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TAJIKISTAN

CASE STUDY

EXPORT BECOMES SIMPLER

Simplified certification for exports increases competitiveness for Tajik producers



Mr. A. Kayumov, Chairman of the Golden Valley Association of Fruit and Vegetable Producers and Processing Companies, is confident that the extended validity of the quality certificate will help the producers.

By helping to remove the administrative “mark of shame” associated with short validity certificates, USAID enabled Sughd producers to take full competitive advantage of their high-quality preserved fruits and vegetables.

CHALLENGE: The Sughd Province region of Tajikistan has long served as a major producer of processed fruits and vegetables, especially to Russia and Kazakhstan where they are prized for taste and quality. Even though the producers were meeting international and national quality standards that enable a 3-year period for product validity, the national standardization body issued quality certificates that were valid for only 3 months. Many Tajik businesses found it difficult to exporting their products within that 3-month window, since other export approvals and transportation to the foreign markets also took a considerable time. Producers often had to re-certify their shipments at least once on average, incurring significant additional costs. Additionally, the short validity time of the quality certificate implied to the foreign buyers that the products were inferior, and because of it, the Tajik producers were getting significantly lower prices for their goods.

INITIATIVE: To help Tajik producers, the USAID Business Improvement Project proposed to Sughd Province business associations and the government to revise the validity of the quality certificate. To substantiate the need for the change, the USAID project in partnership with the Golden Valley Association produced an analysis of the problem that demonstrated the disadvantages stemming from this regulation for the region’s processing companies. In cooperation with the government and the business associations, the project was able to convince the province certification body to revise their position on certification. In December 2009, the Center for Standardization, Certification, Metrology, and Trade Inspection of Sughd Province extended the period of certificate validity from 3 months to 1 year for processed fruit and vegetable products, which is much closer to the industry standards. The center further encouraged producers to pursue improved storage facilities, holding out the prospect for additional validity period increases.

RESULT: “Increasing the validity period of certificates will increase the trust of buyers for products from Tajikistan and improve the value of our products outside of the country,” says Mr. A. Kayumov, Chairman of the Golden Valley Association of Fruit and Vegetable Producers and Processing Companies. The change has directly affected 12 processed fruit and vegetable producers in Sughd Province. Each year, these companies export 26 million liters of canned products. The 1-year validity certificates will increase foreign buyers’ confidence over the quality of the Tajik product and will enable the producers to receive \$2 per liter on average instead of the previous \$1.50. Combined with saved re-certification fees, this increase in price will put over \$13.2 million into the province economy each year.