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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **USAID LAUNCHES GRANTS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY STANDARDS**

**BELGRADE (August 10, 2011)** – Farmers, cooperatives, and small- and medium-sized businesses involved in agriculture and food processing can apply to the USAID Agribusiness Project for grants to obtain certification so they can export goods.

The Program for the Introduction of Food Safety and Quality Standards, now in its third year, helps grantees meet other countries' strict requirements for standardization and certification guaranteeing the quality and safety of food products.

During the past two years, the USAID Agribusiness Project has disbursed nearly US\$300,000 (RSD21.3 million) to 59 agribusinesses to help them meet international food safety and quality standards. These include ensuring that foods are organic, halal or kosher, or that they meet the criteria set by international organizations.

These include GlobalG.A.P., a group that sets standards to reduce chemical use, ensure worker safety, and minimize the environmental effects of farming; HACCP, a system that identifies hazards and their control to ensure food safety; ISO 22000, a management system to ensure safety in the food chain; and ISO 14001, standards to minimize farming's negative effects on the environment.

Agribusinesses that produce or process fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, herbs, spices, meat and dairy products can qualify for the grants so they can export their products. Meeting these standards also improves production efficiency, decreases costs, assures compliance with environmental requirements, and protects consumers' health.

USAID has invested \$24 million in Serbia through its Agribusiness Project, which improves productivity, expands value-added agricultural processing, opens export markets, and builds the capacity of producer organizations and service providers supporting the agribusiness sector.

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**For further information on the USAID Agribusiness Project and/or the Grants for Introduction of Food Safety and Quality Standards, please contact Ana Martinovic, Communications Advisor / [ana\\_martinovic@agrobiznis.net](mailto:ana_martinovic@agrobiznis.net)/ +381 63 705 0264/ [www.agrobiznis.net](http://www.agrobiznis.net)**

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