtable discussion with the Belii Most Small Farmers Association in Tiraspol. The purpose of the meeting was to check in with the association on their development efforts and whether they have been implementing the strategic development recommendations that were made by ACED back in 2013. The results cited by the members were impressive, including that they now have more than 140 dues paying members, whereas they had only 38 members as of the last meeting.
- On November 14<sup>th</sup> the Component 2 Team organized a Right Bank Study Tour on advanced table grape production and post-harvest handling for a group of Transnistrian table grape producers who travelled to Budesti and Stauseni. National Consultant Vasile Biesu made a presentation to the group on the latest innovations in Table Grape production which was followed by a roundtable discussion on the rate of uptake for innovations on the Left bank and needed seminars.
- The study tour “Experience of Beekeepers in Moldova: Production, Processing, and Associations” took place on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Mihai Bozianu, a beekeeper from Mingir village in western Moldova, presented some advanced American beekeeping techniques he has introduced on his farm following his participation in a study tour to the USA. Following that presentation, and also in the ACED conference room, the participants met with Stefan Condratuiuc, the president of the Moldovan National Beekeeping Association, who presented the history of the association, the difficulties the group has encountered, and the opportunities the association has created for the Moldovan honey producers.
- After departing from these meetings in Chisinau, the Transnistrian participants on this Study Tour visited the Right Bank company “Vastdial & Co” S.R.L. Bulboaca. The company has high performance Danish honey processing equipment, for refining and packing honey, as well as for processing wax and propolis. They explained that they are now certified in the international standards ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 22000:2005.
- On December 5<sup>th</sup> the Component 2 Team organized a meeting with the tree-fruit grower producer group members in Tiraspol, with the meeting being facilitated by Iurie Fala, an ACED consultant and the director of the Moldova Fruct association.

Those who were present discussed the different needs of their members, regarding marketing, lobbying, learning about new techniques, and the usefulness of buying joint inputs for a bulk discount.

- On Dec 20<sup>th</sup> there were two plant protection training seminars in Tiraspol — one for plum, peach and cherry orchards, and another one for table grape producers.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

- Three Transnistrian companies actively participated in ACED supported exhibit that took place at the GulfFood Trade show in Dubai in February. These companies included the Tiraspol Baby Food Factory, Rustas, and Mihail Porhun the key beekeeper/honey producer.
- On January 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> ACED organized a highly successful two-day honey training seminar in Tiraspol. ACED organized a minibus so that 16 participants from the Right Bank could come to Tiraspol two days in a row for this event, and an additional 17 participants from the Left Bank attended this event. A Ukrainian expert, Mr. Oleksander Komisar, who is well known in Moldova for his beekeeping newsletter and other beekeeping related publications, presented at the event.
- On January 16<sup>th</sup> Iurie Fala presented his draft action plan for the Transnistrian Treefruit Grower's association to the group that consisted of 10 interested companies. At that meeting they did decide to proceed further, and on February 5<sup>th</sup>, Natalia Murahovscaia joined them for an additional meeting when they discussed next steps, nominated board members, and identified a candidate to be the Executive Director.
- On Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> and then again on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> ACED held six sessions of the Strawberry Winter School seminar series with the logistics for these events being organized by the RTSP Bely Most. All of the sessions took place in Chitskani, with each one being a three hour session covering the entire production cycle as well as harvesting and post-harvest handling. National Consultant Trofim Gavrilov was the trainer for this series of seminars.
- On the 18<sup>th</sup> of February National Consultant Tudor Cazac presented a seminar on pruning table grapes, followed by a field visit. Twenty-six producers attended the seminar, and a local TV crew came and filmed the seminar and the field visit that appeared in the show "Six Ares" (6 sotok).
- Four Honey producers participated in the Trade Mission visit to the Campina Honey Expo in Romania, which took place from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, as part of a cross-bank tour for a group of honey producers from Moldova.
- On March 13<sup>th</sup>, ACED held a Demonstration Activity Field day for the High Tunnel Strawberry Production Demo at the Pavel Gangan Family Farm, which was organized by RTSP Bely Most in Chitskani. The event "Strawberry Production In High Tunnels, Preparing for the Season at the Beginning of the Vegetative Period using Mulch and Drip Irrigation" was led by national consultant Trofim Gavrilov. The photo at the right shows the consultant for the Winter



Strawberry School providing the participants with practical advice.

- There were two plant protection trainings held in Tiraspol, one on plum, peach and cherry plant protection, offered by Ghenadie Buciuceanu and Alexandra Braghis. A second training was a Table grape plant protection seminar provided by Alexandra Braghis. Both trainings were organized by the RTSP CCC.

### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q1: APRIL TO JUNE 2015**

- This quarter, ACED completed a new tender process (using a Request for Proposals, or RfP and open competition) for a Tree-fruit, Honey, Raspberry and Table Grape Regional Training and Service Provider (RTSP). ACED began work with the selected Regional Training Service Provider, which is named the Agency for Regional Development from Transnistria (ARDT).
- ACED Component 2 staff sent out two new Strawberry Bulletins to more than 200 Transnistrian farmers, which covered the topics of “New Strawberry Varieties” and “Establishing a New Strawberry Plots.” ACED staff was surprised to be able to extract more than 200 farmers from the TAMIS database who are interested in berry production for this, as the original strawberry database from 2013 only contained just over 40 names.
- National Consultant Ghenadie Buciuceanu provided a seminar on Apple Plant Protection from Diseases and Pests on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April. There were 15 participants at the seminar (13 farmers and 2 Agricultural Scientific Research Institute (NII) specialists).
- On May 21<sup>st</sup>, National Consultant Tudor Cazac provided the seminar First Phase Green Operations for Table Grapes. The seminar logistics were successfully organized by the new RTSP, the Agency for Regional Development from Transnistria (ARDT).
- On the 28<sup>th</sup> of May the Serbian Beekeepers who were on a Trade Mission to Moldova made a visit to Transnistria. They visited honey producers who had taken part in the Cross-Bank Study Tour to Serbia last year: “Beekeeping – Approaches, Production, Technologies, Equipment and Processing” organized by ACED. The Serbian beekeepers visited local apiaries, presented equipment and medicines for bees produced in Serbia and told about their own Beekeepers Association.
- On June 5<sup>th</sup> ACED organized a Chemical thinning Farmer Field Day with National Consultant Pesteanu. There were 10 participants, representing the largest and best orchards in the region.
- On June 11<sup>th</sup>, Component 2 held a seminar on Stone Fruit Pre-cooling and Varieties at the Agrostar company, which was presented by National Consultant Pesteanu and the ACED Food Safety Specialist, Andrei Cumpanici. There were 13 participants for this event, as well as a TV crew from the local show “TCB news” (Novosti TCB affiliated with Sheriff, the same TV crew as for the local show “6 Ares”). The event logistics were organized by the new RTSP - ARDT.
- ACED received, and approved, a Technical Assistance application from the MMD group (the owners of the Tiraspol Baby Food Factory in Tiraspol), requesting assistance with product naming, brand development, brand book preparation and package design for their apple chips (in 35gr, 65gr & 125gr packages). ACED issued an RfP for interested bidders to reply to through the VCSC web site.
- On May 20<sup>th</sup>, experts Andrei Cumpanici and Professor Viorel Gornet visited the Fkusnyashki Pelmeni producer in Bender and provided a consultation on how to

redesign their workflow in order to meet international food safety standards. After the visit, Mr. Gornet, a meat processing expert from Chisinau, provided a new suggested layout for plant operations that Fkusnyashki can use to implement and meet food safety standards.

- In the beginning of May, ACED had been planning to hold the 3rd and final Farmer Field Day for advanced strawberry production in high tunnels at the demo activity Results of Using Mulch, Drip Irrigation and High Tunnels for Strawberry Production. Unfortunately the host farmer called ACED a few days before the seminar and said that overnight a good portion of his plants got sick and died. National Consultant Alexandra Braghis provided a technical assistance consultation, and based on her recommendations for combatting fusarium oxysporum (fusarium wilt) the farmer was able to save a large portion of his crop before it was too late. Because of this fungus, the last field day was cancelled as a precautionary measure to stop the spread of fusarium oxysporum to other farmers' strawberry fields.

### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q2: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015**

- From the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of September ACED's Component 2 team organized a study tour to Ukraine on the topic of Beekeeping – Approaches, Production, Technologies, Equipment and Processing for a cross-bank group of 16 beekeepers. This study tour was designed to give Moldovan beekeepers and honey producers an opportunity to observe modern production and honey processing practices in Ukraine, and to acquire the necessary tools and knowledge to implement these techniques and technologies for honey production in Moldova.

- The agenda of the honey production study tour was developed by Dr Olexandr Komisar, the editor of the famous Ukrainian magazine Beekeeping Circle. He managed to include in the study tour the best practices of Ukrainian beekeeping: a new method of wintering of bees in four-unit hives, an apiary with different methods of mechanization, the original simple technology of wax melting, a queen bee nursery, a beeswax plant and a visit to a modern industrial apiary with 1,000 bee colonies.



- There was also a study tour to Southern Italy on Table Grape Production & Post-harvest Technologies and Infrastructure for a cross-bank group of table group producers between the 26<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> of July. The goal of the study tour was to learn the best practices that are applicable for Moldovan producers in organizing the production, post-harvest handling, marketing, and sales of table grapes. Ten Left Bank study tour participants and two Right Bank producers participated.
- On July 16<sup>th</sup> ACED held a Demonstration Activity Farmer Field Day on the use of an anti-hail net system within an intensive apple orchard at EvroRostAgro with National Consultant Pesteanu. There were 10 participants representing different fruit tree orchards in the region. National Consultant Pesteanu presented information about the demo activity results and the results of these best practices in Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. The picture shows the group examining the anti-hail nets installed in the EvroRostAgro orchard and apples damaged by an earlier hail storm.

- On July 22<sup>nd</sup> ACED organized a Demo Activity Farmer Field Day on Construction of Greenhouses for Cucumber Production in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle in partnership with the Transnistrian Agricultural Research Institute (NII). 34 participants attended the event. Following this event, all of the participants visited the Demo Activity plot where the expert and representatives of the Right Bank greenhouse vendor explained the peculiarities of greenhouses for vegetable production that should be taken into consideration when small farmers start to develop their business.
- Following on a successful study tour on advanced table grape production and post-harvest handling to Italy at the end of July, more than 20 table grape producers gathered in Tiraspol for a three-part training event on Table Grape Harvesting, Sorting, Quality Standards, Varieties & Local Trials of Gibberlins (GA3) as a Growth Hormone on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August. Four experts from Chisinau made presentations. The seminar was requested by producers who have shown increased interests in adopting modern practices after what they saw in Italy.
- On Wednesday August 12<sup>th</sup>, ACED organized a seminar on sweet pepper production, PHH and varieties in Tiraspol. The event was hosted by NII in their conference room. Additionally, NII provided tours of their two laboratories and they gave their price lists to farmers for testing services available at the institute. The trainer was National Consultant Omelciuc from the Right Bank and ACED staff organized the training for more than 20 participants.
- On September 10<sup>th</sup>, a minibus brought 15 participants from the Left Bank to the National Plum Producers Forum in Nisporeni.
- On September 18<sup>th</sup> ACED organized a Farmer Field Day at the Demo Site on Construction of Greenhouses for Cucumber Production in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle in partnership with the Transnistrian Agricultural Research Institute (NII). National Expert Omelciuc presented information on Greenhouse Cucumber Production in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle.

### III. CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITIES

#### Gender and Marginal Groups

##### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q3: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014**

This quarter the number of women attending ACED training sessions, including study tours, represented 39% of the total number of discrete training participants. The number of women adopting improved techniques and/or practices as a result of the ACED training events was 63, which represents 38% of the total number of discrete adopters. A total of \$535,841, or 35% of the total sales reported, were reported by women-led or women-owned companies, with \$416,000, or 80%, being reported as export sales by these companies.

##### **The Women in Agriculture Network (WAN) Activity**

- The ACED partners for the implementation of the Women in Agricultural Networks (WAN) activity completed the final events in their individual programs during the October to November period, thus finalizing their one-year implementation phase. \

- On November 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> sub-contractor AGROinform organized the Annual Forum for the Northern Regional WAN in Balti. The picture shows ACED CoP Jim Herne listening to the opening presentations being made by various members of the Northern Regional WAN. Approximately 70 women from different districts of the Northern region attended the event, with nearly 50 of them staying overnight. There were two mini-training sessions attended by women on important subjects for their day-to-day business operations, specifically on Communications and Negotiation, and Enterprise and Product Promotion. On the second day, the women had the chance to learn about several financial opportunities available to them, including the advantageous loans and grants being offered by the MAC-P project, IFAD Moldova and the Organization for SME Development (ODIMM). ACED distributed the HVA production guides on plums, apples, cucumbers, cherries, seedling material, and greenhouse construction.



- On November 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> in Chisinau, and November 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> in Balti, AGROinform organized two two-day seminars on Lobbying and Advocacy for the Central and Northern WAN members. This was a topic requested by the women members who want to better understand the methods and procedures for lobbying and advocacy, and who want to acquire effective skills in this field.



- On November 21<sup>st</sup>, the Association of Women of Gagauzia held the Final Round Table for the Gagauzian WAN members. This was a smaller event, with approximately 25 women participating to meet and summarize the activities of the past year, as well as to discuss the draft plan of action for next year.

- On November 27<sup>th</sup>, the Forum for the Southern WAN members was held in Cahul. Women gathered with the same purpose: to meet, learn, and exchange experiences and best practices. 60 women were present for the motivating stories presented, including Gori's Tomatoes Family Farm presenting the concept of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) of vegetables and how the CSA works. There was also a session with presentations from IFAD VI, MAC-P, ODIMM, and other financial opportunities.



- There were three women from the Southern WAN participating in the ACED study visit on Vegetable growing in Turkey in October this year. All three of them made a presentation of the visit and shared their impression with the rest of the women, which seemed to sensitize the others to the importance of participating in various events where they can learn new and efficient technologies and methods for their business development.
- As a result of the WAN annual forums, ACED has concluded that this type of event definitely creates a special networking atmosphere that benefits the women in various ways, from setting up contacts and linkages, to sharing knowledge and information, to stirring up motivation, energy and creating an optimistic mood. Considering the WAN activity successes to date, ACED has decided to support this activity for a second year.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y4Q4: JANUARY TO MARCH 2015**

This quarter the number of women attending ACED training sessions represented 27% of the total discrete (new) participants. The number of women adopting improved techniques and practices as a result of ACED was 64 (or 34%) of the total discrete adopters. A total of \$236,247 (or 15% of the total sales) were reported by women-led and/or owned companies, of which \$108,795 (or 18%) were registered as export sales. The number of clients benefiting from assistance leading to new HVA investments was 28, out of which nine (or 32%) were from women-led and/or owned entities. The investments made by these entities came to 31% of the total new HVA investments made during the quarter for production and post-harvest facility improvements.

#### **Women in Agriculture Network (WAN) Activity**

- During this quarter, ACED worked with the WAN partner sub-contractors on developing the action plans and budgets needed for ACED support for another year of WAN activities. Similar to the previous year, the ACED partners will be implementing numerous activities based on the work plans and budgets developed in cooperation with the WAN Advisory Group members. The work plans include various types of seminars, workshops, round-tables as well as study tour within the country and abroad on various subjects suggested by the women.

#### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q1: APRIL TO JUNE 2015**

This quarter the number of women attending ACED training sessions represented 40% of the total discrete (new) participants. The number of women adopting improved techniques and practices, as a result of ACED assistance, was 82 or 36% of the total discrete adopters.

A total of \$137,648, or 12% of the total sales reported, were reported by women-led or owned companies. The number of clients benefiting from assistance leading to HVA investments was 29, of which 6 (20%) were women-led or owned entities. At the same time, the investments carried out by these entities (\$8,480) were smaller in scale compared to the previous quarter with the investments mainly being made in vegetable production, a popular agricultural business among women producers. Five women-led or owned companies, out of a total of 14 companies, received technical assistance during the reporting period.

### **The Women in Agriculture Network (WAN) Activity**

- The WAN activity started with a fast pace of implementation in line with the second year action plans for the WAN program. The year started quite well in terms of interest, attendance and efficiency, with the women being more receptive to the WAN and more aware of the advantages, usefulness and benefits of being a WAN member. As a result, the turn-out for WAN events has gradually increased over the past year as their reliance on, and understanding of, the program has grown.

#### The Northern and Central WANs:

- A three-day course on Family Farm Accounting was held on April 14<sup>th</sup>, April 21<sup>st</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup>. This schedule was agreed on by the Network Advisory Group members for the WAN as the most convenient considering the beginning of the production season and the work load for the women participants.
- A two-day seminar on Public Speaking and Emotional Control took place in Balti on April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. The participants were highly appreciative of the opportunity to develop their public speaking skills and abilities. There were three women present who were planning to participate in the local election campaign, for the position of village mayor.
- On April 2<sup>nd</sup> the Central WAN members participated in a seminar on Cooperation and Association (about the creation of a producer group). This is a topic of high interest to producers, as they are more and more inclined towards working together for their common goals. The participants learned the stages of producer group creation, including the opportunities, the threats and risks, and ways to address them.
- Twenty women attended a seminar on Business Communications and Negotiations which took place on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. During the practical session, the women broke out into small groups and each made a presentation of their company and product.
- On April 30<sup>th</sup> women from both the Northern and Central WANs participated in a seminar on Currant Production Technologies held in Chisinau. The seminar was delivered by ACED national consultant Parasovia Sava. The attendance was higher than expected (25 participants), which proves women's acute interest in berry production.
- On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, a group of twenty women from the Northern WAN visited the Family Farm of Maria Darii, a WAN member who was happy to share her experiences in growing early cabbage. As she told her peers, this was a technology she learned during two study visits organized by ACED to Zarechie, Ukraine in 2013 and 2014.
- On May 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, women from the Central WAN attended an intensive course on Agricultural Marketing. This course covered subjects such as product promotion, packaging, and marketing channels.
- On May 15<sup>th</sup> and June 3<sup>rd</sup>, WAN members from the Drochia and Riscani sub-regions attended workshops on Taxation Aspects in Agriculture for 2015. Two specialists from the Fiscal Inspection Service explained all the rules and requirements and answered all the burning questions related to this subject.
- On May 22<sup>nd</sup> an Experience Exchange Meeting on the subject of Investment Opportunities in Agriculture was held in Balti. Over 20 WAN members had the

opportunity to meet representatives of different programs/projects that support the agricultural sector and learn about recent programs that have been launched, or are going to be launched in the near future. They learned about the Poland loan program, and its access requirements, the IFAD VI activities, and the Ag subsidy regulations for 2015.

- WAN members involved in nut production from the Northern and Central WANs attended a seminar on this subject on May 28<sup>th</sup> in Chisinau. One participant made the following comment on this activity, on behalf of all of the participants: “This was an excellent opportunity to learn directly from such a good specialist, thanks to ACED.”

The Southern WAN:

- Basic Computer Skills Development courses held in Causeni and Stefan Voda were completed on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Twenty one women had the chance to learn the basics of operating a computer and accessing the internet.
- A group of women from the Southern WAN went on a study visit to Gura Bicului (in Anenii Noi Raion) to Gori’s Tomatoes Family Farm. Gori’s Tomatoes is growing organic vegetables and is delivering according to the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) system. In addition to this, the women visited two businesses involved in sweet pepper and cucumber production.
- On May 27<sup>th</sup>, a group of women from the Southern WAN gathered for a seminar on Business Planning in Cimislia. The women learned about the necessary sections and the basic contents of a typical business plan. During the seminar they practiced the preparation of SWOT analyses and preparing descriptions of their companies, which are important elements in a business plan.
- On May 29<sup>th</sup>, the Southern WAN members attended a seminar on Accounting for Limited Liability Companies and Family Farms in Causeni. The women were very active in asking questions during, and at the end of, the seminar, and as a result the event lasted two hours more than initially planned.



The Gagauzian WAN:

- Two seminars on Tomato & Cucumber Production in Greenhouses were held for the Gagauzian WAN members from Ciadir Lunga and nearby villages. ACED Consultant Nicu Bejan delivered the seminars.
- In the middle of May, the Gagauzian WAN members participated in an Experience Exchange Visit in Transnistria, where they met with their Transnistrian counterparts (see photo at right) and they visited a small business for greenhouse flower production.
- Another event on strawberry production was held in Comrat with ACED Consultant Petru Vizitiu delivering the technical materials.



### The Transnistria WAN:

- The Network Advisory Group (NAG) Meeting for the Transnistrian WAN was held on April 9<sup>th</sup> where the NAG members discussed the timing and arrangements for activities planned for this year, specifically the local and international study visits and the exchange visits with the Central and Gagauzian WAN members.
- On April 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, TPP organized two successful seminars on The Role of Irrigation in Fruit & Vegetable Production in Ribnita and Tiraspol. The seminars were delivered by ACED national consultants on water quality and irrigation systems - Raisa Lozan and Nicolae Sircu.
- A Flower Production seminar, with a field visit, was organized for the Transnistrian WAN members on May 6<sup>th</sup>. The participants had a chance to see and learn more on the topic of flower (rose and alstroemeria) production in greenhouses, a business that is quite productive and profitable.
- On May 29<sup>th</sup> the Transnistrian WAN members from Camenca and Ribnita attended a seminar on Strawberry Production in Tiraspol followed by two field visits in Causeni, Copanca and Slobozia, Cremenciug. The seminar was delivered by Larisa Colomicenco, WAN member and ACED RTSP, who also hosted the field visits on her farm where she produces both strawberries and vegetables. Aside from strawberries the women saw the new Colomicenco mini-processing facility for pickle production.
- Fourteen Transnistrian WAN members participated in a two-day study visit on Berry Production in Vinnitsa, Ukraine. The study visit was organized by the Fruit Project company which is specialized in agro services. On the first day the women attended a practical seminar on Strawberry & Raspberry Production Technologies delivered by Fruit Project Consultant, Jeremy Darby from Great Britain who gave a very comprehensive description of strawberry and raspberry growing technologies, including varieties, pest and diseases. On the second day the women visited two berry producers, with a smaller one that was growing various berries including strawberries in open field and greenhouses, black and red currants, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, gooseberries, as well as cherries and apples.



### **SELECT ACTIVITIES FROM Y5Q2: JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015**

This quarter the number of women attending ACED training sessions represented 52% of total discrete (new) participants. The number of women adopting improved techniques and practices as a result of ACED assistance was 163, or 43% of the total discrete adopters. Additionally, \$224,050, or 5%, of the total sales this quarter were reported by women-led and/or owned companies. The number of clients benefiting from assistance leading to HVA

investments was 23, of which 3 or 13%, were women-led/owned entities. The investments made by two of these entities (for \$500,350, or 18% of total investments) were large-scale investments in the apple value chain and fruit drying. One new women-led/owned company was among the eight companies that received technical assistance from the ACED Project during the reporting period.

### **Women in Agriculture Network (WAN) Activity**

- The highlight of the quarter was a study tour on Fruit and Vegetable Production organized in the Sandormierz region of Poland between July 25<sup>th</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Fourteen women, representing different regional WANs, participated in this study tour. Participants saw modern orchards for apples, sweet and sour cherries, pears, apricots, and some nice fields of raspberries, gooseberries, red and black currants and aronia berries. They also saw the application of modern field equipment, such as harvesting platforms, a cherry harvesting machine, a berry harvesting machine and other equipment used to reduce the need for manual labor in the fields.



### The Northern and Central WANs:

- Six groups of fifteen women each visited various agricultural businesses operated by their WAN colleagues within their own regions. Women from the Northern WAN visited a berry production farm in Riscani district, a walnut and hazel nut production farm (including a plum drying facility) in Drochia district and an apple and pear production business in Edinet district. Meanwhile for the Central WAN members such visits were organized in Hincesti to a plum production farm, in Orhei to fruit orchards and in Nisporeni to a table grape producer.



- In addition to these experience exchange visits, WAN members participated in several study visits on subjects like berry and vegetable production. Related to berries, some women visited the farm of Mr. Eduard Manciu who grows gooseberries on one hectare. The producer shared the advantages and disadvantages of growing gooseberries with the women.
- Another study visit was organized at Gori's Tomatoes Family Farm in



Gura Bicului village to study the CSA model.

- Women from the Central WAN visited the left side of the Nistru River to meet members of the Transnistrian WAN. Both parties had a brief meeting introducing themselves and the businesses they are running. The meeting was followed by a visit to the company Livada-Service that produces apples and plums, but also owns a modern cold storage and a sorting line.

#### The Southern WAN:

- Women from the Southern WAN visited the blackberry plantation of Raisa Ghimp in Ialoveni district, Tipala village. These berries are of high interest to the women as they are new to the Moldovan market. Besides selling fresh product in the local market, Raisa is processing part of the harvest, making wine and jelly.
- On July 23<sup>rd</sup> 28 women from the Causeni and Stefan Voda sub-regions attended a seminar on Export Procedures and Cooperation with Local Retailers. The event was organized jointly with the ACED Marketing Team who provided two specialists (Politrans Ltd and Linella market) who consulted with the group on these subjects based on their knowledge and experience.
- Another interesting and useful event for the Southern WAN members was a two-day study tour to the North of Moldova. The group visited the farms of three successful members from the Northern WAN, in Drochia district. The first two women were growing vegetables in greenhouses and in open fields, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peppers and eggplant. In addition, the women had a chance to visit the walnut and hazelnut orchards of Nadejda Frumusachi from Lazo village.



#### The Gagauzian WAN:

- An event of great interest to women was held in mid-July for a group of Gagauzian WAN members who visited two farms specialized in salad and culinary herb production. The first host, producing salads, welcomed the women to his farm in Ialoveni where he was growing various greens, including arugula. The second host shared her experience in growing culinary herbs like thyme, estragon, basil, sage, lemon grass, and other tea herbs.



#### The Transnistria WAN:

- On July 17, ACED organized a WAN seminar on Berry Production, with the RTSP TPP organizing the logistics for 18 participants. The training took place in Tiraspol, and was provided by a local berry expert Ivan Velichko. He presented the main aspects of raspberry, blackberry and cornus (dogwood) production and gave practical recommendations starting from the business plan through to production

(peculiarities of seedling material, planting, water for irrigation, pruning) and joint marketing. Ivan Velichko gave several examples of successful European berry cooperatives, as well as presenting the significant experience of a right bank village (Pocrovca) where almost all farmers produce raspberries and have joint marketing and cold storage facilities. After the theoretical part, all of the women visited Ivan Velichko's company, which is named "Greenhouse", with raspberry, blackberry and cornus (dogwood) production in Caragash village.

- Another study visit, on New Varieties and Hybrids of Vegetables and Melons at the Agricultural Resereach Institute of Transnistria was conducted on July 29<sup>th</sup>. A group of 18 women visited an exhibit of various vegetables (tomatoes, sweet peppers, eggplants) and melons at the Research Institute in Tiraspol.



- Two seminars on the subject Steps in the Preparation of Products and Documentation for Sales to Supermarkets were held this month, one in Tiraspol and one in Ribnita, for 40 total participants. A representative of the Fourchette supermarket chain made a presentation on the conditions and requirements for working with this retailer in Tiraspol. For Ribnita a representative from the Sheriff supermarket chain explained their rules. ACED invited Eugen Vieru, the director of the Politrans Broker Company, to both seminars to inform the participants on export procedures and the documents required for export.
- Two workshops on the subject Sources of Financing for Small and Medium Businesses - Preferential Loans were provided in both Ribnita and Tiraspol in September. Access to finance was one of the topics frequently requested by the women. They were interested to learn about the existing funding opportunities, including the procedures, conditions and requirements to access such funds. The instructor was from the Transnistrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as they have sufficient experience and knowledge in this subject.

## Environmental Compliance

The ACED Environmental Specialist resigned from the project at the end of September 2014 and this position will not be filled with a full-time replacement. ACED has made arrangements to engage the services of a local consultant with USAID project experience related to environmental compliance, and to use the person on an as-needed basis. This person has now been engaged to provide as-needed consulting services starting from the first quarter of Year Five. During this quarter the consultant has been working on the Annual Environmental Status Report for Year Four, which is nearly complete.

## Local Capacity Building for Moldovan BSPs

As has been the case throughout the implementation of ACED, the project has continued to make extensive use of local service providers for the implementation of project activities and events, and the provision of services. ACED generally seeks out suppliers of goods and services via full and open competition via an open bid solicitation process. Administrative and technical staff review the bids received and come to a decision on which bidder provides the best value for money for the project before awarding a contract.

## Donor Coordination

ACED cooperates and collaborates with most projects and donors in Moldova involved with agriculture and food production. These important efforts undertaken in FY 2015 bring added value to all of the activities and events that the ACED project implements. The main donor collaboration activities during the year fell into the following categories.

### Collaboration with the Embassy & USAID:

- As was included in the April monthly report the CoP, accompanied by Kristin Penn and Mr Srinivasan Kaliappan, a fruit importer from India, met with Alina Romanowski from the State Department in Washington. This meeting took place at Mihai Cojocar's demonstration site that is located within the Criuleni central irrigation zone. During the visit Ms Romanowski received a lot of information on the assistance that ACED (via the funding from USAID and MCC) has provided to Mr Cojocar and she had a chance to see for herself the extent of the irrigation system that has been rehabilitated with MCC Compact funding.
- On May 5<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP and Adrian Cojocar travelled to Soroca to participate in the American Ambassador's visit to the food processing firm Alfa Nistru. During the visit the ACED CoP described the assistance that the project has provided to the company and briefed the Ambassador on aspects of the ACED program in Moldova.
- On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June, the CoP and the CIS Zone Coordinator (Oxana Borza) travelled to Criuleni to participate in a field visit to an ACED client by Susan Fritz, the USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Europe/Eurasia Region. This was Susan's first visit to Moldova and ACED arranged for her to visit the sweet cherry orchard of Mihai Cojocar and the Criuleni CIS zone pumping station. The ACED COR reported after the visit that Susan was very pleased with the visit and was pleased to see cooperation and collaboration between USAID and MCC, implemented by the ACED project.
- On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July the ACED Chief of Party, along with the Chief of Parties from the BRITE and LGSP projects, participated in a discussion moderated by staff from the Expert Grup on the subject of impediments to attracting foreign investment into Moldova.
- On Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, the ACED CoP accompanied by Lilian Cipciriuc and Irina Ungureanu (acting as translator for the event) participated in the visit by US Congressman Steve Chabot at the Constimax table grape farm on the outskirts of Chisinau. The congressman was accompanied by the Acting USAID Director, Tom Rhodes, the ACED COR, Rodica Miron, Kristin Penn from the MCC office in Moldova and other officials from the US Embassy in Moldova.

### Collaboration with the MCC Compact:

- On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October the CoP, accompanied by the project's CIS Zone Activity Facilitator and the USAID COR, participated in a review meeting with Kristin Penn and Cynthia Berning at the MCA office in Chisinau. Discussions were held on the implementation of the ACED assistance to the CIS zone farmers and the plans in the near future for training and technical assistance activities.
- On December 8<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP, Andrea Chartock, Oleg Stiopca and Elena Brinza participated in a phone conference call with the M&E staff from MCC Washington.

The purpose of the call was to discuss the details of ACED's request to MCC that they lift the restriction on project activities in some of the MCC "Control" zones. ACED responded to questions from the MCC staff and provided them with additional information on what the project has been doing and what would be done in these control zones.

- On January 21<sup>st</sup> the ACED CoP and Peter White had an extensive meeting with Cynthia Berning from MCC Washington and Andrei Stratulat from MCA Moldova to review and discuss recent marketing activities and the plans for trade show participation for the remainder of the project. Extensive discussions were held on a broad range of topics, including the "cost-sharing" activities that the ACED project has launched to assist producers to gain access to new, distant, markets. Considerable discussion also took place on the ACED supported trial shipment to Bangladesh, along with the details of the many issues and challenges that ACED worked on to assist with this trial shipment.
- Following the meeting mentioned above the ACED CoP, Oleg Stiopca and Oxana Borza continued the meeting with Cynthia and Andrei to review and discuss ACED's plans for technical assistance and training activities for the farmers involved in the MCC irrigation zones. Extensive discussions were held on all aspects of the training and technical assistance program for the MCC farmers, based on a GANTT chart showing the plans for Activity 5 for the coming year. Cynthia seemed concerned about the level of activity planned for the CIS zones but Oleg informed the CoP that the real issue was that ACED plans a significant amount of activity following closure of the Compact.
- On the 30<sup>th</sup> of January the CoP had lunch with Gary Merkley, the Project Manager for the MCA ISRA (Irrigation Sector Reform Activity) project. These regular meetings are useful opportunities for the ISRA and ACED projects to compare notes, keep informed of developments in the field and to inform each other on ongoing activities and events. This is more important at this point, with the launching of the ACED Training & Technical Assistance activities for the farmers in the CIS zones.
- On Tuesday February 17<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP along with Oleg Stiopca and Oxana Borza met with Andrei Stralutat from the MCA office once again to review the draft plan for training activities within the CIS Zones. Andrei had comments from Kristin Penn and Cynthia Berning, along with comments from other MCA staff, and we reviewed them to determine how to best strengthen the plan. The most important issue was that the plan lacked enough detail to give readers a good appreciation for the level of activity that ACED has planned and the ACED Team agreed to add more detail in the GANTT chart so that readers could know when and where individual activities would be taking place. It was also agreed that the CIS Zone plan would only include calendar 2015 and that most of the activities planned would be completed by the end of August 2015.
- On May 20<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP participated in a meeting at USAID to discuss, between USAID, MCC and ACED, upcoming events that are planned by MCC to attract investors in the partially complete irrigation systems in the Lower Prut. There will be a donor conference in early June and then an Investors Conference in early July, tied in with the US Trade Rep visit to Moldova.

- On June 3<sup>rd</sup> the ACED CoP and the CIS Zone Coordinator (Oxana Borza) participated in a MCC Donors Roundtable conference where various donor agencies in Moldova were presented with the opportunities for new investments and future support for the irrigation zones by the staff from MCA and by the ACED CoR from USAID. The ACED CoR used a powerpoint presentation that had been prepared by the ACED CoP for her presentation at the event.
- On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July the ACED Chief of Party, and Marketing Team member Lilian Cipciruiuc, participated in the Investor's Forum organized by the MCC office in Moldova. This was a one-day event organized to highlight the attractive investment opportunities that are available, to both foreign and domestic investors, in the areas around the Centralized Irrigation Zones that will have access to water from the irrigation systems rehabilitated by the MCC Compact. ACED arranged for the CEO of Linella, one of the major supermarket chains in Moldova, to make a presentation regarding their new program to expand their purchasing of local fruit and vegetables from domestic sources.
- On the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, the ACED Training & CIS Assistance Teams organized the main public event for the project during the month – the National Irrigation Technology Forum. This was a well-attended event and it brought together about 80 farmers from the Centralized Irrigation Zones which are being rehabilitated by the MCC Compact in Moldova. The MCC Director in Moldova, Leslie McCuaig, and the former Minister of Agriculture for Moldova, Vasile Bumacov, were among the prominent guests.

*Collaboration with the Moldovan Government:*

- On October 2<sup>nd</sup> the ACED CoP and DCoP joined Rodica Miron from USAID for a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, Vasile Bumacov. This meeting was held to advise the Minister of the upcoming visit to Moldova by Chris White and the B2B event to be held in Bucharest, and to seek his participation in these events. During the meeting the status of the RIAs for the additional 14 ISPMs that the Ministry requested was discussed and it was agreed that ACED will hold off on conducting these additional RIAs until the government has acted on the initial ISPMs that the ACED project has analyzed.
- On November 27<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP and the ACED Marketing Specialist, Peter White, held a meeting with Maxim Popov from the Prime Minister's office and Andrei Sestovschi from MIEPO. The subjects of the discussion were collaboration between ACED and MIEPO on future trade shows and the possible inclusion of a high profile event for the Prime Minister at the GulFood show.
- On January 20<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP and Peter White met with Andrei Sestovschi from MIEPO and Maxim Popov from the Prime Minister's office to discuss the arrangements for the Moldova booth at the GulFood trade show. ACED informed Andrei and Maxim that there will be an individual podium available for MIEPO/Invest in Moldova and that ACED will arrange to have both of these logos on the front of the podium.
- On January 20<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP, DCoP, Peter White and Andrei Cumpanici met with Alexandru Ciobanu from the Moldovan National Food Safety Agency to discuss the steps needed to complete and submit the "Pest Risk Analysis" required by the Indian

food safety authorities before Moldovan fruit can be imported into the country. It was agreed that ACED will contract with a local consultant to prepare the form and then NFSA will formally submit the application on a government to government basis.

- On February 6<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP, Peter White and other members of the ACED Marketing Team met with the Moldovan Ambassador to Germany, and his assistant, at the Moldova booth at Fruit Logistica. The Ambassador spent quite a bit of time at the booth, speaking individually to each of the exhibiting companies and observing the interaction between the participants and the visitors to the booth.
- On Thursday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, the ACED CoP, accompanied by the Activity 1 and 4 Technical Leads, participated in a meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Food Safety Agency. The meeting was held to discuss the status of Moldova's submission of the Pest Risk Analysis to the Indian food safety authorities and what agency or office should take the next actions to move the approval process along on the Indian side.
- On the 8<sup>th</sup> of June the ACED office hosted Andrei Sestovschi from MIEPO to have a discussion of the collaboration between MIEPO and ACED on the Moldova booth for the Anuga trade show. MIEPO has committed to covering about 5,000 Euros of the costs of this show, and Andrei will also participate in the show.
- On June 22<sup>nd</sup> the ACED CoP, along with the USAID COR, met with Igor Gorasov who is the manager of the Polish Loan program which provides loans for Polish made agricultural and food processing equipment. Igor explained how the program works and he asked for ACED assistance in getting the word out to farmers and agribusinesses regarding the existence of this program. Igor will provide ACED with some brochures on the program that can be distributed to the trainees in the ACED technical seminars and at the ACED Demo Activity Farmer Field Days.
- On August 11<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP, Marketing Team members and Andrei Sestovic from MIEPO conducted a review of the bids for the construction of the Moldova booth at the ANUGA trade show. The response to the RfP was quite good, with a total of seven companies having submitted bids for the booth at this show. The designs submitted by all of the bidders were quite similar, mainly due to the restrictive nature of the conditions contained in the RfP, and in the end the committee selected a bid from a Moldovan firm – the AVG Service Group – which has constructed stands at other German trade shows.

#### Collaboration with Other Donors & Projects:

- Also on November 10<sup>th</sup> the CoP and Leon Skarshinski met with Olga Sainciuc from the World Bank funded MAC-P project (Moldova Agricultural Competitiveness Project). Leon had a chance to learn about the activities and plans of the MAC-P project and to review the areas that are in common with the ACED project. These include assistance to the newly established Moldovan National Food Safety Agency (NFSA) and the efforts of the MAC-P project to facilitate the formation of producer groups and cooperatives.
- On November 18<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP and Oleg Stiopca met with Andrew Sergeant, a consultant in town conduct a review of the horticultural sector in to advise the World Bank on the design of a new project which will focus on horticulture in Moldova. The CoP and Oleg provided Andrew with a number of useful suggestions and background

info on the horticulture sector in Moldova, and he was provided with the names of farmers to visit in the Criuleni area when he was out to visit the irrigation zone.

- On the 20<sup>th</sup> of November the ACED CoP and DCoP held a meeting with the UNECE to discuss the current need for policy reforms in the Moldovan agricultural sector. Extensive discussions were held regarding the policy reform activities that the ACED project has been carrying out, and the key areas needed for reform in the near term. ACED provided advice and guidance to the UNECE consultants on what issues should be the focus of any UN assistance in this area in the future.
- On November 25<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP held a follow-up meeting with Andrew Sergeant regarding his assignment to assess the Moldovan horticultural sector for the World Bank. He came back in to review his impressions and observations and to discuss concepts that he had developed for any future WB project. One area of particular concern was that of marketing, and the lack of focus on markets and marketing on the part of the producers he had met on his field visits.
- On December 16<sup>th</sup> the CoP, the DCoP and the ACED Food Safety Specialist participated in the close-out conference organized by the EU Twinning Project which has collaborated with the ACED project on providing assistance to the SPS Laboratory and the National Food Safety Agency. This was a good opportunity for the ACED staff to make contact with some of the key people in the food safety system in Moldova, including the Minister of Agriculture, the head of the Food Safety Agency and some of the EU officials involved in the efforts to improve Moldova's food safety system.
- On Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, the ACED CoP participated in one of the regular Moldovan Ag Project Donor Coordination meetings which took place at the ESRA TA Project office. There was a good turnout for this meeting and Saverio Savio (from the EIB wine sector project) spoke quite extensively on the situation in the wine industry in Moldova. There appear to be some significant challenges ahead for the wine industry, including a massive inventory of unsold, and perhaps unsellable, wine at most of the wineries in the country. The ACED CoP briefed the participants on the international trade shows which were underway (FL and GF) and passed around a copy of the January issue of EUROFRUIT so the participants could see the article on Moldova in the magazine.
- On the 17<sup>th</sup> of April the ACED CoP made a presentation at the conference on *SMEs and Small Farmers in Agribusiness* that was sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The ACED CoP made a brief presentation on the ACED project for the group, and following the presentations he had an opportunity to share some of his experiences with other participants at the event.
- On Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP travelled to Costesti to make a presentation on Moldovan agriculture, and the activities of the ACED project, to a group of newly arrived Peace Corps Volunteers. About 16 volunteers were in the group, all small business volunteers, and the CoP provided them with a good orientation to agriculture and the ACED project.

Other Collaborative Activities:

- ❖ On October 8<sup>th</sup> the CoP and the ACED Training Specialist, Oleg Stiopca, met with the Dutch Trade Mission on their return visit to Moldova. The Dutch Mission team had a list of the Dutch companies that will be coming to Moldova and were requesting assistance in identifying counterpart Moldovan companies that could be paired with the Dutch companies. ACED has provided the Mission with a list of companies that they will be able to contract and use for the upcoming trade mission.
- ❖ As part of Chris White's visit to Moldova, on Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, ACED arranged for a series of visits for Chris that would help him get a better picture of the overall situation with agriculture, and in particular horticultural production, in Moldova. During the day Chris, accompanied by the ACED CoP, the Marketing Specialist and the project's USAID COR, visited with World Bank consultants assessing the situation in Moldova, the American Ambassador to Moldova and the Minister of Agriculture.
- ❖ On Tuesday, the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, the CoP and the DCoP had a chance to meet with the Moldovan Ambassador to Romania, and his assistant, and to brief them on the activities that the ACED project, in partnership with Moldova Fruct, has been undertaking to expand Moldova's exports of fresh fruit. The Ambassador was one of three speakers at the event and he made very positive remarks about the ACED project and the prospects for expanded trade with Romania.
- ❖ On December 7<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP participated in the preparations for, and the implementation of, the 2014 Winter Bazaar which is organized by the International Women's Club of Moldova. On Saturday, the 6<sup>th</sup>, the CoP assisted with the set up and preparations for the event and then on the 7<sup>th</sup> the CoP volunteered to work at the Ireland Booth during the event itself. This was a good opportunity for the CoP to meet and greet many of the other people in the donor community and he also made an appearance on local TV, with a glimpse of him being seen on the nightly news show on Pro TV.
- ❖ On Also on January 20<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP, Peter White, Veronica Vladiuc and Aurel Statan met with representatives from the Moldova 1 television and radio network to discuss the support ACED will provide to have TV reporting teams at both trade shows in February – Fruit Logistica and GulFood. It was agreed that two person teams (a cameraman and a reporter) will participate in each show with the team being at FL from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> and the team being at GulFood from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> (using Fly Dubai to facilitate travel arrangements).
- ❖ On Wednesday February 25<sup>th</sup> the ACED CoP was interviewed by Olga Cotlearova who is a reporter from the Moldovan Business Channel (MBC) TV station. MBC has put a more extensive version of the interview on their web site, in the section called "Interviews with Impact" (<http://mbc.md/rom/shows/interviu-cu-impact/>).
- ❖ On the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of April the ACED CoP, Jim Herne, and the ACED Component II Manager, Andrea Chartock, participated in a two-day conference in London titled the *DAI Inclusive Economic Growth Workshop*. The two ACED employees had a chance to learn about the various Market System Development approaches that are in use around the world by various DAI projects and to share some of the techniques and approaches that have been used by the ACED project and to get to meet and share experiences with DAI staff from around the world.

## IV. LESSONS LEARNED

The ACED project has now completed four and a half years of its five year life, and the ACED staff and the farmer & producer clients, have continued to learn from the intense level of activities and events over the past 54 months. The level of activity has continued to be high throughout the third and fourth years of the project (Apr '13 to Mar '14 and Apr '14 to Mar '15) and a high level has continued throughout the first half of the fifth and final year of project implementation. A high level of activity will continue throughout the final quarter of calendar 2015, with a tapering off of activities in early 2016. Based on experience to date, ACED's management and technical staff have collected the following items as the "Lessons Learned" from the four and a half years of the project:

- ✓ Despite the lifting of the Russian ban on the import of Moldovan HVA produce, there is still a great need to reduce the extreme dependency on the Russian market. In 2015, the Russian ban on imports of fresh fruit and vegetables from the EU (and especially imports from Poland) has increased the competition for alternative markets, cutting off some potential avenues for Moldovans to sell their fruit.
- ✓ With the lifting of the ban, and renewed producer efforts to place fruit in the Russian market, the producers have learned that the market landscape in Russia has changed considerably since they last exported to Russia. Russian consumers have less money to spend, importers have established new sources of supply, and the local price for apples and other fruit are much lower than in past years. These factors all argue for an increased emphasis on exploring and penetrating new markets.
- ✓ New markets imply new ways of doing things and in response the producers need to be open to learning about, and adapting to, these new requirements. In many of these markets packaging is different (packed by count instead of by weight) and customers are looking for specific sizes, colors and varieties of apples. Fortunately for the Moldovan producers they seem to be more aware of the varying requirements of new markets and they are adapting their capabilities to be able to respond.
- ✓ Payment terms are another major impediment to venturing into new markets. Most non-Russian customers work on the basis of Letters of Credit (LCs) and not on a cash basis as the Moldovans are used to. As with the packaging and marking requirements mentioned in the previous paragraph the Moldovan suppliers are adapting to these new requirements and are willing to accept more modern payment arrangements.
- ✓ The shipping arrangements as well, are another factor that the Moldovan producers need to take into account. With the assistance provided by the ACED project over the past four years the producers have come to understand the necessary arrangements for shipments to the Gulf, Egypt, India and other distant destinations. Many of the producers now have real-world experience with shipping goods to distant markets and are much more prepared for this than they were two to three years ago.
- ✓ The quality of the packaging for the fruit was a problem for Moldovan producers in the past but much progress has been made over the past few years. Many producers now purchase their carton material from Romania or Poland and the quality of the material is much better than what was used in the past. In addition many producers have purchased carton folding machines and are able to prepare good quality boxes, that are suitable for foreign markets, on site and as needed.

- ✓ Over the past four and a half years the ACED project has shifted a large part of the costs for the major marketing activities to the producers, industry associations and the national export promotion agency (MIEPO). As USAID continues its assistance to the HVA sector in Moldova this process should continue and result in the bulk of the costs for these events being borne by the producers, the associations and the export agency by the time the follow-on project ends.
- ✓ The ACED has continued to have a good response from farmers and producers who attend the project's training events and the adoption rate for new approaches and techniques that have been presented at these seminars has been quite high. Despite the level of training that has been provided over the past four years many local producers still have a poor awareness of the latest advancements in production technologies. Continued assistance in this area, via training seminars, demo activities, technical bulletins and domestic & international study tours, will be important.
- ✓ ACED has had some success fostering the creation of some new producer groups and this effort should continue. Historically Moldovans have been reluctant to join together and undertake marketing efforts as a group but this resistance seems to be breaking down. The result of repeated visits to producer groups and farmer cooperatives in foreign countries seems to be having an effect and the new project should continue to promote these efforts to strengthen the competitiveness of Moldovan producers.
- ✓ With the imminent arrival of irrigation water at some of the MCC irrigation zones the farmers in those regions will need to move quickly if they are to take advantage of the opportunity that will be presented to them. It seems that the larger farmers, who already have significant investments and operations, are well placed to make use of the irrigation systems but the smaller farmers may not be able to catch up.
- ✓ Moldova needs continued improvements to the regulatory environment to achieve the ambitious plans it has for making HVA the economic engine it can be. While there seems to be some progress on the issue of variety registration, in reality the situation has not changed very much since the ACED project began. This will continue to be a drag on the development of HVA, and the adoption of new, improved varieties.
- ✓ ACED's experience with farmers and producers on the Left Bank (Transnistria) has been very positive and the farmers there seem even more eager to learn about new things than farmers on the Right Bank. The Cross-Bank activities implemented by the project seem to be particularly effective ways of fostering good interpersonal and business relations and these efforts should continue.
- ✓ The Women in Agricultural Networks program that the ACED project implemented in 2014 and 2015 seems to have been very effective in awakening the desire on the part of rural women to associate and learn from each other. The responses to this program have been extremely positive and the women involved have developed funding proposals for other donors and are optimistic on receiving some funding. It would be advisable that the new project continue these efforts to support rural women.

The ACED Project has done well at seeking out, and developing, collaborative and cooperative relationships with other donors and international projects. The links with the UNDP Aid for Trade project are a good case in point and these types of collaborative arrangements need to be further developed as new agricultural projects appear on the scene. The future USAID agricultural project should also work more closely with appropriate

government agencies, and undertake collaborative activities that advance the mutual objectives of the project and these agencies. These should include the National Food Safety Agency and MIEPO, the Moldovan trade and investment promotion agency.

As is true with any development project, the management and staff of the ACED project also need to remain flexible and creative to take advantage of unexpected opportunities that come about from time to time. The appearance of a new potential client organization, new methods of promoting Moldova and Moldovan producers and products and new, perhaps not previously considered, market opportunities should be given due consideration and follow-up if warranted. Some examples of the continued willingness of ACED's management and staff to undertake new types of activities are the following:

- ✓ When the ACED team learned that Moldova Fruct had been offered a small, no-cost, booth at the IndAgra trade show in Bucharest in October, the Marketing Team immediately offered to partner with Moldova Fruct on this show and to use ACED resources to make this a more important event for the association.
- ✓ With the commitment to expand the booth at IndAgra the US Embassy in Romania offered to assist ACED to organize a reception for the Moldovan producers with an offer to hold this event at the American Ambassador's residence in Bucharest. This offer made good sense for ACED and Moldova Fruct as it would provide an opportunity to heighten the visibility of the Moldovan producers in Romania and give them an opportunity to meet face-to-face with Romanian buyers.
- ✓ Following on some initial contact between Peter White from ACED and Chris White from EUROFRUIT magazine, Chris suggested that ACED give some consideration to having a booth at the World of Perishables trade show in Dubai. ACED has supported two small booths at this fresh produce focused show and the results have been encouraging. Future efforts to support Moldovan HVA should include participation in this show.
- ✓ ACED developed a working relationship with the management of the Linella supermarket chain in Moldova although initially this collaboration did not yield much in the way of results. The arrival of a new foreign manager for the chain provided ACED with an opportunity to enhance the relationship and capitalize on the opportunity to place local produce in the Linella supermarkets. Through the engagement of an advisor for Linella, focused on improving their fresh produce marketing, ACED has been able to assist Linella to sign supply contracts with nine new local suppliers and Linella is in negotiations with another nine producers that may become suppliers as well.

These are only a few examples of the ongoing efforts by the ACED staff to seek out new and creative ways of doing things and new activities and events that the project can implement to continue to expand Moldova's markets for fresh produce. This process will continue for the remainder of the project and additional new and creative approaches, not only for the marketing effort but across the board with all project activities, will be explored and tried with the encouragement and support of ACED's USAID COR.