



Georgia Employment and Infrastructure Initiative
საქართველოს დასაქმებისა და ინფრასტრუქტურის ინიციატივა

COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

Akhmeta Cheese Day



Dairy production is a major part of the economy in Akhmeta. To stimulate increased interest and investment in this high-potential sector, a Cheese Day festival was held in Akhmeta on May 1, 2007. Many businesses and local communities participated in the event where they presented and sold different varieties of local cheese. Local restaurants and bakers also offered barbeque, bread, and wine, products that are commonly provided with cheese.

"I am very glad to have had the opportunity to attend the Cheese Day on May 1st in Akhmeta, Kakheti as it gave me the possibility to make a sustainable linkage with one of the most famous supermarket networks in Georgia: JSC Populi. In addition, the cheese festival made me think of business expansion."

Malkhaz Kevkhashvili
Local Cheese Producer

The Cheese Day was financed by USAID through CHF International, organized by the New Life Foundation, and assisted by the local municipality of Akhmeta. Participants represented a wide range of market actors: big business and small producers, district and regional government, NGOs, cheese processing equipment suppliers, animal feed dealers, and credit providers.

In addition to the other activities, a roundtable was conducted on dairy production. Input suppliers, buyers, government, and small producers all expressed their views on how to improve the sub-sector. The roundtable provided much useful information to the participants and gave the community a better understanding of how they should consolidate their resources in the future.

The experience sharing among experts and practitioners and linkages forged among farmers, buyers, processors, and MFIs made the event a true success. During the trade fair, participants sold a total of 107.5 kg of cheese and 8 kg of matsoni for USD 1,515. In addition, a business link was established between representatives from the market chain Populi and a local cheese producer, Malkhaz Kevkhashvili, who will deliver 200kg of sulguni cheese each day to Populi, resulting in approximately \$15,000 of monthly income. Cheese production will be distributed among various local cheese producers.



The government played a decisive role in organizing and financing this event and the positive results convinced the municipality to turn the festival into an annual tradition. The local municipality has even started working on establishing its own brand of Tushetian guda cheese.

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