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### **USAID AGRIBUSINESS PROJECT CREATES MORE THAN 7,000 JOBS AND GENERATES \$122 MILLION IN SALES IN FIVE YEARS**

**BELGRADE (July 11)** – U.S. Ambassador Mary Burce Warlick and Ministry of Agriculture Veterinary Department Director Zoran Mićović, marked the successful completion of the five-year USAID Agribusiness Project on Wednesday.

The Agribusiness Project, launched in 2007 by the U.S. Agency for International Development, has created 7,122 new agricultural sector jobs and generated \$122.8 million in food sales. An additional \$70 million worth goods are under contract for delivery.

“Through our USAID Agribusiness Project, the United States Government has helped Serbian agribusiness companies increase their sales and exports by establishing them on the international market,” said Ambassador Mary Burce Warlick, noting that USAID worked with 205 Serbian agribusinesses to improve the packaging, labeling and marketing of their products so they could attend 46 food and agriculture trade shows, including expositions in Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, New York, and Kuala Lumpur.

The USAID Agribusiness Project also helped form five national industry associations, including the Serbian Meat Processors Association, the Serbian Dairy Association, and organizations representing organic farmers, blueberry growers, and herb processors and exporters.

In 2011, the USAID Agribusiness Project taught business skills to 600 Serbian women and provided US\$135,000 in grants to 11 women who won its business plan competition for strategies to launch or improve their agribusinesses. The project also trained 180 agricultural university students in entrepreneurship and awarded US\$180,000 in grants to the 28 students with the most bankable business plans.

The USAID Agribusiness Project, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, also assisted in the creation of a warehouse receipts system which allows farmers to use their crops as collateral, enabling them to access the banking system to raise working capital. The project also helped launch a pesticides safety program that taught 4,000 farmers how to properly handle chemicals to protect consumers, the environment and themselves.

It has brought new technologies to Serbia making production cheaper, more efficient, and environmentally sound. In Blace, the Lazar Dairy is turning farm waste into electricity with its new biogas digester, the first in Serbia, using technology that came from the United States.

“While the USAID Agribusiness Project is ending, I want to make it clear that the U.S. Government is committed to supporting Serbia’s agribusinesses and helping them expand locally, regionally and internationally through other initiatives,” Ambassador Warlick said.

**For additional information about the USAID Agribusiness Project, contact Ana Martinovic, Communication Advisor, at +381 11 242 6611 or [ana\\_martinovic@agrobiznis.net](mailto:ana_martinovic@agrobiznis.net).**

***Since 2001 USAID has invested more than \$662.5 million to stimulate economic growth, strengthen the justice system, and promote good governance in Serbia.***

**For more information about USAID, visit <http://serbia.usaid.gov>.**