



E-NEWSLETTER FROM FAO IN GEORGIA



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EU REPRESENTATIVES AND GEORGIA'S MINISTER REVIEW EU-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

15/03/2018 EU-funded and supported agricultural and rural development programmes in Georgia, including wine sector reform initiated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) under the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD), were the main topics of discussion during the high-profile meeting. The EU mission led by Susana Marazuela Azpiroz, DG AGRI Head of Unit A5 - Neighbourhood and Enlargement met the Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia Levan Davitashvili.



In the framework of the visit, EU delegation members visited the national Wine Agency and got acquainted with its activities

At the event, the EU mission was introduced to the main achievements under EU-funded agriculture and rural development initiatives implemented in Georgia since 2013. Minister Davitashvili stressed the importance of the EU's support and commitment to help improve the lives of Georgians and reduce rural poverty in the country. He spoke about the implementation of the agriculture and rural development strategies in Georgia and underlined the EU's crucial support in this process. The Minister stated that agriculture and rural development remains a key priority within the restructured Ministry and thanked the EU Delegation for continuous support.



Susana Marazuela Azpiroz welcomed the Ministry's successful work in the areas of agriculture and rural development and continuous cooperation with EU

The participants of the event also discussed EU's technical assistance programmes supported by FAO to improve capacities in the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. Special attention was paid to the ongoing process of discussing new institutional models for the reformation of the wine sector in Georgia. Private-public partnership governance models specifically created for the Georgian wine sector was recently introduced by FAO under ENPARD. The reform is expected to lead to a better coordination among the Georgian wine institutions and the overall development of the country's wine sector competitiveness.

The event was attended by the First Deputy Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture, Nodar Kereselidze, Head of National Wine Agency of Georgia, Giorgi Samanishvili, Head of Cooperation at EU Delegation to Georgia, Vincent Rey and FAO-ENPARD Coordination officer Javier Sanz Alvarez.

The European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) is recognised as one of the most successful agriculture and rural development initiatives funded by the European Union in Georgia. The first phase of ENPARD in Georgia focused on developing the potential of agriculture. The second and the third phases focus on creating diversified economic opportunities for rural population that go beyond agricultural activities. More information on ENPARD is available at: www.enpard.ge



TAJK OFFICIALS LEARN FROM GEORGIAN PEERS in FAO STUDY TOUR

22/03/2018 - Senior staff members of Tajikistan's Ministry of Agriculture and its Statistics Agency visited Georgia to meet with representatives of the National Statistics Office and the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture in Georgia. The five-day study tour aimed at sharing experiences on agriculture reforms, learning about implementation of agricultural policies, and observing some of the best agriculture practices in action.



"Georgia was selected as the destination of the study tour since the country has very recent experience in reforming and modernizing its agriculture, revising its government structures, and better defining the support to farmers – a pursuit that is still ongoing in Tajikistan," said FAO policy officer Dmitry Zvyagintsev.

The tour was part of an FAO project to improve rural livelihoods and food security in Tajikistan through strengthened institutions. While in Georgia, the Tajik delegation discussed the development of agricultural policy and the usage of statistical data. In the Georgian countryside, they got advice from officials on data collection, sampling and surveys, and sharing information with farmers. Meetings were held at the FAO's Representation office in Georgia where FAO consultants shared their experience regarding the market information systems, evaluation and assessment systems, value chain development and other ongoing programmes implemented by FAO in Georgia.

DAIRY CONGRESS KICKS OFF NEXT PHASE OF EU-FAO-EBRD SUPPORT TO GEORGIAN MILK PRODUCERS

14/03/2018 - The benefits of cooperation and opportunities for small and medium-sized dairy enterprises topped the agenda of the Second Caucasus Dairy Congress held in Georgia's capital, Tbilisi, today.

The event, supported by the European Union and Georgia's Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture, was the latest effort by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to strengthen Georgia's dairy industry.

Over 200 participants from the Caucasus and Eastern Europe attended the Congress, including commercial dairy farmers, processors, equipment suppliers, industry experts and representatives from the Georgian government.

For Georgia, part of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the European Union, increasing sector efficiency and improving the quality and safety of its dairy products are key to staying competitive.



"Thanks to the Association Agreement, Georgian farmers can export their products to the EU single market, and consumers in Georgia will profit from better quality and healthier dairy products. To achieve this, Georgian dairy producers need to meet EU standards. The EU supports them in this, through several ongoing projects. Many of us look forward to enjoying Sulguni and Matsoni in the European union," noted Janos Herman, Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia.

Industry on upswing

Thanks to a good investment climate, ideal dairy farming conditions and strong demand for milk, cheese and other products – many of them unique to Georgia – the country's dairy industry is experiencing a growth spurt.

Over the last few years, FAO and the EBRD have helped the country's commercial dairy farmers boost milk productivity and quality. They've organized technical training, international study tours and four knowledge sharing events, including today's Congress, to explore the latest dairy trends, technologies, food safety standards and investment opportunities.



FAO-EBRD project has helped the Association of Commercial Milk Producers of Georgia launch georgiandairy.org – the only professional web portal for Georgian dairy sector stakeholders – and provide regular market analysis and news, price information, trade statistics and information on modern milk production technologies.

Farmers trained by FAO and the EBRD have invested more than USD 2.5 million to modernize their operations and buy more productive livestock breeds – resulting in higher yields and profits.

Since the project's launch in 2015, the production of high quality milk in Georgia has more than doubled, and most of the commercial producers have been assisted by FAO and the EBRD.

The next step is greater cooperation across the sector, said Andriy Yarmak, an FAO agricultural economist.

"The project's first two phases were about transferring as much knowledge as possible and promoting dairy business investments, with impressive results," he said.

"By working together in farmer cooperatives – sharing costs for feed or the services of livestock nutrition specialists, for example, or joining forces to sell or process milk – Georgia's milk producers can take it to the next level and increase their profits significantly," he added.

EU and EBRD provide further significant support to the sector. For example, the EU-EBRD DCFTA Adaption Programme supports dairy producers in applying DCFTA-related technical regulations, quality and standards, new food safety standards, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements through trainings and seminars as well through consulting projects.

Greater cooperation

The Association of Commercial Milk Producers of Georgia, modelled on a similar association in Ukraine, has become a knowledge centre for other commercial farmers in Georgia. The Association is now looking into developing fee-based advisory services for technology and veterinary care for its members and other sector stakeholders.

GEORGIA AND ARMENIA MEET TO DISCUSS VETERINARY MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTHCARE TRANS-BORDER ISSUES

20/03/2018 - A trans-border meeting was held to discuss issues related to veterinary medicine and public healthcare. This meeting was organized by the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, the National Food Agency of Georgia (NFA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United States Defence Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).

Close cooperation between Georgia and Armenia is necessary for effective veterinary disease control and traceability. This demands regular meetings to exchange information and co-planning of control activities. In terms of disease prevention as well as animals/animal products export, this kind of cooperation between Georgia and Armenia is of special importance for the NFA as international trade focuses not only on the



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“Within the framework of the Trans-border cooperation, the parties jointly plan disease prevention measures, ensuring improved epizootic and epidemiological status and food safety,” said Mr. Lasha Avaliani, head of the NFA’s veterinary department.

FAO has supported the National Food Agency in the implementation of the National Animal Identification and Traceability System (NAITS) in Georgia since 2016. Traceability is one of the key elements of the whole system, involving animal disease control, as well as the prevention of human infections.

According to Mr. Mikeil Sokhadze, National Animal Identification Program manager, “The most important component of the Animal Identification Program is traceability, which implies timely threat identification and then efficient eradication. Georgia and Armenia have intensive trade flows. Therefore, both sides are interested in improving the epidemiological status of the region.”

The US Department of Defence Threat Reduction Service (DTRA) is involved in the trans-border cooperation process, actively monitoring the most dangerous pathogens.

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS WORKSHOP HELD AT GEOSTAT



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The event was opened by Mamuka Meskhi, Assistant FAO Representative in Georgia

20/03/2018 - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is holding a three-day seminar at Geostat on SDG indicators under FAO custodianship. The objective of the workshop is to increase awareness of these agricultural and environmental goals in the relevant institutions.

The 21 indicators of the global goals which are important for the national governments and the UN agencies to assess the fulfillment of the UN SDGs and are under FAO custodianship are being discussed during the workshop. The following dimensions will be discussed: the methodology, important for the collection of the indicators; the data sources and the plans connected to the development of the indicators, the role of FAO in implementing and monitoring the UN SDGs both on regional and national levels.

The training workshop opened today and lasts till 22 March. The representatives of Geostat staff, Administration of the Government of Georgia, different ministries, NGOs and International organizations are participating in the workshop.

On September 2015, 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) document, titled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The agenda contains 17 Global Goals and 169 targets. The SDGs aim at ending poverty and hunger while restoring and sustainably managing natural resources, integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

ENPARD STAKEHOLDERS DISCUSS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL ACTION GROUPS IN GEORGIA



The LEADER approach is associated with local empowerment through local strategy development and resource allocation. The main tool for the application of the LEADER approach to area development and involving local representatives in decision-making is the Local Action Group (LAG).

21/03/2018 - FAO brought together the stakeholders and implementing partners of the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) for the 16th ENPARD stakeholders' meeting. The gathering aimed to share the updates within the EU supported agricultural and rural development projects, focusing on the current state and future development of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and implementing LEADER approach in the regions of Georgia.

ENPARD uses European approach to rural development - LAG/LEADER model. Fundamentally, it is the energy and resources of the local people that contribute to the rural development process by forming partnerships at a sub-regional level between the public, private and civil sectors.

Opening speech by Mr. Nodar Kereselidze, First Deputy Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture was followed by discussions within the group about the state of play of registration and legal status of LAGs, creation of the Georgian Association of LAGs (GALAG) and Georgian Rural Development Network (GRDN). Special attention was paid to the new initiative introduced by CENN concerning the development of a manual on rural development for LAG members.

The Programme Managers of the EU Delegation to Georgia, Alvaro Aparicio Ortega and Cristina Casella briefed the audience on the status of the implementation of ENPARD phase II and phase III.

The meeting was concluded with the updates of the representatives of the ENPARD implementing partner organizations. FAO, UNDP, Mercy Corps, Care, PIN, RDFG, HEKS-EPER, GIPA, CENN, Caritas Czech Republic and others updated the audience on the progress within their projects.

The meeting was also attended by other donor organizations that also briefed on their activities in support to Georgia's agriculture and rural sectors.



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