

Rural Development and Legal Support Centre

Project under FARM Responsive Mechanism

Project: “Development of Market Information System in Agriculture”

Project Partners: Farmer’s Independent Weekly

Final Project Summary Report

April 2005 – March 2007

Executive Summary

The objectives of the project “Development of Market Information System in Agriculture in Ukraine” were to develop a stable agriculture information system that would provide accurate, regular and timely information on agriculture related products to producers and processors of agricultural products, oblast and rayon state agriculture departments as well as other agricultural market players.

The project achieved these objectives by expanding the scope and improving the content of the MISA weekly publication. The MISA weekly is published every Tuesday and distributed throughout Ukraine. MISA weekly includes a database of prices for main types of agricultural products and inputs; information and analytical materials about the agriculture market, information on new technologies in agriculture, articles focusing economic issues on agriculture development within the current legislation and expert advice on a variety of agriculture topics and issues.

The positive results that have been realized due to the new and improved MISA weekly are: enhanced export potential of agriculture producers; improved preparation and distribution of agriculture products; increased transparency of the agricultural market; and established international contacts on market information exchange

Background and Rationale for the Project

The development of market information system in agriculture is one of the ways to make agricultural production more efficient in Ukraine. A well developed market information system improves market opportunities for all categories of agriculture producers thus increasing their income and level of their living standard. As a result of this initiative small household plot holders, farmers, agricultural enterprises, agricultural producers, agricultural processors, agriculture cooperatives, trade organizations, rayon state agriculture departments, educational and scientific institutions currently receive access to reliable market information, agriculture advice from specialists in the field and updates on new technologies in agriculture.

Achieved Project Goal and Objectives

- **Decreased of risks in agribusiness** – having a stable access to market information is providing agricultural producers an opportunity to plan their production processes, to be guided in the market environment, thus to lower risks related to production and marketing of agriculture products.
- **Choice of assortment of production for producers and consumers** – MISA weekly highlights a number of production options for farmers, allowing agriculture producers to act adequately in market conditions and establish business relations with processing companies.
- **Strengthened position of agriculture producers in marketing processes**- MISA weekly provides reliable information on prices and gives producers an opportunity to identify the best consumers of their production. The access to accurate market

information allows for agriculture producers to protect their position in agriculture markets.

- **Facilitation of fair competition between producers and sellers of agriculture products** – having access to information is allowing producers to expand business their contacts, to define the best commodity markets and deliveries that will promote their competitiveness as producers on agricultural market.
- **Increased level of public awareness** - agriculture producers and processors are receiving current information on legislation and changes in legislation regulating the agriculture sector which is regularly published in the weekly publication.
- **Introduction of new technologies of agriculture production and processing** – MISA weekly highlights the newest agriculture production and processing technologies allowing agriculture producers the opportunity to increase production efficiency on the basis of introduction of the new innovative technologies.
- **Provision of access of agricultural producers and processors to experience on the best ecological - safe agro practices** – MISA weekly informs agricultural producers and processors about the best ecological - safe agro practices which will allow safe inputs and resources, to protect environment and to produce ecologically safe products.

Outcomes and Results

- The scope of MISA weekly increased from four pages to a total of eight. The following sections were added to the publication: “The best experience in agricultural production”, “Rural Partnership”, “Question – Answer”, “Development of rural public organizations: practices and experience”, “Financial institutions – Support to rural business development”. The addition of the these sections has significantly improved the content and quality of the publication.
- The printing run of MISA publication increased, and by the end of the fourth quarter of the project implementation reached 5000 copies.
- Rural Development and Legal Support Centre created the MISA website was (www.misa.com.ua), allowing access to information to be made available to an even wider range of people.
- A training trip to Canada with the Farmer’s Independent Weekly newspaper was an opportunity to get acquainted with the practical experience gained by a newspaper that is devoted to providing information to farmers. During the trip the following issues were studied: preparation, marketing and selling of an agriculture newspaper. The lessons learned were incorporated into the preparation of MISA weekly.
- A total of 52 seminars/workshops were held in 19 different rayons throughout the Odessa Oblast. The seminars/workshops were dedicated to various issues regarding rural development, infrastructure and business. A total of 657 people attended these events.
- Information about MISA was disseminated at roundtable meetings and workshops outside the scope of the project. Some the workshops included: “Preparation of footage scenario on development of rural advisory services in Ukraine”; Accession of Ukraine to WTO: perspectives and challenges to small and medium business” and “The Role of Advisory Services in the development of rural small and medium businesses: practical experience gained by Odessa Region”.
- Rural Development and Legal Support Centre joined membership in the National Association of Agriculture Advisors “Doroda”. Negotiations have been held with the

Association to channel some of the state funds allotted to finance advisory services activities in Ukraine to support the weekly publication.

- Dissemination of MISA Weekly has been spread across Ukraine as a whole. The recipients of the publication are as follows: Oblast State Administration; Oblast Agricultural Departments; National Farmers' Associations; Oblast Farmers' Associations, National Association of Advisory Services and Regional Representative Offices and public organizations (village and rayon level).

Canadian Partner Contribution

During the first quarter of project implementation Olena Dashkevich attended training in Canada with Farmer's Independent Weekly of Manitoba. During the two weeks training Olena received first hand experience on how a Canadian newspaper operates. Topics covered during this training included: Establishing the structure of an edition: dividing according to subject headings that under changes as the situation requires; Economic analyses of the market of agricultural products that influence the regional economics; How to raise competitive capacity of the edition; How to extend the number of clients; How to work with farmers, subscribers and advertisers; Government financing; Information gathering and processing as well as how to create the printed edition and website creation.

The training received at Farmer's Independent Weekly assisted in improving the content, structure and distribution of the MISA weekly. Furthermore, the training assisted in improving relations with partners and beneficiaries.

Conclusion

The dissemination of the weekly publication has continued beyond the life of the project. Project partners such as: Ministry of Agro-Industrial Complex, Association of Farmers of Ukraine, Farmers' Association of Ukraine and its oblast branches, Department of Economic Development and European Integration within Odessa State Administration; managers of agricultural enterprises, scientific research institutions, advisory services in the oblasts of Ukraine, oblast state administrations and councils, agricultural departments in rayons within the Odessa oblast and oblasts across Ukraine and extension specialists have all become dependent on the information provided by the weekly publication and are committed to ensuring that the publication is sustained.

Furthermore, negotiations have been held with state authorities to enhance their ownership in creation and dissemination of MISA weekly. The Rural Development and Legal Support Centre became a member of the National Association of Agricultural Advisors «Dorada» and with their assistance negotiations were held with state administrators to secure funds. At the start of 2007, a provision was made on the state budget of Ukraine to finance the advisory activities in all oblasts. At present, the mechanism is being developed for obtaining these funds. MISA is hopeful there will be an opportunity to channel a proportion of the funds for the support the publication of MISA weekly.