

Growing Opportunities in Georgia:

Women Entrepreneurs add Value to Agribusinesses and Contribute to Economic Prosperity

Ms. Demetradze is an entrepreneur in the Georgian village of Tseva who owns Nektari, a company specializing in beekeeping that produces high quality honey and apiculture products. She learned about the Agribusiness Development Activity (ADA) funded by the U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) under its compact or grant agreement with Georgia during public consultations in her village. Hopeful to take advantage of one of the grants (which would provide funds to match her personal contributions), Ms. Demetradze travelled to Tbilisi to complete the application. She was pleased to learn weeks later that she, in fact, had received a matching grant from the Millennium Challenge Georgia Fund (MCG), the Georgian government entity responsible for implementing the \$395 million compact. Since receiving the grant, Ms. Demetradze has expanded Nektari, hired several new employees, supplied 11 wholesalers and retailers who sell the company's products, and reached over \$13,000 in annual sales. In addition, Ms. Demetradze now has the potential to double her production to three tons per year, due to greater demand generated in part by the assistance received in identifying new markets and redesigning her company's logo and labels.



The U.S.-funded Millennium Challenge Georgia Fund (MCG) awards grants to small and medium agribusinesses for the development of farm service centers, value added enterprises, value chain initiatives, and primary production. Pictured is one of the grantees, who signed a grant agreement with the MCG.

ADA grants are also helping women entrepreneurs to build Farm Service Centers (FSCs), one-stop agricultural shops that sell fertilizers, seeds, tools, veterinary preparations, and disinfectants, and provide training on the use of modern agricultural technologies. Ms. Ratiani, the owner of a small store in Mestia, expanded and diversified her products through the help of an ADA grant and opened a full-scale FSC. Mestia is the only town in a large and remote mountainous district and serves as the center of administrative and economic activity for 132 villages and



Pictured is the Farm Service Center (FSC) under renovation that Ms. Ratiani purchased in Mestia, Georgia. This one-stop agricultural shop will sell fertilizers, seeds, tools, veterinary preparations, and disinfectants, and provide training on the use of modern agricultural technologies.

Ms. Demetradze and Ms. Ratiani are just two examples of the important role that women play in agricultural and rural development in Georgia. Women are actively involved in the development of Georgian agriculture and have used MCC's investments to improve their businesses and pursue greater economic opportunities. Women are benefiting directly from the ADA as grantees who developed proposals, and as employees, who work hard to develop domestic agricultural products. These MCC grants currently are helping Georgian entrepreneurs employ over a thousand employees and provide services to over 25,000 indirect beneficiaries to improve their livelihoods, contributing to the Georgian economy and reducing poverty through sustainable growth.

The ADA continues to match grants to small and medium agribusinesses throughout Georgia as the demand for such funding increases with a significant number of high quality grant applications. To date, 188 grant agreements have been signed and \$9.6 million dollars have been committed to assist primary producers, value-chain initiatives, and farm service centers grow their business to stimulate economic growth. The ADA program is transforming agribusinesses by awarding grants on a competitive basis to develop farm service centers, value-added enterprises, value chain initiatives, and primary production. This simple solution provides a smart, homegrown solution to an impediment to growth in the region and will help expand opportunities for Georgian families.

approximately 15,000 inhabitants. Agriculture in the area consists mainly of livestock, potato and maize production, but until now, there has been no organized and reliable supply of high quality seeds and fertilizer. This deficiency has made development of commercial agriculture extremely difficult in the district and limited farmers to subsistence agriculture. With the ADA grant, Ms. Ratiani purchased and renovated a building for the FSC, creating a showroom and storage space for fertilizer chemicals and veterinary medicines and a training room to provide seminars and consultations for local farmers. Ms. Ratiani's long-term aim is to drive agricultural development in the district by supplying fertilizers, seed materials, and veterinary preparations to 800 area farmers. Once the FSC is rehabilitated and running, she aims to create at least eight new jobs and benefit over 800 farmers in the area.



Before MCC investments, this Service Center in Kvareli, Kakheti region was vacant.



After MCC investments, the Farm Service Center was launched in June 2008 thanks to the grant received from MCC. This FSC serves up to 2,000 clients in the region, earning up to \$800,000 in sales annually.