

SUCCESS STORY

LEARNING FROM THE BESTS ON THE POSTHARVEST TECHNOLOGIES



Photo: AgBiz Program's Staff

Practical exercise in one of the visited Bosnian packing centers

“The post harvest technology represents not only a preservation of quality, but it is also a strong marketing tool” said Andrea Sekulovski, President of Federation of Farmers of Republic of Macedonia

From 24 – 28 October, 2011, a group of thirteen representatives from the Macedonian fresh fruits and vegetables value chain had unique chance to participate at the regional UC Davis Postharvest Management Training in Sarajevo.

The post harvesting tend to be one of the weakest points in the fresh fruits and vegetables supply chain that significantly downsizes the quality, appearance and prices of the produce and therefore weakens the overall competitiveness of Macedonian exporters on targeted markets.

Aiming to support better knowledge on post harvesting techniques in order to decrease losses and increase incomes, the USAID's Regional Competitiveness Initiative, USAID projects in ten countries, Swedish development Agency (SIDA) and Czech Development Agency (CzDA) cooperated to bring lecturers from the prestigious University of California - Davis Postharvest Technology Institute (UC Davis) in the Balkan region. The UC Davis Institute is worldwide recognized by its expertise in the field of the postharvest handling technology.

The 89 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, Georgia, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Albania and Kosovo, learned from the best how to properly manage fruits and vegetables after harvest including temperature management, handling, packaging, maintaining the cold chain during transport, the use of controlled atmosphere, symptoms and treatments for diseases and other related issues. Through presentations, case studies, practical exercises in grading and products selection while visiting the operating packing centers, as well as through extensive training material provided, the graduates gained valuable insights and knowledge on how to adopt advanced PHH operations and conform to the stringent postharvest requirements from buyers in more sophisticated markets.

Beside the great opportunity to learn new postharvest practices and latest techniques, participants from Macedonia had a chance to explore new market opportunities and to expand their regional cooperation by establishing business contacts with potential partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Azerbaijan, Kosovo and Ukraine.

USAID AgBiz Program will closely monitor the follow up of this training to assure realization of one of its major objectives – transfer of the gained knowledge as much as possible to the Macedonian agricultural sector and academic community, which will ultimately lead to improved final product quality and enhanced competitiveness of Macedonian agricultural products.