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KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

CASE STUDY

Quality Seeds Increase Productivity

USAID helped increase sunflower yields and edible oil production in Kyrgyzstan



USAID's beneficiary Kurbanaly Mitiev, drying and packing sunflower seeds.
Photo: IFDC

“The results exceeded my expectations. I was very happy not only with the high yield, but also with the quality of seeds, which have a high oil output. This means my seeds got a better price.”

- Kurbanaly Mitiev, a USAID beneficiary from northern Kyrgyzstan.

Challenge

Kyrgyzstan consumes approximately 125,000 tons of edible oil per year but because of a lack of raw resources, the country cannot produce enough to meet demand. Although there is potential to produce more sunflower oil, only 29% of the country's demand is produced domestically. The rest is imported at considerably higher prices and the consumer bears this cost. Last year Kyrgyzstan increased the amount of land for growing sunflower by 15%. However, because of poor seed quality, a lack of crop management skills and a low use of inputs there was no significant increase in production. The average yield of oil crops is approximately 1 million tons per hectare.

Initiative

USAID's Kyrgyz Agro-Input Enterprise Development Project promotes expanding the acreage and productivity of oil crops to increase domestic oil production and generate income for farmers. Under the Global Development Alliance with Eurasia Group, 246.2 hectares throughout Kyrgyzstan were planted with high-quality *Pioneer* sunflower seeds. Participating farmers could get seeds, fertilizer and agricultural machinery service at subsidized prices. The Project helped 15,000 farmers adopt more advanced sunflower growing technologies that would help them maximize yields and incomes.

Result

The results were impressive as yields tripled and economic returns improved significantly. This intervention also helped to promote improved agro-inputs and modern agricultural machinery. Kurbanaly Mitiev, a farmer, planted *Pioneer* sunflower seed on his nine-hectare field and harvested 3.5 tons per hectare of dried seeds with an oil output of 46%. Using regular seeds, he harvested 1.5 tons per hectare and had an oil output of only 30%. This difference meant Kurbanaly could sell his seeds to oil producers for a 25% higher price. “I am planning to increase my sunflower fields to 20 hectares next year. I am convinced that using high-quality seeds and advanced techniques, I can generate a good income,” said Kurbanaly.