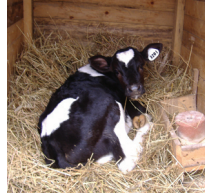


Azerbaijan

Farmer-to-Farmer Program (FtF)



Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan faced many rapid changes in political and economic life. The transformation from the Soviet centrally managed economy to a market-oriented economy created challenges, particularly in agriculture when farms and farmlands were rapidly privatized. Agriculture is a vital component of Azerbaijan's economy, making up 22 percent of the country's GDP. However, farmers did not have the planning and management skills necessary to cope in an open market. Most were unable to compete with the modern technology of food-exporter countries such as Turkey, Germany and France.

To help smallholders faced with this situation, ACDI/VOCA implements the USAID-funded Farmer-to-Farmer (FtF) program in Azerbaijan. FtF facilitates people-to-people learning and is designed to improve farm and agribusiness operations and agricultural systems, including increasing production of livestock, field crops, fruits and vegetables. FtF also works to develop food processing, packaging, product marketing and rural credit capacity. The program works to increase the sustainability of private agricultural

ACDI/VOCA has brought over 230 FtF volunteers to Azerbaijan.

enterprises, agricultural support organizations and rural credit institutions by bringing highly qualified volunteers from the U.S. to Azerbaijan for short-term assignments. These volunteers provide needed insight into business strategy, processing, marketing, product diversity, technology transfer, quality control and rural credit.

Since 2003 FtF Azerbaijan has completed over 80 volunteer assignments providing various forms of technical assistance. Through the FtF program, ACDI/VOCA identifies the most important obstacles in various subsectors and designs two- to three-week technical assistance projects to help farmers and agribusinesses overcome these obstacles. FtF works in close coordination with other actors in the field, including local private and nonprofit agricultural support organizations, rural finance institutions, and USAID- and non-USAID-funded development projects. In addition, FtF keeps close contacts with its alumni farmers to understand the current trends and needs in the subsectors.

Where possible, FtF applies ACDI/VOCA's market chain philosophy and approach in



Project Profile

developing agriculture. For example, if a need is identified for technical assistance in wheat cultivation, FtF fields a volunteer oriented to the farmers' current and potential clients, such as bakeries and feed mills, as well as input providers. Another successful FtF approach is working with a group of farmers representing a particular subsector. Volunteer assignments have been carried out with beekeepers, greenhouse owners, and vegetable and dairy-processing plants.

FtF Impact

When FtF started working in Azerbaijan, Latif Ginyetoglu was one of the first farmers to host FtF volunteers. With their help, Ginyetoglu has made significant progress in developing his beekeeping business. His production has grown from 23 beehives and 15 kg of harvested honey to 300 beehives and 12 MT of honey. His small beekeeping enterprise has grown into a successful business that earns \$120,000 from its honey sales and employs 13 permanent employees. Ginyetoglu credits ACDI/VOCA technical assistance with helping his business grow.



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