

The First “MCA” Farmer

Sevan Jamalyan is a typical Armenian farmer living in the village of Griboyedov, Armavir marz. Like many of his friends and peers, Sevan has not just heard a lot about MCA-Armenia program but also started to benefit from the program investments. Recently his farm has become one of the most prominent ones in Armavir region. Sevan and other farmers in the village have completed one session of the on-farm water management training as a part of MCA-Armenia Water to Market project. In addition, his farm – as an exemplary one where new technologies are adopted pretty quick - was selected as a Demonstration Site.

SEVAN JAMALYAN: “Today’s farmer in Armenia has very limited, virtually no access to getting knowledge and information about the new ways of improving farm production and management. They would like to get more opportunities for advice and consultation about simple things that can increase the production and get access to markets. Many farmers have no idea about such elementary things like fertilizing or irrigating, they do it intuitively or just follow what their senior or elder peers do. I think we should only welcome that MCA-Armenia program teaches such practical things, besides the heavy investment into the rural infrastructure for us.”

Sevan has always taken care of his piece of land, though in Soviet times people like him used to work in factories and kolkhozes – collective farms. After land privatization in the beginning of 1990s, these people remained alone with their orchards with limited knowledge and resources. Although Sevan was able to learn fast and realized early that the soviet times are over and farmers have to rely on themselves, it still took quite a while to understand the harsh realities of the switch to market economy. Now, after becoming an MCA-Armenia beneficiary, his land is well-equipped with technologies that he could not afford to buy before.

As a Demonstration Site for MCA-Armenia’s Water-to-Market project, it has now all the necessary



Ambassador John Danilovich handing a certificate of completion of the Water-to-Market trainings to Sevan Jamalyan. June 12, 2007, Armenia, Griboyedov village.

equipment to boost the farm’s production rate and increase the family’s income. The Water to Market team has supported Sevan with installation of new irrigation pipes to switch to drip irrigation technique as well as putting up sensor and water meters. Sevan will now be switching to produce new varieties of vegetables – a higher value agricultural production. It serves as an example to other farmers who come to see and learn how to develop a better business. It is worth mentioning that after the MCA-Armenia program is over, all these equipments will continue to serve him.

One of the objectives of Water-to-Market activity is to improve farmers' skills in water management and to support the transition to higher value agriculture. Trainings and demonstrations in these respects are expected to be provided for 60,000 farmers. By the end of MCA-Armenia Compact there will be 220 demonstration sites all over Armenia – 120 in on-farm water management, 100 – in high value agriculture.