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BELARUS

SUCCESS STORY

Milk Free Flowing at Improved Dairy

Volunteers' support helps boost revenues for Belarusian farmers



Photo: CNFA

Rick McGuire, who conducted training sessions on artificial insemination practices for farmers in Belarus, assists with the calving process.

After implementing advice from USAID volunteers, Agro-Box Farm increased its revenue from milk sales from \$184,645 to \$235,047 in one year.

In Belarus, 100 people from the village of Chernova run Agro-Box, a privatized collective farm specializing in crop and livestock production. The farm owns 5,360 acres of land, of which 4,626 are cultivated. Agro-Box Farm grows a variety of crops, such as winter and spring grains, legumes, flax, rapeseed, and grasses, and maintains 848 head of cattle, including 290 milking cows.

In its attempt to successfully privatize, the farm faces several challenges, particularly in trying to increase profits from dairy production. One attempt to increase profit has been to shift from traditional tie stall housing to free stall housing for cattle, which is a well-known method to increase milk production.

However, due to inadequate knowledge and preparation, this transition has created problems that have actually led to a decrease in daily milk production per cow from 13 kilograms (28 pounds) to 10 kilograms (22 pounds). In addition, it is estimated that over 75% of the cows suffer from mastitis and other diseases, which can decrease milk yields up to 25% and reduce the quality of the milk. The veterinarians at Agro-Box Farm were unable to detect and treat these diseases, which has also considerably decreased farm profits.

In order to tackle these challenges, the owner of Agro-Box Farm requested assistance from USAID, who sent six volunteer experts to assist with dairy improvements. Their activities included trainings on developing a viable forage production system, dairy herd management and nutrition, transition to free stall technology, artificial insemination, and dairy health management.

As a result of their assistance, Agro-Box Farm has increased its revenue from milk sales from \$184,645 to \$235,047 in one year. The farmers intend to continue implementing the new techniques recommended by the volunteers.

Telling Our Story
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