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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **130 AGRIBUSINESS COMPANIES TO PARTICIPATE IN USAID SPONSORED BUSINESS SKILLS TRAINING**

A total of 130 food companies and producer organizations from ten municipalities will participate in 50 business skills training workshops, organized by USAID. The workshops will be held in ten different municipalities in the period between April 11th and June 31<sup>st</sup> and are designed to help companies increase the competitiveness of their products and prepare them for participation at regional and international food fairs, thus helping them access foreign markets and increase their export.

The training will be conducted in cooperation with Regional Chambers of Commerce; Local Economic Development offices from Zaječar, Vranje, Valjevo, Kruševac, Užice, Niš, Leskovac, Kraljevo; and support from the Municipalities of Novi Pazar and Nova Varoš.

The training program will cover topics such as: the development of strategic and business plans; Professional selling skills; Trade fairs and business linking and networking; Integrated marketing communication, and others.

*“The surprisingly large number of companies which applied for the training certainly indicates that there is a need and desire for the further improvement of business skills. Our companies obviously recognize the importance of accessing foreign markets and want to prepare themselves better for the competition, both on the local as well as the international market. Through this training program we want to provide companies with concrete help and support to help them compete.” – said **Nenad Popadic**, Financial Advisor, USAID Agribusiness Project. .*

Companies and cooperatives which successfully complete this training program will have an opportunity to participate in the **“Culinaria Fine Food Show”**, to be organized in Belgrade, September 28-30, 2011, with support from USAID and the Zizgin Company.

### *Culinaria Fine Food Show*

The first Culinaria Fine Food Show took place in Belgrade in September 2010. During this occasion, more than 3000 visitors had an opportunity to see products presented by 79 companies from 6 countries. The organizers of the fair brought in 60 professional buying companies from 14 countries, including TESCO from the United Kingdom and Central Europe; Lidl from Croatia; representatives of regional retail chains and importing companies; and the largest importers in the U.S. and Canada for products from South-Eastern Europe.

*“Most often, the attendance at large international shows are limited to larger food producers and as such, the Culinaria Fine Food Show was designed by USAID with the*

*aim of bringing international buyers to Serbia. This will ensure that smaller Serbian companies get the chance to introduce their delicious products onto international markets",* **Remer Lane**, USAID Agribusiness Project's Marketing and Export Advisor.

*"Judging by the interest stimulated by last year's event, it is safe to say that Culinaria is on track to become the largest and most prestigious food industry event in the region,"* noted USAID's Mission Director **Susan Fritz**.

Besides USAID, the "Culinaria Fine Food Show" is being supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, SIEPA and the German organization GTZ.

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