



Ukrainian Farmers Find Strength in Numbers

Challenge

Ukraine’s growing number of private farmers and small-plot holders faced numerous difficulties in growing and selling quality produce. Most lack up-to-date farming knowledge and business skills, and are further crippled by the unavailability of affordable commercial credit options. These constraints have prompted efforts to pool skills and resources in order to succeed.



Photo: Curtis Swift

Volunteer Curtis Swift provides vegetable production and plant protection training to Prydunavya farmers.

“We have truly felt America’s support in our efforts to better serve our members. We will long remember the friendships we made and the lessons we learned from USAID volunteers.”

- Ivan Kulcha, Prydunavya chairman

Results

With USAID help, PFA developed into a sustainable organization which provides members with information on agricultural prices and markets, registration and taxation issues, and legal advice. The PFA has expanded from 110 to 300 farmers, and annual yields for association members have increased by 320%. As of 2004, the Prydunavya Credit Union has almost doubled its statutory capital from member dues and increased total member deposits from less than \$14,000 to more than \$75,000 in two years.

Initiative

A group of private farmers in the Prydunavya village of Southern Ukraine requested assistance from the Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs in developing the Prydunavya Private Farmers Association (PFA) to provide services and improve the sustainability of family farms. Based on PFA’s success, soon a credit union was created which for many members was the only available source of unsecured, crop-cycle loans.

PFA needed help on how to run its cooperative. USAID Farmer to Farmer volunteers trained the PFA on association development, crop production and pest control techniques, cooperative development, and financial planning. USAID also helped twenty-seven Prydunavya farmers acquire and install drip irrigation on their vegetable fields.

The Prydunavya Credit Union staff were trained on credit union strategic planning, and updated accounting and financial management to improve efficiency and increase members confidence and deposits.

USAID provided guidance on advocacy activities to help the PFA better represent its members’ interests to local and regional authorities, and strategies to recruit new, dues-paying members. PFA was advised to hire a full-time crop consultant to provide extension services to members.

Case Study

