



Tuesday, June 14, 2011  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **TRAINING IN SAFE PESTICIDE USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROVIDED BY USAID AND MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE, FORESTRY AND WATER MANAGEMENT**

**BELGRADE (JUNE 14, 2011)** – Training sessions for Serbian farmers in safe pesticide use and environmental protection will be conducted in 42 Serbian municipalities in June and July by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management.

The classes are designed to raise awareness about the safe use and handling of pesticides. The trainings will be conducted by experts from 33 Agricultural Extension Service Stations in Serbia.

The first round of trainings, held in 2009, resulted in 475 agricultural producers being awarded Certificates of Competence in the Safe Use of Pesticides and Environmental Protection and 38 educators receiving training licenses. Those sessions were conducted in collaboration with the Directorate of Plant Protection of the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management.

The current classes for agricultural producers in Safe Pesticide Use and Environmental Protection will cover such issues as: pesticides and their use; the appropriate types of safety clothing and equipment to use during handling; the impact of pesticides on human health; symptoms and first aid in case of pesticide poisoning; appropriate storage of pesticides; validation and calibration of equipment used to apply pesticides; application and disposal of unused pesticides and used pesticide containers; pest resistance; and environmental considerations when using pesticides.

The classes are meant to help ensure that food that is safe for human and animal consumption and to protect the health of farmers and the environment. Improper pesticide handling and use can harm agricultural producers through direct exposure and the general population through the consumption of pesticide residues and through soil and water contamination.

The production of healthy, high-quality human and animal food is vital for the Serbian economy. Many countries have adopted standards to ensure the safety and quality of food and animal feed. These standards represent restrictions for the export of Serbian agricultural products unless they can be met or exceeded.

USAID has invested \$26 million through its Agribusiness Project, which seeks to contribute to the improvement of agricultural production, quality and packaging of agricultural products, increase the competitiveness of Serbian agricultural products, enable access to new markets for export, and to strengthen the capacities of producer organizations and Agribusiness Development Services.

**For additional information about USAID Agribusiness Project, please visit our Internet presentation at [www.agrobiznis.net](http://www.agrobiznis.net) or contact Communication Adviser Ana Martinovic at +381 11 243 66 11.**