

Local Market Development Project

Helvetas, Swiss Association for International Co-operation
 ICCO, A Dutch Interchurch Organisation for Development Co-operation

1 Getting market information by SMS

From this June, thanks to the efforts of the project and the Kyrgyz Agricultural Market Information Service, with the technical support of the content-provider Nikita Mobile Ltd, there is a new service for getting wholesale prices from agricultural produce markets in Kyrgyzstan this year via short SMS messages. Currently information on cucumbers and tomatoes is available. The information is updated 3 times per week. In the course of the next few months it is planned to expand the list of produce up to 30 items, namely: carrots, potatoes, onions, cabbages, beetroot, garlic, Bulgarian peppers, aubergines, turnips, apricots, peaches, grapes, apples, pears, strawberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, water melons, honeydew melons and also information about meat - beef, lamb, pork, horseflesh and chicken. This service is only currently available to Bitel mobile phone subscribers. Negotiations are underway with Katel and Fonex about offering this service to their subscribers.

In order to get the wholesale prices available in Osh and Bishkek it is necessary to send an SMS to number 1122 with the following:

1. Information about cucumbers: SMS message text 'ON 589' (Warning! ON – Latin letters and between the word ON and the number 589 there must be a space)
2. Information about tomatoes: SMS message text 'ON 591' (Warning! ON - Latin letters and between the word ON and the number 591 there must be a space)



A few minutes later you will receive a message with the information about the highest and lowest wholesale prices per kilogram for the produce in the wholesale markets of Osh and Bishkek (Batken, Osh, Alamedin and Orto-Sai bazaars). The cost per SMS message about one of the named agricultural products is 6 (six) soms.

The project will be happy to pass on this information to any interested parties.

2 Deliveries of fresh vegetables to sales points in Osh and Bishkek

At the beginning of June, the project, together with its partners, began working on a new chain - Transporting agricultural produce to sales points/ markets in Osh and Bishkek. Fresh produce from growers in Osh Oblast bearing the quality mark, Straight from the Bed! has been delivered to 8 shops in Osh and also two deliveries of one ton each to Bishkek. Growers in Chui Oblast have started delivering produce under the 'Straight from the Bed!' mark to five pavilions in Bishkek in the second half of June and plan to increase the volume in July when large quantities of vegetables will be dug up.

3 Project Work in Issyk-Kul Oblast

In June the project had meetings with representatives of the Koopromservis processing factory and farmer's leaders of four rayons of Issyk-Kul Oblast including farmers from the southern shore rayons of Ton and Jety Oguz. It is planned to sign contracts for the delivery of the fruit and berry harvests at the next meeting of the working groups in July when the approximate volumes of the forthcoming harvest will be known. At the meeting discussions took place between the farmers and enterprises about the purchase prices and transport terms. The processing factory plans not only to use the produce to make fruit juice but also to buy it to be sold on in the fresh fruit market.

4 Expanding the project into Tajikistan

At the end of May - beginning of June the project did some research and a team of four people discovered that there were excellent possibilities to expand the project into Tajikistan.

Although land in Tajikistan has not been privatised, under the land reforms carried out there, farmers can get land on long leases. The government of Tajikistan also wants to change the structure of agriculture and reduce the area used for growing cotton and in 2006 in the Sogd oblast, 11,000 hectares of land that last year had been used for growing cotton is being used to grow vegetables and planting apricot orchards.

There are about 30 fruit and vegetable enterprises in Sogd Oblast, 2 in Zerafshan and 4 in Khatlonskij Oblast and a lot of international projects involving fruit and vegetable processing, working in Sogd Oblast.

There is a large demand for agricultural consultations from farmers and they are ready to pay for them as they are currently doing.

Information about whether or not the project will be expanded into Tajikistan will appear in a future bulletin.