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**KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

## CASE STUDY

# Quality Seeds Ensure High Yields

**USAID helped increase wheat yields and ensure food security in Kyrgyzstan**



USAID's beneficiary Ragim Ragimov inspects the new wheat varieties at his field. Photo: IFDC

***“The results exceeded our best expectation. I was very happy not only for the high yield, but also for the quality of grain that means better quality of bread in our bakeries.”***

- Ragim Ragimov, a USAID beneficiary from northern Kyrgyzstan.

### Challenge

Each year, Kyrgyzstan falls short by 400,000 metric tons of wheat that is needed to produce bread – one of the major staple foods in the country. One of the reasons of such chronic problem is the lack of quality seeds - Kyrgyzstan's annual deficit of good seed is estimated at 11,000 -16,000 metric tons. Additionally, the country uses outdated, low yield wheat varieties and applies little other agricultural inputs to maximize harvests.

### Initiative

To boost wheat yields and help meet the food needs in the country, USAID offered local farmers 275 metric tons of high quality winter wheat seeds for purchase at a discount price last year. The seeds were brought into the country by the USAID Seed Assistance Program (implemented by ICARDA) and distributed by the USAID Kyrgyz Agro-Input Enterprise Development Project (implemented by IFDC). The two wheat varieties offered to the farmers, “Starshina” and “Krasnodar 99,” have an average yield of 3.93 metric tons from hectare, nearly twice the 2 metric tons that traditional varieties usually yield in Kyrgyzstan. The 25% subsidy was designed to attract the farmers to the offered new seed varieties instead of the traditional varieties.

To support the initiative, the Kyrgyz Agro-Input Enterprise Development Project helped 100,000 farmers adopt more advanced technologies used to maintain and protect their crop fields.

### Result

It is estimated that Kyrgyzstan has produced approximately 1.2 million metric tons of bread wheat, making it the highest harvest reached in the last 15 years in Kyrgyzstan. Compared to last year the harvest increased by 50%. The average yield countrywide was 2.9 metric tons from hectare compared to 1.7 metric tons from hectare last year. Many of the farmers that have participated in the two USAID projects, not only doubled but tripled or even quadrupled their yields. “The results exceeded our best expectations,” says Ragim Ragimov, one of the farmers that directly benefited from the USAID intervention. This wheat producer planted 65 hectares with new varieties last autumn at his farm in Kant Rayon, northern Kyrgyzstan. “The new wheat varieties introduced through the USAID assistance program yielded more than 5 metric tons from hectare,” Ragimov says.

Farmers appreciated not only the high yielding capacity of new varieties introduced through, but also the high quality of grain, which is critical for flour and bakery industries. “I was very happy not only for the high yield, but also for the quality of grain that means better quality of bread in our bakeries,” Ragimov says.