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UZBEKISTAN

SNAPSHOT “Better Late...and Better!”

Uzbek Fruit Variety Contests



Photo: Sumnat Djalalov

Fruit Variety Contest winners receive modern orchard tools that stimulate better adoption of techniques promoted within the project.

Variety Contests bring farmers together to share information and experiences. AgLinks Plus is leveraging farmer networks to facilitate the transfer and adoption of fruit production best practices at events that are productive, informative, and fun.

Telling Our Story

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The USAID Agricultural Linkages Plus Project (AgLinks Plus) sponsors a series of variety competitions after each agricultural cropping season.

In rural and farming communities, word of mouth is the most viral and meaningful means of information dissemination—even more so than Facebook! Farmers are as curious and competitive as they are cautious; they are always interested in what crops their neighbors are growing, what approaches they use, and, most importantly, what results they achieve.

Throughout fiscal year 2012, AgLinks Plus leveraged this word-of-mouth principle by sponsoring a series of variety competitions, bringing together farmers and their families to compare their produce at the end of the production year. A distinguished panel of local judges used common criteria to choose winners of each competition. At a recent competition, an entrant arrived just in time to be included in the judging, then won first place. Better late...and better! Prizes—such as pruning, grafting, and budding tools—are awarded to the winners and those farmers willing to adopt new and different technologies. Farmers are able to see first-hand the techniques and tools that the project has been encouraging them to adapt through farm demonstrations and technical assistance.

While their produce is being judged, farmers not only socialize but also talk about their crops and farms. They share the challenges they face and the approaches they use to deal with them. The project also provides specific information sessions to the assembled farmers about their fruits and sponsors local technical experts to share their insights. After most varietal contests, farmers arrange for visits to each other's farms to continue exchanging information and learning from each other. Winning farmers are inundated with requests for transplants and grafting material from their prized plants.

The rate and amount of technology adoption is a prime objective and key indicator of success for any agricultural development project. AgLinks Plus is leveraging farmer networks and facilitating the transfer and adoption of fruit production best practices by bringing farmers together at end-of-season variety competitions that are productive, informative, and fun.