



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

AGRICULTURAL LINKAGES PROJECT (AGLINKS UZBEKISTAN)

QUARTERLY REPORT (Q3 FY 2009)

APR 2009 – JUN 2009

JULY 2009

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by DAI.

AGRICULTURAL LINKAGES PROJECT

(AGLINKS)

Q3 FY 2009 QUARTERLY REPORT

APR 2009 – JUN 2009

AgLinks Uzbekistan
12 Afrosiab Street – 3rd Floor
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Telephone: (998) (71) 252-5414

Fax: (998) (71) 252-6756

For the

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RAISE Plus IQC

Contract No. EDH-I-05-00004-00

Task Order No. EDH-I-07-05-00004-0

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table Of Contents

Acronyms

A. ADMINISTRATION

- A.1. Legal Status.
- A.2. Personnel.
- A.3. Office.
- A.4. Banking
- A.5. Leasing.
- A.6. Issue(s).

B. TECHNICAL

- B.1. AgriFirms.
- B.2. Producers.
- B.3. Private Sector.
- B.4. Public Sector.
- B.5. Issue(s).

C. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

- C.1. Mitigation.
- C.2. Monitoring.
- C.3. Issue(s).

D. FINANCE

- D.1. Disbursements.
- D.2. Commitments.
- D.3. Obligations.
- D.4. Issue(s).

ANNEX A : AgLinks Organizational Structure – June 2009

ANNEX B : Tools and Testers Distribution List

ANNEX C : Monthly Reports (Apr and May 2009)

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BDS	Business Development Services
BEO	Bureau Environmental Officer
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNFA	Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs
CPS	Crop Protection Services
DAI	Development Alternative Inc.
Dekhan	backyard farm
DPP	Dynamic Planning Process
EU	European Union
FtF	Farmer-to-Farmer
FY	Fiscal Year
G&A	General and Administrative
GOU	Government of Uzbekistan
ha	hectare (10,000 square meters, 100 meters by 100 meters, 2.47 acres)
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HO	Home Office
HPLC	High Performance Liquid Chromatograph
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IKS	Islohotkonsaltservis, Ltd. (local consulting firm)
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JSC	Joint Stock Company
Kholhoz	collective farm (during Soviet era)
LLC	Limited Liability Company
LOP	Life of Project
LSP	Local Service Provider
MAWR	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MERIT	Ministry of External Economic Relations, Investment and Trade of Uzbekistan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDC	Negative Determination with Conditions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
Oblast	province
ODC	Other Direct Costs
OH	Overhead
PD	Positive Determination
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan
Pudrats	Family-based agricultural production units
Rayon	district
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEAF	Small Enterprise Assistance Fund
Shirkat	production cooperative (Uzbek)
SME	Small and Medium size Enterprises
Sovhoz	state farm enterprise (during Soviet era)
TA	Technical Assistance
TCN	Third Country National
TQSA	Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance
TTCC	Tashkent Testing and Certification Center

Tumani	rayon (district) in Uzbek
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USG	United States Government
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VAT	Value Added Tax
Viloyat	Oblast (province) in Uzbek
WUA	Water User's Association
WUASP	Water User's Association Support Project

This report covers the third complete quarter (April-May-June of 2009) of the re-sized AgLinks Project which began operations in Uzbekistan in September 2008 and covers the spring agricultural season. This quarter saw multiple technical activities as the project entered the first full agricultural season since its launch in mid-June 2008. The project's most active quarter was also reflected in the highest recorded three-month financial disbursement to-date. Project activities received official US Government visitors in June including the US Ambassador to Uzbekistan's visit to project partners at Shirin Suv Yangier Water Users Association (WUA) and a Pungon WUA grape demonstration plot. The project also received the USAID Almaty Mission Director (acting) at the Tashkent Center for Testing and Certification (TCTC) during her visit to Tashkent in late June.

A. ADMINISTRATION

There was no new progress to report this quarter on the proposed MOU to afford AgLinks legal "project" status in Uzbekistan. The revised MOU ("version 2.0") was resubmitted to the Cabinet of Ministers and is still under consideration by the local authorities. Home office backstopping for AgLinks will undergo significant change during the summer of 2009 as DAI staff move on to other positions and graduate education.



Photo # 1: US Ambassador (far left) Visiting Grape Demonstration Plot

A.1. Legal Status.

There was no change in the legal status of the project which is still implemented under DAI's status as a resident representative office. The revised draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was under consideration by the Cabinet of Ministers throughout the quarter. The project continues to be resourceful and creative in finding ways and means to implement the program under its present status. Formal project status would allow even more activities, particularly in terms of technology procurement. AgLinks was informed this quarter that the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (MAWR) was undergoing a restructuring and that AgLinks would likely be assigned to a new department charged with investment promotion and project monitoring.

A.2. Personnel.

Home Office (HO). A request submitted to USAID in April for a Home Office supervisory visit by the Project Coordinator and Director of the Economic Growth division at DAI was not approved and postponed until further notice. Two DAI home

office employees providing backstopping support to AgLinks announced their decisions to depart during this quarter. Both the Project Team Leader, Heather Dale, and the Project Manager, Rachel Chapman, stated their intention to continue their careers elsewhere. Ms. Dale moved to a competitor in June while Ms. Chapman informed that she will be returning to graduate school in mid-August. Suitable replacements will be identified, trained and engaged prior to these scheduled departures to assure overlap with the previous AgLinks backstop team. By the end of June 2009 the DAI Home Office officially notified USAID that Gary Kilmer, DAI Economic Growth Director, would be the interim Project Team Leader for AgLinks.

Field Office. Sunnat Djalalov was hired in mid-April as the third and final junior technical specialist. Formerly employed by the USAID WUASP project that ended in March, Sunnat is geographically responsible for Namangan Province activities and complements the existing technical skills among the team as the project's Water Development Advisor. The AgLinks organizational structure is presented in Annex A.



Photo # 2: Procured Fruit Tree Tools

A.3. Office.

Discussions were held between the respective home offices of DAI and CNFA regarding the implementation of a new Farmer-to-Farmer (FtF) program in Uzbekistan. By the end of the quarter CNFA had opted to enter discussion with a local consulting firm (OASIS FES) to implement the Uzbekistan portion of the FtF program instead of attempting to establish a local office. This was one of the options that AgLinks staff had presented to CNFA during their visit to Tashkent last quarter. Under the local consulting firm scenario AgLinks will not be sharing office space with CNFA staff implementing the FtF program but will continue to work closely with the firm to identify FtF opportunities that reinforce AgLinks project objectives.



Photo # 3: Procured Fruit Testers

Office staff worked with USAID and US Embassy staff to clear the delivery of fruit tree tools and produce testers from customs. Equipment ordered last quarter arrived and cleared customs in sufficient time to be employed during the 2009 fruit harvest, including representative presentations during the US Ambassador's field visit in mid-June. Tools included both large and small branch loppers for pruning trees, hand lenses for identifying pests, budding and grafting knives, sample harvest bag and paper

trays. The fruit testers included devices to measure sugar, moisture, pressure and temperature.

A.4. Banking.

The ABN Amro to Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) transition continues to work smoothly from the project's perspective with no delays or financial access issues to report.

A.5. Leasing.

After sharing USAID Almaty's concerns with Business Leasing regarding the level of the latter's direct financial participation, the leasing option was discontinued in the present uncertain international financial environment. AgLinks has proceeded to implement the suggested direct cost-share participation option by directly purchasing capital equipment for project recipients without a financing intermediary. Project recipients are required to pay any and all import duties as part of their contribution to the cost-share since AgLinks can not import technical equipment duty-free.

A.6. Issue(s).

The MOU remains an outstanding and unsettled issue. While the project can and is implementing activities the lack of project status conferred by an MOU limits options and hinders progress. The project has been creative, and will continue so, in finding unique means of importing agricultural productivity enhancing technology. The project will also have an entirely new DAI Home Office backstop team at the end of August 2009. This team may have limited experience with Uzbekistan and likely will not have visited the project, country or region in the field. Field office staff will work closely with the new backstop team to initiate them to the particularities of implementing the AgLinks Uzbekistan project.

B. TECHNICAL

AgLinks support focused on activities with direct impact on the upcoming harvest which began with cherries and apricots at the end of this quarter (June).

B.1. AgriFirms.

Training - Fruit Tree Pruning. The winter fruit tree pruning from last quarter (February) performed on a peach demonstration plot in Quvasoy District of Ferghana Province demonstrated its impact during this quarter. Opening the tree structure to greater sunlight and maximizing fruit bearing limbs allowed the trees to produce more fruit than neighboring plots following traditional methods. The improved yield was directly noticeable by all farmers with single pruned limbs providing 11 fruit versus 4 on non-pruned trees. Many more farmers have become interested in the “American” method of pruning after this demonstration. Farmers have stated their intention to replicate this technique on a larger number of peach trees during the spring 2010 pruning season.



Photo # 4: Peach Tree Pruned with New Method; Note Multiple Fruit and Open Branch Structure

Passive Solar Hoop Houses. Project technical staff visited solar-heated green houses that are created as quarter spherical shapes often referred to as “hoop houses.” These passively heated green houses increase the length of the growing season for fruits and vegetables by allowing earlier planting after winter and extended harvesting into the winter months. AgLinks staff visited sites within Tashkent Region that employed passive heating systems, researched costs, established technical specifications, identified suppliers and inquired of partner interest. AgriFirms would be the first target for passive hoop houses because of the technical requirement to have a full-time agronomist to manage the structure. Project staff were finalizing the environmental requirements for small-scale construction and, if funds are available, the team will begin construction next quarter in order to begin production this fall and winter.



Photo # 5: Passive Solar Hoop House

Stone Fruit Cold Store. The final technical and cost estimates for the cold storage installation at 3 agrifirms (Muyan, Bekhizor in Ferghana and Istiqlol in Samarkand) indicated that proceeding this agricultural season would significantly reduce financial resources available to the project. Given previous concerns about funding, project staff decided to implement a cold storage training program this year and postpone additional cold store procurement to a later date once funding and project legal status are clarified. The cold store training option uses an existing small (20 mt) cold store at Quvasoy Bekhizor AgriFirm in Ferghana Province. This cold store is being upgraded with a pre-cooling facility and used as a training facility throughout the 2009 agricultural season to instruct agrifirm staff from multiple locations on produce management under reduced temperature and prevailing market conditions.



Photo # 6: Pre-Cooling Staging Area Under Construction at Bekhizor AgriFirm

AgLinks signed a contract with local consultants to provide the technical input and training on cold storage management and work began to upgrade the storage facility during this quarter. The Bekhizor AgriFirm Director committed financial and human resources to build the pre-cooling area while AgLinks provided the plastic storage and stacking crates. A total of 2500 plastic storage crates were provided to allow for stacking and storage that does not crush the fruit while in the cold room and assure a free flow of cool air.



Photo # 7: Plastic Storage Crate

B.2. Producers.

Producer activities are often combined with AgriFirm activities to achieve economies of scope in agronomic, pest and harvest trainings through joint training sessions that unite agrifirm and WUA farmers from the targeted geographic areas.

Grapes. Grape best agronomic practices training was contracted through a local consulting firm (OASIS FES) which combined both local and international expertise. The firm employed a South African grape specialist to provide modern techniques used

in grape production management. These trainings were held at four different locales; three using the recently installed AgLinks grape demonstration plots and one held on the corporate grape vineyard of the agroprocessor BERAD. The AgLinks grape demonstration plots are one in Namangan Province (Pungon District) and two in Samarkand Province (Samarkand and Payarik districts) while the BERAD fields are in Tashkent Province. A total of 132 farmers participated in the grape best practices trainings that included sessions in Payariq (46), Parkent (30), Samarkand (29) and Pop (27) districts.



Photo # 8: Grape Best Practices Training

Stone Fruits. Stone fruit activities this quarter focused on harvest trainings with additional emphasis on apricots. AgLinks supported an apricot Variety Contest organized by Toraqoragon AgriFirm in Namangan Province during late June with the participation of farmers from all three AgLinks partners in the area. Five farmers from each partner group submitted their best varieties to be judged in terms of sugar content, ripeness, taste and uniqueness. Samples were submitted from Pungon and Shirin Suv Yangier Water User Association farmers, as well as from the variety contest host, Toraqoragon AgriFirm. Additional support was provided by local government authorities and the private sector.

The recently procured Brix tester was used to measure sugar while the Penetrometer was used to measure ripeness. The subjective tests for taste and uniqueness were dependent upon the judges' preferences. Winning farmers were awarded plastic harvest and storage crates. A review panel comprised of three local judges was commissioned to perform both the objective and subjective testing. The judges were the director of the provincial fruit tree breeding station and nursery (Shreder), the local Khokimiyat agronomist and the laboratory director from a local fruit processor. The majority of the winners for the 2009 season were from the Pungon Water Users Association. Similar Variety Contests will be held in Ferghana Province for peaches in August and Samarkand Province for grapes in September. These contests not only assist the project to identify potential varieties for promulgation but also allow the AgLinks team to introduce practical use of the procured fruit testers.

Nursery. AgLinks staff met with the director of the Namangan Provincial branch of Shreder during the month of June. The director agreed to participate in the apricot Variety Contest (see above) and provided a tour of one of the three nurseries they manage. The highest sugar content apricot from the Variety Contest, as measured by the Brix tester, was an imported type from Turkey. The Director stated that they have 3,000 saplings of this variety that will be ready for planting in the Spring of 2010. Because of the interest generated in this variety through the 2009 contest many farmers stated they would be keen to plant these saplings in 2010. Meetings were also held this quarter with the headquarters office of Shreder in Tashkent. There is certainly

potential for additional collaboration between AgLinks and the national and provincial level Shreder Institute branches that the project will continue to develop.

B.3. Private Sector.

No trade shows were attended during this quarter as the team focused on the spring production and harvest seasons. BERAD grape producers were part of the grape best practices trainings this quarter with a special session arranged at the company vineyard.

Market Identification and Development. Istiqlol Meva Sabzavot AgriFirm shipped the first tranche of a \$7.9 million contract signed with a Russian importer that was negotiated during their attendance at the Ingredients show in November 2008 with AgLinks assistance. Additional tranches will be sent throughout the harvest season as produce becomes available. Green World Commercial Director, Asqar Kadirov, attended an InWent sponsored agro processor training in Germany during this quarter. AgLinks cost-shared his participation with the German cooperation agency by paying air fare while the host nation covered all training costs. Mr. Kadirov made several contacts for potential buyers of Green World products with follow-up continuing as the harvest season begins.

Processing Equipment. AgLinks staff continue to hear from agro processors that stocks from last year's harvest are still available and they will make relatively fewer purchases of this year's crop. Hence, the project has begun to identify sources of fruit drying technologies for the different crops and agroclimatic zones. Fresh fruit prices are expected to be significantly lower due to reduced demand from agro processors and continued restrictions on fresh exports. In order to capture some additional value farmers need access to drying technology to preserve the surplus fruit for future use and marketing options. The team investigated several options for drying technology that will be tested over the course of this harvest season given the variety of crops and geographic zones. The team has focused on passive technologies that do not require additional energy input to dry fruit.



Photo # 9: Example of Passive Solar Drying Technique

B.4. Public Sector.

The High Performance Liquid Chromatograph (HPLC) for the Tashkent City Center for Testing and Certification (TCTC) arrived this quarter. The Uzbekistan PERSUAP was approved by AID and activities begun

Training on ISO 17025. Follow-up meeting with the TCTC on ISO 17025 (Laboratory Accreditation) revealed their preference for a focus on ISO 17020 (Inspection

Management). This distinction was presented to AgLinks by the new director of the TCTC, Ikhtiyor Abdumannapovich Abdullaev, during an introductory meeting this quarter. Mr. Abdullaev pointed out that the ISO 17020 is the internationally recognized standard for the competence of inspection bodies, of which the TCTC is one. ISO 17020 differs from ISO 9001:2000 (Quality Management) because the latter does not require evaluation of the technical competence of the inspection body. Hence, it is more advantageous for TCTC to pursue the 17020 than the 17025.

Enhance Lab Capacity of TCTC. The HPLC ordered in the United States from Agilent Technologies (formerly Hewlett-Packard's analytical equipment division) arrived in Tashkent and cleared Customs by the end of the quarter. The Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer (AAS) procured by the TCTC in complement to the AgLinks purchase also arrived, cleared Customs and was physically stored at the TCTC laboratory by the end of June. Installation and training of laboratory staff on both analytical instruments will begin next quarter. The HPLC will allow TCTC technicians to test for organic contaminants (ex., pesticide residues, mycotoxins, melamine, etc.) while the AAS will provide the capacity to test for inorganics (ex., lead, antimony, selenium, etc.). Smaller support equipment (ex., timer, sonic bath, water purifier, etc.) along with reagents and calibration standards will be delivered in a second shipment scheduled for July.



Photo # 10: HPLC in Shipping Box at TCTC Lab

PERSUAP. The Uzbekistan PERSUAP was approved by USAID and AID/Washington and activities began to mitigate and monitor potential problems. Pest identification, management and mitigation trainings were held throughout the quarter with a focus on grapes (see Section C below). AgLinks staff are also discussing with the national plant protection service the best way to extend the approved pesticides to similar crops rather than the single crop specificity presently practiced in Uzbekistan.

Nursery. Shreder contacts and collaboration continue to improve at both the national and provincial levels as evidenced by Shreder technical staff attendance at AgLinks sponsored events. For example, the Samarkand grape pest practices trainings and the Namangan apricot Variety Contest.

B.5. Issue(s).

No major issues were identified this quarter. The importation of the HPLC through the TCTC worked as planned and provides an example for additional and future import procurements of high technology. High technology designation was key to reduced Customs fees paid by the TCTC. AgLinks will engage a Customs specialist next quarter to identify other equipment that has preferential treatment under Uzbek import law to identify potential other procurements that can be implemented with project partners (ex., agrifirms, processors, etc.).

C. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

AID/W approved the project's Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) for Uzbekistan in late April. Based upon recommendations contained within the approved PERSUAP the project began mitigation and monitoring activities to provide training to farmers on pest identification, pesticide use and safety. In mid-April project staff attended an introduction to Regulation 216, Environmental Procedures, sponsored by USAID and presented by the Regional Environmental Advisor based in Almaty. Previously identified local specialists in pest identification, pesticide handling and safety, and suppliers of safety equipment were hired this quarter to provide trainings to farmers and sprayer teams. The specialists and equipment were used in mitigation trainings and materials once the PERSUAP was formally approved. Mitigation equipment included sprayers, overalls, goggles, gloves, boots and aspirators.

C.1. Mitigation.

Pest identification, pesticide use and safety trainings were held in all three targeted regions during this quarter using local expertise complemented with AgLinks project staff. During these trainings the PERSUAP recommended agrochemicals for each identified pest problem were provided to farmers along with safe application and disposal methods. Trainings held in Samarkand and Namangan provinces reached a total of 59 farmers and spraying specialists, including 4 women.



Photo # 11: Pesticide Safety Training

Spraying specialists are local entrepreneurs who have begun to specifically apply agrochemicals to farmer's fields on a contract basis. AgLinks has targeted these specialty sprayers for training and safety equipment because they provide greater outreach to multiple farms and offer a control point for introducing pesticide best practices among an increasingly professional group. Farmers are also trained on the necessity of safe agrochemical use but the majority of farmers employ these specialty sprayers for their fields and orchards.

C.2. Monitoring.

AgLinks signed agreements with several specialty sprayer groups to provide monthly reports during the spraying season to confirm what they are spraying, for what purpose, for whom and where. For example, in Namangan Province a total of 5 sprayer groups have signed agreements to report information on spraying patterns in exchange for AgLinks support on training and equipment provision. In Pungon District of Namangan Province 2 spraying groups were trained, while 3 more were trained in Torakoragon

District; 2 private and 1 based at Torakoragon AgriFirm, the local AgLinks partner. Torakoragon AgriFirm hired a staff entomologist and AgLinks provided a backpack sprayer to reach taller fruit trees and reduce pesticide use through more uniform application. The AgriFirm will rent out this equipment to interested spraying specialists.

C.3. Issues.

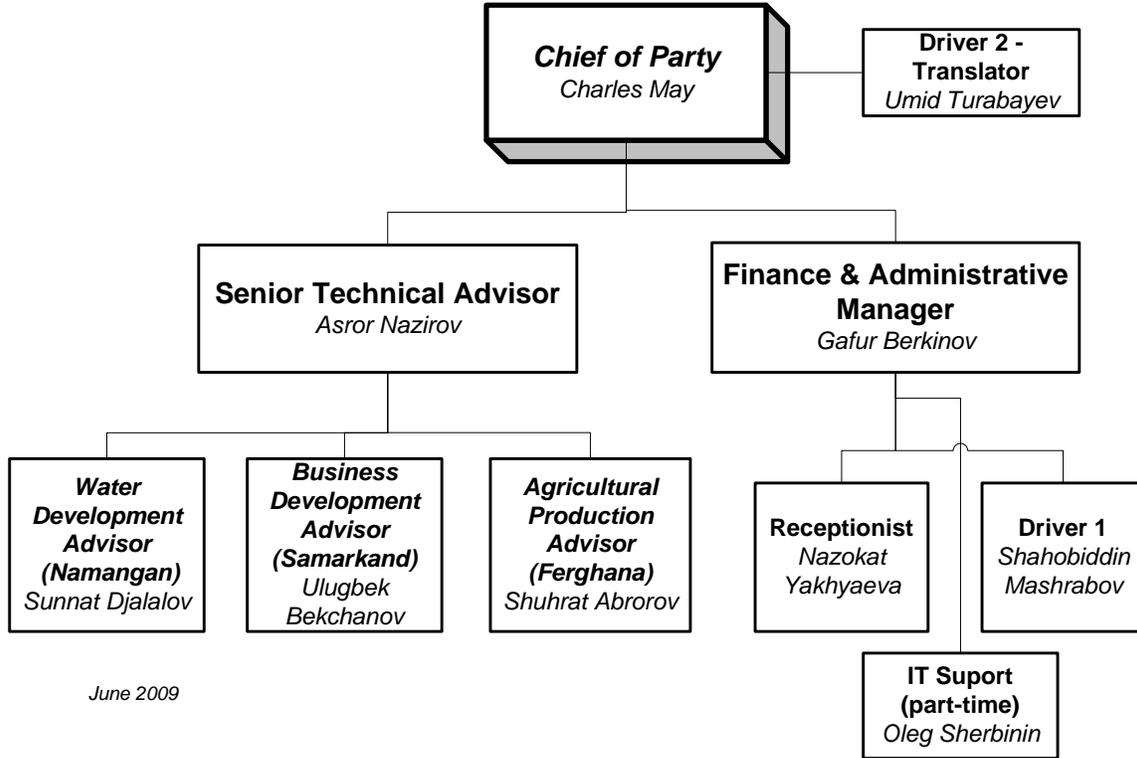
Safe use pesticide trainings and affiliated equipment distributions have been very popular with farmers and sprayers, respectively. There is certainly unmet demand for information, skills and understanding of pest management methods that AgLinks will continue to develop. AgLinks attempted to have project technical staff attend an integrated pest management (IPM) training in Israel in May but were not accepted into the program. AgLinks will continue to explore other options for developing more extensive training and expertise in pest management including local consultants, online resources and additional training for farmers, sprayers and technical staff as recommended in the PERSUAP.

Because of frequent farmer requests, AgLinks will also seek to expand the crops covered with PERSUAP approved agrochemicals. Crop category approvals are allowed under US-EPA regulations (ex., approved pome fruit agrochemicals are approved for use on apples, pears and quince) but are not presently allowed in Uzbekistan (ex., each agrochemical is single crop use, irregardless of similar produce). AgLinks will explore options with the local pest protection agency to determine if and how such an expansion of PERSUAP approved agrochemicals can be implemented in Uzbekistan.



Photo # 12: Backpack Sprayer

AgLinks Uzbekistan Project Structure



June 2009

Annex B

Preliminary list of USAID AgLinks partners receiving orchard tools and fruit quality testers

Name	Brix tester	Moisture tester	Pressure tester	Hand lens	Thermometer	Orchard lopper	Vine lopper	Grafting knife
Agrifirms:								
"Torakorgon Sohibkorlari"	1	1	1	2	1	15	5	2
"Muyan Sohibkor"	1	1	1	2	1	25	2	5
"Kuvashoy Behizor"	1	1	1	2	1	25	2	5
"Dilkusho Sifat"	1	1	1	2	1	5	8	2
"Istiklol Meva Sabzavot"	1	1	1	2	1	5	8	2
WUAs:								
"Shirinsuv Yangiyer"	1		1	1	1	5	3	2
"Pungon"	1			1	1	3	4	2
"Karshiboy Mirob AUS"	1	1		1	1	3	4	2
"Damkhasa Arigi MHA"	1	1		1	1	3	4	2
"Hojaboston Suv Tarmogi"	1	1		1	1	4	5	2
Processors								
Berad-Agro		1						
Agromir				1		5		2
Governmental organizations								
Uzstandart	1	1	1	1	1			
Shreder Institute	2	2	2	5		3	2	10
Plant protection center				10				
Reserved for new partners	5	3	4	8	7	9	3	21
Total:	18	15	13	40	18	110	50	59

USAID AgLinks Project

Monthly Report #05- April 2009

Contract #EDH-I-00-05-00004

TO #EDH-I-07-05-00004-00

Practical, on-farm and field trainings were the AgLinks' focus as spring began in April.

ADMINISTRATION. The recruitment process for the third and final junior technical specialist was completed. Sunnat Djalalov joined AgLinks in mid-April after working with USAID's Water Users Association Support Project (WUASP), services project clients in Namangan Province and provides water development technical assistance to all clients. A visa was requested and obtained for Gary Kilmer, DAI Managing Director for Economic Growth, but his project supervisory and advisory trip to Uzbekistan has been postponed until further notice at USAID's request. A second visa request for Rachel Chapman, also from the DAI HO, was not granted by end April. Team members continued to engage the Social Initiatives Support Fund (SISF) by editing a proposed Memorandum of Understanding to focus on training for women farmers. AgLinks also attended a SISF roundtable in late April. AgLinks informed DAI's HO of their interest in co-locating and co-operating with CNFA on the Uzbekistan portion of Farmer-to-Farmer in April. By mid-month the DAI and CNFA Home Offices met to discuss collaboration details.

The team proposed and drafted a "Single Country Program" for consideration by US authorities for the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP). AgLinks staff identified and assisted the application process for 8 potential applicants consisting of 4 public sector entities (2 Ministry of Agriculture, 1 Shreder Institute, 1 Tashkent Center for Testing and Certification), 3 agroprocesors (2 Berad, 1 Agromir) and 1 agrifirm (Dilkusho-Tayloq District). The team also identified and submitted nominees for an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training to be co-funded with the Israelis via MASHAV. A total of 5 applicants were identified, 3 were forward nominated to Israel but none were selected, although the Israelis encouraged applicants to apply again next year. Two AgLinks staff members were enrolled, attended and completed a week-long post-harvest training in Turkey offered by the University of California at Davis. Training focus for AgLinks was cold storage management techniques to support subsequent project activities in this area and fresh fruit handling, packing and packaging.

TECHNICAL. In-country technical training this month focused on grape producers.

AGRIFIRMS & PRODUCERS. Training activities were prefaced by farmer round-tables held in each of the targeted regions to identify the most pressing seasonal problems confronted by client farmers. AgLinks client agrifirms and Water User Associations (WUAs) then participated in the grape best practices training provided by a South African consultant in collaboration with local experts under contract to the local consulting firm, Oasis FES. These trainings were held in the districts of Pop (Namangan Province), Payarik and Samarkand (Samarkand Province) and Parkent (Tashkent Province; for Berad staff) for a total of 226 farmers. Best practices was followed by training on pest identification, pesticide use and safety procedures, once the PERSUAP was approved, to meet the most pressing pest problems identified by farmers earlier in the month. AgLinks procured, provided and demonstrated safety equipment to each of the client groups (agrifirm or WUA) to aid training demonstrations and serve as models for farmers. Pesticide training was only completed in Samarkand Province for 5 AgLinks clients (48 trainees of which 4 female) by the end of the month. These trainings will continue in the other regions during the first week of May. All three grape trainings (roundtable, best practices and pests) used the trellis demonstration plots installed by the project over the preceding months in collaboration with farmers in the three grape-growing districts.

USAID AgLinks Project

Monthly Report #06- May 2009

Contract #EDH-I-00-05-00004

TO #EDH-I-07-05-00004-00

Major equipment procurements arrived, on-farm trainings continued and initial harvest produce was shipped to external markets during the month of May.

ADMINISTRATION. AgLinks activities were the subject of three district and provincial level press reports during the month of May. Samarkand Province (“Zarafshan”) and Tayloq District (“Qoshchinor”) newspapers reported a general article on USAID support to agriculture via the activities of the AgLinks program including trade shows, trainings, strategic planning and equipment. A Payariq District newspaper (“Payariq Hayoti”) had a specific article on the AgLinks grape best practices training (UZB-14). Project staff concluded and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Social Initiatives Support Fund (SISF) that focuses on training women farmers. SISF women farmers began attending AgLinks sponsored trainings this month. AgLinks was also approached by representatives of Korean-based airlines regarding the possibility of air freighting fresh produce to Seoul. The team responded with interest and the Koreans are seeking clarification from their respective home offices. At month’s end the Project Team Leader for AgLinks at the DAI Home Office, Heather Dale, announced her resignation effective mid-June. A replacement will be identified with sufficient time to allow for overlap and an orderly hand-over before her departure.



Grape Best Practices Training

TECHNICAL. In-country technical training this month focused on grape producers.

AGRIFIRMS & PRODUCERS. The draft report of the grape best practices training was received and under technical review by the end of the month. Best practices was followed by training on pest identification, pesticide use and safety procedures in Namangan Province, Samarkand Province clients having received this same training in late April. AgLinks procured, provided and demonstrated safety equipment to each of the client groups (agrifirm or WUA) to aid training demonstrations and serve as models for farmers. All grape trainings used the trellis demonstration plots installed by the project over the preceding months in collaboration with client farmers.

AgLinks staff visited farm sites to explore solar hoop houses for vegetable and fruit production. Solar hoop houses use passive heating from the sun that is stored in a side-cut of land under greenhouse conditions to extend the agricultural season. Staff made contact, explored designs, identified suppliers and calculated costs. A cold store training (UZB-23) was begun this month that will continue into the summer as project staff and local consultants train staff from the two Ferghana AgriFirms on the proper management and maintenance of cold storage during the harvest and post-harvest periods.

PRIVATE SECTOR. By the end of the last week of May, Istiqlol Meva Sabzavot agrifirm shipped the first tranche of the \$7.9 million contract with a load of cabbage (172 tons) and cherries (6 tons) destined for the Russian buyer (AgroImport). The Green World Commercial Director/Sales Manager, Asqar Kadirov, returned from the agroprocessor DAI, Inc.

May 2009

management training in Germany. The training included attendance at trade shows and buyer meetings. AgLinks and Green World learned of keen German interest in fruit and vegetable paste products from Uzbekistan and are following leads with several potential buyers.

PUBLIC SECTOR. The High Performance Liquid Chromatograph (HPLC) for the Tashkent Center for Testing and Certification (TCTC) was shipped, arrived and Customs clearance procedures begun. AgLinks continues to support the TCTC as they engage the Customs clearance process. The HPLC should be available in early June with installation and training to follow. After promotion of the previous TCTC Director this month, project staff met with his replacement, Ikhtiyor Abdumannapovich Abdullaev, to introduce the joint activities undertaken with his predecessor. Staff also met with the Vice-Rector for Scientific Research of Tashkent State Agricultural University, Prof. Laziza Gafurova, for an introductory visit to identify possible areas of collaboration.



AgLinks Staff Visit Solar Hoop House

ENVIRONMENTAL. AgLinks staff continued grape pest identification, pesticide use and safety training begun at the end of last month after the PERSUAP approval. Training was held in Namangan, in concert with Ministry plant protection personnel, with 59 AgLinks clients (of which 5 women) trained between Namangan (May) and Samarkand (April).

[REDACTED]

Sep 07 to		% of CLIN Expended	LOP Budget Balance
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

NEXT MONTH. The following major activities are anticipated for June 2009 :

- 1st week – Namangan fruit tree pest training; arrival of Tools and Testers
- 2nd week – harvest training using Testers - Namangan; cold store training
- 3rd week – site visits to Namangan WUA and TCTC; HPLC training
- 4th week – summer fruit tree pruning training using Tools in Ferghana