



## Turning a Vision Into a Profitable Business Venture

Gheorghe Capatana is the young director of Comun Agro, a small business in Ungheni, Moldova. The most profitable part of his business is vegetable gardening. Gheorghe has rented 440 hectares of land, and cultivates crops which include corn, grains, sunflower and sugar beet. He planted early cabbage on three hectares which resulted in total sales of 250,000 lei (approximately \$20,000).

With the money from these sales, he was able to make an investment in higher quality seeds and seedlings in order to get a better autumn harvest. However, things are not always easy. According to Gheorghe, "The main problem is the lack of irrigation for the fields. Without irrigation, you can't grow healthy vegetables."

The young farmer had a vision and desire to turn his small business into a real success. Because of this, he has always had the support of the villagers who entrust him with their lands. With the assistance of the regional Agricultural Producers Association (APA), he participated in a USAID program to help him achieve his dream.

"The APA has changed my life. Here I learned how to work according to a business plan, consult experts in the field, and solve my current problems. It is a very useful association for private farmers, but only for those who truly understand its mission."



Photo: Diana Grossu/Private Farmers Assistance Program

Since 2001, USAID has worked to help rural entrepreneurs build the success of their businesses, attract capital, retain profits, increase the welfare of their families, and ultimately, assist in the development of Moldovan villages.

According to Gheorghe, the idea of coming together in a formal association is both good and useful for private farmers. "It is only through this approach that we can put our intentions into practice. In dealing with the association, first of all, I promote my own interests since as a private farmer, I am often pressed by many external forces."

Gheorghe has expanded his business as a result of the services provided by APA. He can exchange experiences with farmers and producers all over the country as well as with experts from abroad. Through his participation with APA, he has had the opportunity to receive many favorable proposals and offers to choose from. He is also able to participate in various seminars and workshops with experts, and thus improve his skills.

***"The Association pushed my business to go further. That's why being a member is a great advantage. You just have to learn how to benefit."***

***- Gheorghe Capatana***

Gheorghe Capatana's income from the sales of agricultural products increased by 35% from the year before. This was due to the use of forecasts provided by association experts and their extensive database, which includes all agricultural product throughout Moldova. He confidently admits, "By the end of this year, I expect to triple my sales. With the profits from these sales, I can even solve the irrigation problem as I intend to buy a modern irrigation system next year."

Capatana and his workers produce high quality profitable produce. Business is good and his workers are happy because they have a steady income.