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KYRGYZSTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Feeding the Soil to Yield More Crops

Agri-businessmen work to increase farmland productivity and worth



Photo: AED

A farmer displays new potato varieties at the first annual “Silk Road” Ferghana Valley International AgriExpo, organized by the agribusiness association with USAID assistance.

Members of the agribusiness association have improved the business and horticultural practices of farming communities in the Ferghana Valley and throughout Kyrgyzstan.

Telling Our Story
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The fall of the Soviet Union brought serious economic consequences to rural communities in Central Asia. Farmers in the fertile valleys of Kyrgyzstan saw yields drop and markets disappear. They had little knowledge of modern agricultural practices and no access to modern agricultural technology. In 2002, USAID helped establish the *Jer Azygy* Association of Agri-Businessmen of Kyrgyzstan, an organization dedicated to reversing the trend in Kyrgyzstan’s agricultural sector.

In the Kyrgyz language, *Jer Azygy* means “food for the soil.” But the group has done much more than improve soil quality. It provides farmers with services and information on modern technologies, creates conditions for generating high yields, and helps increase living standards in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan.

To achieve this, the association has worked with USAID to send its members to agricultural training programs and seminars in both Kyrgyzstan and abroad. There, members learn about new technologies and products that can increase the production potential of their nutrient-deprived soil. Armed with this knowledge, members are revolutionizing their region’s agricultural sector. Ten members opened stores to sell new varieties of fertilizers and seeds, and six of them hired professional agronomists to advise their customers. Other members have signed contracts with foreign companies to import fertilizer and export seeds and produce.

Jer Azygy is promoting international best practices specific to the agricultural, cultural, and economic climate of Central Asia. Through its members, *Jer Azygy* now possesses the most up-to-date information on agri-technology and its influence is spreading beyond those directly involved in its programs. Through its farm stores, television interviews, and village meetings, *Jer Azygy* has helped thousands of farmers and their families. The association has also launched a monthly newsletter, *Agribusiness Monthly*, and a website to further expand its reach.

The innovative agri-businessmen of *Jer Azygy* are making great strides towards modernizing Kyrgyzstan’s agribusiness and reversing the industry’s negative trend.