



## PHOTO & CAPTION

### Local Co-op Lifts Dairy Profits



Photo: Oleg Brinza, CNFA

***Maria Leahu is one of 500 villagers from Cainarii Vechi, Moldova, who bring their fresh milk every day to the cooperative.***

Liudmila Serepitco was a retired teacher in Cainarii Vechi village when she set up a modest surplus milk collection point in 1997. She had no idea that her attempt at entrepreneurship would touch on the lives of so many of her neighbors.

It was not until she hosted her first USAID volunteer did she realize the untapped potential of forming a cooperative of dairy producers. USAID's Farmer-to-Farmer initiative organizes volunteer agriculturalists to organize small dairy farmers and help them improve milk production and processing.

More than 300 dairy farmers from the area around Cainarii Vechi used veterinary services available at the co-op and reported higher milk yields as a result. In 2004, after two years of collaborating with Farmer-to-Farmer, Liudmila's cooperative sales hit 2 million lei — more than \$150,000 and a 56 percent increase in individual farmers' income over 2003.

#### Telling Our Story

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