



PHOTO & CAPTION

New Cheeses Capture Local Market



Photo: Chemonics International/Zijadin Gajnovci

Four Kosovo dairy processors are now making a variety of new cheeses and yogurts, thanks to a USAID effort to energize the dairy industry. The new products are replacing imports, as consumers are discovering locally produced cheeses and yogurts that taste great.

One of the four dairy processors, Abi Company, has added feta, ricotta, and mozzarella cheeses to its production line. Their new mozzarella is quickly winning favor with popular pizzerias. Another processor, Rona, has developed new yogurts and feta, mozzarella, and ricotta cheeses, and is on its way to producing gouda. Rona has also created a refreshing new dairy drink made from whey, a processed milk by-product. A third processor, Shala, changed its cheese processing procedures as a result of the USAID program, and added a feta and whey drinks to its product line. Ajka, the fourth processor, improved its yogurts with a new technique and also launched a whey drink product. The processors are each buying about 5,000 more liters of milk per day from local dairy farms and have boosted their income from new-product sales by \$2,000 per day.

Rona Company co-owner Remzi Shahini exhibits his new feta cheese. Rona Company is one of four dairy processors in Kosovo making new dairy products thanks to USAID training in processing techniques.

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USAID provides training and technical assistance to dairy processors as part of its effort to help Kosovo build a strong, stable economy and reduce unemployment. By giving them tools to make products that would otherwise be imported, USAID is strengthening the local economy and increasing the number of jobs on both dairy farms and dairy processing facilities.

The dairy processors are excited about their new products, and have plans to introduce even more varieties of cheese and yogurt to their product lines. In fact, one of the processors is already gearing up to make cheddar cheese and cream cheese. The processors are also getting ready to increase existing cheese and yogurt production even more — three of the plants are expecting to increase their daily milk purchases by 7,000 liters.