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MEDIA ADVISORY

USAID and the Republic of Serbia Ministry of Agriculture initiate a nation-wide project for the improvement of the Agricultural Market Information System (STIPS) of Serbia

During June 12th - 13th, the first Workshop aimed at the improvement of STIPS will take place in Cacak at the Fruit Growing Institute.

This event is the first workshop of its kind and is a part of the Project for the Improvement of the Agricultural Market Information System (STIPS) of Serbia. The Project will be implemented by *Agromreza* in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and the USAID Agribusiness Project. In total, eighteen such interactive workshops will be held throughout Serbia at the designated STIPS reporting canthers.

The aim of this Project is to inform Serbian farmers and agricultural enterprises on the ways in which the Agricultural Market Information System (STIPS) can be used and to educate them on the basic principles of marketing. Familiarizing farmers with the system will enable them to better access information on current market trends and tendencies which will ultimately improve their ability to better market and sell their products.

Agricultural Market Information System of Serbia (STIPS) is a system of regular collection, processing and the distribution of data regarding the market in agricultural and food products in order to provide a consistent oversight of the situation on the market. STIPS includes information on fruit and vegetables, live animals, and the grains market, as well as the latest information from the agro inputs market. Agricultural markets are monitored in 18 centers in Serbia.

STIPS in Serbia started operating in the spring of 2004, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Serbia and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

What is the purpose of Agricultural Market Information System of Serbia?

The STIPS assists farmers in deciding what and how to produce, where, when and to whom to sell their produce, how to achieve a better price for their products... Farmers who are informed of the situation on the agricultural market through the Agricultural Market Information System of Serbia can improve their position in negotiations with buyers.

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.

For information on the Project for the Improvement of the Agricultural Market Information System (STIPS) of Serbia, kindly contact Ms. Brankica Obučina at 381 11 243 66 11 or brankica_obucina@agrobiznis.net.

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