

Training Program for Farmers from Lori Region Held in Bulachari, Georgia



From November 29 through December 2 2010, at the CENN's Training Center in Bulakhari, Georgia, within the framework of the EU-funded Project for Sustainable Land Management for Mitigating Land Degradation and Reducing Poverty in the South Caucasus Region being implemented by the Regional Environmental Center of Caucasus (RECC) and the Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN), in partnership with Green Lane Agricultural Assistance NGO, a training program has been delivered for the project target groups, mainly farmers and agricultural producers, from 11 communities (Alaverdi (that includes also Sarahin, Akner, and Madan villages), Akori, Akhtala, Shamlugh, Neghots, Shnogh, Teghut, Tumanyan, Dsegh, Qarinj, and Marts) of Lori region that are located in the Debed River Basin. The training program was attended by 54 participants.

Training sessions were facilitated by the specialists and experts of Green Lane.

Dr. Nune Sarukhanyan, the President of the Green Lane NGO, spoke about crop cultivation techniques and soil management practices, including pre-sowing soil treatment, selection of seeds, new and improved techniques for growing seedlings, crop management practices that include weeding, tillage, fertilization and supplementation, as well as application of organic fertilizers (Azotovit, Lignogumat), composting, etc. Dr. Sarukhanyan also presented effective organic techniques for disease, pest and weed control as well as revegetation (reclamation) of degraded soil.

Dr. Rafael Sarukhanyan, the Green Lane's expert on economics, told the participants about the issues and sustainable practices of small-scale farm management, record keeping, and differentiated budgeting of all lines of production by small-scale farmers. In addition, Dr. Rafael Sarukhanyan presented and explained to the participants the main concepts (those practically applied) in farm economy.

Harutyun Gevorgyan, Lecturer of the State Agrarian University of Armenia (SAUA), made a presentation on modern techniques and technologies for cattle management, feeding animals with protein-rich forage as well as prevention measures for the most widely spread animal diseases and parasites.

The topic list for trainings had been identified beforehand based on the needs of the above target communities.

During the trainings, the following publications were provided to the participants:

- Modern and sustainable farming techniques, land management and sustainable development
- Importance of integrated pest management
- Causes and effects of decreased soil fertility
- Beware of nitrates
- Record keeping and budgeting of all lines of production by small-scale farmers
- Increasing productivity and improving health of farm animals

Trainings have been facilitated in an interactive way. During discussions, problems and issues faced by the participants on their farms have been identified and pathways towards new, ecological and environment friendly farming practices outlined. The participants did interactive exercises (games), which allowed to practically illustrate and examine particular issues.

Training sessions were followed by discussions that resulted in participants and trainers jointly agree that this training program delivered by Green Lane had been a very important and useful event in terms of changing mindset of farmers to lead them towards modern environment friendly agriculture.