

# From the Farm to the Table:

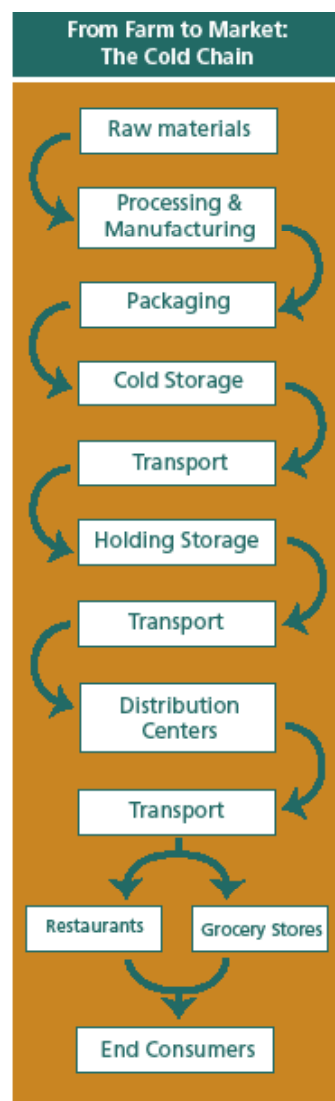
## ACDI/VOCA Strengthens the Cold Chain in Indonesia

By Allyson Perry

As Indonesia recovers from the economic crisis of the late 1990s and as poverty recedes, the improved diet and lifestyle of 220 million Indonesian consumers is increasing the demand for high-value fresh and frozen food products available year-round. However, with 13,000 islands and an underdeveloped transport infrastructure, Indonesia faces a challenge providing safe, nutritious, high-quality foods at affordable prices, particularly outside the main island of Java. As a partner in the Cold Chain

Project, ACDI/VOCA is working with indigenous democratic institutions to improve the accessibility and availability of these commodities to all Indonesians by improving infrastructure, disseminating information and developing national policies and standards for food safety and handling.

Indonesia is a major producer and consumer of a wide range of agricultural and fishery products but remains inefficient at moving perishable products to market. The chain of activities that moves perishable products under controlled temperatures from farm to table is widely referred to as the cold chain. The cold chain (see chart at left) is necessary to maintain the integrity of food products but like any chain it is only as strong as the weakest link. In Indonesia 35-40 percent of fresh fruits and vegetables spoil before reaching the consumer due to poor post-harvest handling and storage, weak distribution networks and inadequate temperature controls.



Awareness among the Indonesian business community of the benefits of a reliable cold chain is generally very low. This has affected food quality, stunted export trade and reduced productivity due to high rates of food-borne illness. To address these issues, ACDI/VOCA has been working with Indonesian businesses since 2003 to support the development of a membership-based, volun-

tary national business and trade association. ACDI/VOCA provides ongoing technical and financial support to the Indonesian Cold Chain Association, or ARPI as it is popularly referred to in Indonesia.



Since its inception in July 2003, ARPI has become a model for transparent, democratic institutions in this six-year-old democracy. By August 2004, membership had grown to 110 businesses in six regional chapters. Membership is currently comprised of the major players in this nascent sector, including producers, processors, distributors, wholesalers, freight forwarders, retailers, supermarkets, hotels, exporters, importers and refrigeration vendors, as well as key stakeholders such as universities and government bodies.

ARPI's mission is to bring together businesses along the entire cold chain, forming an effective forum which aggressively promotes the development of infrastructure, policies, standards and personnel necessary to maximize proper cold storage, distribution and marketing of perishable goods. Its objectives include providing the cold chain industry a means to exchange ideas and conduct constructive dialogue with national and provincial governments to support the development of a refrigerated network which extends shelf life, minimizes shrinkage and maximizes product quality and business returns.

With continued support from ACDI/VOCA, ARPI exposes members to new technologies and food safety protocols, advises members on legislation and regulations affecting the food industry, assists in the development, promotion and adoption of industrywide standards, and provides for general business networking opportunities. Members receive a monthly newsletter and business directory, access to the ARPI website ([www.arpionline.org](http://www.arpionline.org)) and admission to workshops and trainings related to refrigeration, food safety and supply chain management. ARPI also acts as a resource for information on business best practices and business matching.

Through the Cold Chain Project, ACDI/VOCA is playing an important role not only in enterprise development but also in the promotion and development of civil society organizations and democratic institutions in this fledgling democracy.

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