



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**TURKMENISTAN**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Busy Beekeepers Grow Business

### Beekeepers expand business, set ambitious goals



Photo: USAID

An association member bottles honey in jars sterilized with equipment purchased with a USAID grant.

***“Thanks to USAID, we are one step closer to realizing our mid and long-term objectives for the organization,” said Maya Ovezova, the association chief.***

Telling Our Story  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523-1000  
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

In 2003, a group of beekeepers attended a training course on preparing business plans offered by USAID. The course generated a number of discussions, and inspired the 17 participants to establish a Beekeepers Association. The beekeepers decided that pooling their efforts would help them compete against other honey producers in Turkmenistan. By the end of 2003, *Turkmen Bal* (Turkmen Honey) became one of the first registered economic associations in the country.

*Turkmen Bal* began producing honey in small jars for the local market in early 2004. Using skills they gained from the training course, the beekeepers identified several problems in their operations: lack of sufficient labor, cumbersome bottling operations, and no marketing strategy. The association decided to apply for a USAID grant.

Their application was approved, and in the spring of 2005 the association used the grant to buy new honey bottling equipment with the capacity to process 400 kilograms of honey per hour. With further support from USAID, the association bought special heat equipment to sterilize honey jars.

“This equipment enabled us to produce high quality honey products which comply with state government standards and sanitary norms,” says Maya Ovezova, chief of *Turkmen Bal*. USAID also assisted the association in developing a marketing and sales strategy. An aggressive advertising and sales campaign helped establish brand name recognition for the product.

Now customers can buy honey in the new *Turkmen Bal* shop in Ashgabat. During the shop’s first few months, they sold about \$4000 worth of honey. In addition, the association began selling in bulk to Yampash, the biggest shopping center in Ashgabat. The association plans to hire a full-time sales manager and increase the product mix.

Now that the association has developed a local market, they are setting even higher goals. “We hope that in the near future we will be able to expand markets both in Turkmenistan and internationally,” said Ovezova.