



Bringing New Ideas to Romanian Agricultural Sector



Photo: USAID/Jay Sorensen

Young Scientist program graduate Luminita Zagrai accepts the “fruit of knowledge” from American professor Dr. Domoto.

“Right now I’m working on a national project concerning fruit storage in controlled atmospheres, and prevention of spoilage and disease. I’m trying to approach the problem through the prism of what I learned in the U.S.”

- Luminita Zagrai, program participant

Romania, once known as the breadbasket of Europe, is now a net importer of agricultural goods - only 12% of the country’s gross domestic product comes from agriculture. After the fall of communism and during the transition to democracy, privatization of state farms occurred slowly and inefficiently, leading to many fragmented small farms. The irrigation system was damaged, limiting the country’s ability to produce irrigated crops. Romania’s agricultural sector deteriorated and its competitiveness fell far behind that of other Eastern European countries.

USAID funded the Young Scientist Program in Romania to help aspiring leaders in the agricultural sector gain knowledge and develop skills to make Romania’s farms more productive and competitive. Highly skilled young Romanians are provided with the opportunity to work with U.S. agricultural leaders from Iowa State University and University of Wisconsin.

Through hands-on learning, participants in the month-long training program gain exposure to the latest scientific developments in various areas of agriculture, including food safety, biotechnology, livestock genetics, dairy feed and forage, resource management, international trade and policy, and agriculture marketing. To date, twenty-five scientists have received scholarships to study in the U.S., with an additional fifteen to be chosen for the 2004-2005 academic year.

First Person

