



## Cucumbers Make a Difference in Ukraine



Photo: Merle Anderson

USAID provides cooperative development training to a group of vegetable growers in Ukraine.

Ukraine's growing number of private farmers and small-plot holders face numerous difficulties in growing and selling quality produce. Lacking capital, farming knowledge, and small business skills, these individuals need help to capitalize on the promise of privatization.

USAID's Farmer to Farmer program, administered by CNFA, helped introduce farmers in three Ukraine villages to the principles of cooperatives - organized groups that collect membership fees, pool resources, and collaborate on accessing the market as a unified force instead of as individuals. Cooperative members are involved in the process of creating as well as maintaining operations. For example, a Farmer to Farmer volunteer discussed transportation problems with the cooperative members and provided a context for the cucumber growers to work together to develop a solution.

Farmer to Farmer volunteers trained the cucumber growers on business planning and marketing, cooperative development including establishing a board of directors and building membership, and the democratic process of running a cooperative through voting and decision making. All three villages have elected steering committees, set action plans, and developed simple business plans for their fledgling cooperatives. Collaboration has enabled individual farmers to benefit from their partner members through increased production and sales. The farmers, many of whom were previously unemployed, have increased annual family incomes an average of \$226.

Photo & Caption

