

Canada Ukraine FARM Program hosts National Forum on Agricultural Extension May 2007

The Canada–Ukraine Facility for Agricultural Reform and Modernization (FARM) Program, jointly with Ministry of Agricultural Policy of Ukraine and National Association of Agricultural Advisory Services of Ukraine recently held the first ever **National Forum on Agricultural Extension**. Nearly 130 leaders from government, civil society, academia, research institutions, other donor organizations and the private sector came together to discuss Ukraine’s agriculture and rural advisory services – past, present and future. Of particular note was the presence of the People's Deputy of Ukraine and Head of the Verhovna Rada Committee on Agricultural Policy and Land Relations, Mr. Mykhailo Gladiy; Ukraine’s Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Ihor Ostash; Poland’s Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Jan Krzysztof Ardanowski, the President of National Association of Advisory Services of Ukraine, Mr. Roman Shmidt and Canada-based representatives of the Canada International Development Agency (CIDA), David Johnston and Alan Stewart. Also part of the Canadian contingent was Mr. Nathan Taylor, First Secretary (Development) from the Canadian Embassy and Mr. Volodymyr Seniuk, Senior Project Officer, also from the Embassy. The Canadian Government, through its funding of the FARM Program, was the principal sponsor of the Forum. Organizers were the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership’s (STEP) Kyiv-based project management team.



The two-day program was unique and included a comprehensive program of plenary sessions on day one, followed by a more experiential “extension at work” component on day two. On this second day, participants were bussed to Volyn Oblast so that they could witness, first hand, the impact of extension. In Volyn, Forum participants visited several sites that included properly registered, profitable farms;

an active youth leaderships program along with an interesting green tourism project – all successful due to the assistance provided by the local or regional extension service. The group also toured several new businesses (including a Renault repair service facility) that were established with help from the Volyn regional or district extension service. These are particularly important successes as they promote economic diversification and industrialization of rural areas while expanding the range of services and products available to rural communities and producers.



The National Forum was timed to coincide with the Joint Program Steering Committee meeting of the Canada Ukraine FARM Program. The Canadian Steering Committee members were active participants in the Forum with one member, Brent McCannell from Manitoba, presenting the “Canadian experience” in agriculture extension. The remaining members of the Canadian Program Steering Committee include Mr. Robert Prather from Alberta’s Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Mr. Mitchell Demyen from Saskatchewan’s Agriculture and Food and Mr. Glen Millard

from the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnerships. Their involvement along with the involvement of a strong Polish team of participants made this a truly international event.

The Canada-Ukraine FARM Program is a five year initiative funded by the Canadian Government through its international development agency, CIDA. This direct funding is augmented with in-kind financial support from the Canadian Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta along with the participation and involvement of Ukraine's National Agriculture University, its Ministry of Agrarian Policy and national Academy of Agrarian Sciences and the Oblast Administrations of Volyn, Rivne, Sumy and Dnipropetrovsk. The program is managed by STEP. The program supports agriculture reform by providing support to Ukraine's primary agriculture and food-related industries; facilitating the creation of profitable farms and improved rural livelihoods under a market economy; promoting effective rural grassroots institutions participation in agrarian policy development; and providing partnership opportunities for Ukrainian and Canadian companies and facilitate trade and investment links between Canada and Ukraine.

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