



USAID
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA

MEDIA ADVISORY

“The Global Financial Crisis and its Effect on Agribusiness” USAID sponsored seminar at the 76th International Agricultural Fair in Novi Sad

On Tuesday, 12 May 2009, at 10:00 am in the MASTER Congress Center Hall of the Novi Sad exhibition grounds, Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Milan Stegic and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director, Mr. Michael Harvey will officially open a seminar dedicated to “The Global Financial Crisis and its Effects on Agribusiness”. U.S. Ambassador Cameron Munter will also be attending the Fair and will meet with the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Sasa Dragin at approximately 15.30 at the Ministry’s stand in the Main Hall.

The global financial crisis has placed huge pressure on fresh produce suppliers to Europe, limiting consumer spending power and making it more difficult for emerging export markets such as Serbia to establish a strong foothold in the market. The Seminar will provide an analysis of the current international situation, and offer potential solutions to current export constraints.

USAID’s support to hold the conference is just one element of assistance provided by the American people to help Serbia to increase revenue from agricultural production. Acknowledging that the Novi Sad Agricultural Fair is one of the most important events of the year in European agriculture, USAID has launched the Business Linkages Program to better connect international buyers and visitors with the producers, sellers, brokers and service providers at the Fair. In addition, USAID has brought together a number of small Serbian enterprises and helped them to exhibit with a joint stand. This initiative aims to support the growth and export potential of small enterprises with high potential products and services that not yet in the position to reach wider markets. The USAID supported stand can be found Hall III.

The United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has invested \$24 million through its Agribusiness Project which focuses on improving agricultural productivity, expanding value-added agricultural processing, opening new markets for export, and building the capacity of producer organizations and service providers which support Serbia’s agribusiness sector. The Project works with Serbian agricultural producers at all stages of the production cycle “from field to fork” to increase the value of Serbian agricultural products sales and agricultural employment.

Conference Information

The key speaker at Seminar will be Mr. Goran Zivkov, a renowned agricultural economist and former Serbian Minister of Agriculture. He will provide an in-depth analysis of how the economic crisis is affecting Serbian food producers, processors, packers and exporters. Also speaking will be:

- Frédéric Rosseneu, policy advisor for Freshfel Europe, the European Fresh Produce Association, which represents more than 170 members of the fruit and vegetable industry in Europe, on the current European fresh produce market trends.
- Bert Wilschut, product manager for Topfruit at The Greenery, will give an overview of the European apple market during the past 5-10 years and how the varietal range has evolved and what new cultivars have been introduced.

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- Elwira Felgueiras the import director of Berry Gardens, UK's largest fresh berry supplier, which produces, sources and distributes strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries for the UK retail market, will give an insight into the European berry market.

The program will provide participants with the unique opportunity to network with key European buyers of apples, berries and cherries, as well as key Serbian exporters and international food industry leaders, representatives of the Serbian government, the banking sector and representatives of other Balkans countries.

For further information and registration kindly contact Ms. Ana Martinovic, USAID Agribusiness Project Communications Advisor at ana_martinovic@agrobiznis.net; +381 11 243 66 11.