

The results of the field trips have been summarized at the final roundtable discussion held in Yerevan on the 15th of August, 2006 by support of Open Society Institute, Green Lane NGO and the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development.



Forty-five representatives of national and international organizations operating in the field of agriculture and rural development, the Ministry of Agriculture, and mass media joined the members of this multinational group to learn more about the project itself and to discuss its outcomes.



The Consul of Romania Mr. Marius Florescu-Ciobotaru, who also gave significant support to the project, took

part in the meeting. The Consul highly appreciated this initiative and stated that the Embassy of Romania in Armenia is pleased to support co-operation in such an important sphere as organic farming.

Participants from Romania, Hungary, Moldova and Bulgaria shared their opinions on strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of developing organic agriculture in Armenia as well as presented the situation in their own countries. Amongst strengths many of them pointed out the importance attached to the issue by the government of Armenia.

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## DAYS OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN ARMENIA AND ROMANIA

Days of Organic Agriculture in Armenia and Romania became one of the most interesting professional events of the summer of 2006, that put together farmers, researchers, agricultural, extension and information specialists, policy-makers from Romania, Armenia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Moldova to share ideas and exchange experience of developing organic agriculture in developing countries. The project has been initiated and led by "Green Lane" Agricultural Assistance NGO (Armenia) and "Bioterra" Organic Farming Association of Romania, and financially supported by the Open Society Institute under its East-East Program.



Green Lane NGO expresses gratitude to the Open Society Institute for supporting the project

Developing organic agriculture in developing countries

## JULY 2006, ROMANIA

In July, the project was hosted by "Bioterra" Association; a group of Armenian farmers and agricultural specialists visited Romania to acquaint themselves with achievements of their Romanian colleagues in the field of organic agriculture. Roundtable discussions at the University of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine in Cluj Napoka, and Bistrita County Office for Agricultural Advisory, field trips and visits to organic farms, milk collecting centers and processing enterprises, meetings with representatives of farmer associations and ECOINSPECT National Organic Certification Body made it possible to learn the experience of Romania. Organic agriculture started in Romania in 1997 and has already taken a



number of important steps. Total of 75,000 ha of cultivated lands (nearly 0.5% of the total farming lands) are certificated as organic; about 3,500 farmers have already shifted their farming system from conventional to organic one.

### One of the visits made by the group of Armenian specialists was to Lucina Hergheia of Cheile Lucavitei...



In this area there are many plants listed for special protection including bear grapes, little carnations and corner flowers. All can be found here by a spring with sulfur water. Hergheia was started about 150 years ago by Queen Maria Teresa with an impressive collection of pleasure horses. Currently with the support of the SAPARD project there are 400 different breeds of horses both for work and pleasure. The breeds include hutupan, Romanian ponies, English ponies, Bucovina horses and many other local breeds. Hergheia has

a large number of caretakers that live on the site. There is about 1,700 ha. of pasture and 40 ha in woodlands.

### A tour was made to the greenhouses of Mircea Burde of Lapusel, Maramures county...

The participants were pleasantly surprised at the novel methods used by the vegetable farmer. The green houses were surrounded by nettles, wormwood and other plants utilized firstly for the making of compost and secondly to combat pests (the wormwood). In every greenhouse could be found bird nests which help to combat insects. For the control of soil pests Burde maintains in the soil bonemeal which has a role in softening the soil.



The group of experts visited submontane and mountainous regions of Aragatsotn, Tavush, Lori, Vayots Dzor and Syunik, where, specialists believe, there is a natural and economic potential for developing organic agriculture, with organic farmer groups already working towards putting this farming system into practice.

Minister Lokyan stressed that organic agriculture will allow Armenia's farmers to add value to their production and receive additional profits from their small land-plots. The Minister believes that, among other things, it is time for Armenia to consume "wholesome food."

with mainly poor-resource small-scale farming systems like in Armenia.

**European experts had a meeting with David Lokyan, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia.**

"We expect the year of 2007 to be a starting point in developing organic agriculture in Armenia," Mr. Lokyan said.



Most specialists agree that Armenia has good potential to go forward with development of this particular sector of agriculture; they point out the interest being shown by farmers and processors, on the one hand, and consumers on the other hand, support from national and international organizations and the Armenian Government, some specific economic and social factors, even the fact of having virgin land areas suitable for organic systems in mountain and premonitions regions of Armenia.

"This project is of real importance to Armenia, since organic agriculture, as a farming system based on elimination of negative anthropogenic impact upon agro and eco systems, is still a new concept here," Mrs. Nune Sarukhanyan, President of Green Lane NGO, says.

## AUGUST 2006, ARMENIA

In August, the project transferred to Armenia where professionals from four East Europe countries – Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Moldova – joined with their Armenian colleagues to discuss the challenges faced by their countries in making their first steps in developing organic systems, and in outlining the ways of introducing organic farming systems in developing landlocked countries

He stressed that organic agriculture is being seen as one of the all-important strategic directions of Armenia's agrarian sector. Minister Lokyan pointed out the importance of introducing organic farming systems for Armenia's farmers because of the mainly small and split parcels of land. According to him, organic farming can provide some of the Armenian farmers with an opportunity to be competitive not only in the domestic market but also in the export market.