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R&D and Cooperation with CIMMYT



Varoujan Der Simonian at Hovhannes Gaboyan's Wheat field
with Dr. Morgounov of CIMMYT and Gagik Mkerchyan ATG
Foundation director

Meeting with Dr. Alexey Morgounov, Head of International Winter Wheat Improvement Program at CIMMYT resulted in obtaining eight new wheat seed varieties for trial purposes. Our research team set trial plots in fourteen different locations in the seven growing zones in the country. The trial plots revealed that five out of eight new wheat seed varieties are suitable for Armenia's climate. ATG will allocate 2.5 acres to setup a seed nursery for these 5 breeder wheat seed selections, to multiply and eventually distribute for planting with minimum risk to growers.

Dr. Morgounov's letter, congratulated ATG and confirming CIMMYT's commitment for cooperation is posted on our website: www.atgusa.org/Testimonials.



A beautiful countryside
populated mainly by the
elderly - Help us to halt
their emigration!



ATG NEWSLETTER

Summer/Fall
2017

Serving the people of Armenia and Artsakh since 1989

Return to Free Market!

"I was waiting for this moment!" Gagik Mkerchyan, ATG Foundation Director in Armenia

The Prime Minister of Armenia Karen Karapetyan has announced that **"he has no further intention to interfere with seed producers and grain growers."** This pronouncement was followed by a telephone call to Gagik Mkerchyan, informing him that 'the field is open for ATG affiliated growers to produce and market seed grains and other legumes.'

The private seed growers in Armenia had a difficult time during the past five years. Members of previous Administrations had intervened often to control the supply and distribution of wheat and other seed to the markets. As a result, the ATGF associated growers, who once supplied some 60% of the seed sown in the country, for the most part were marginalized.

This recent policy change will dramatically impact farm production in Armenia.

The fall planting season is only few weeks away. Hence, this early request for funds is a departure from our usual December solicitation, with the hope of maximizing the benefits that we can provide to the growers.

Chain Of Events

Prime Minister's announcement provides the opportunity for ATG affiliated growers to resume certified seed production in Armenia. *(for details visit our revised website: www.atgusa.org/seed)*

In effect, this policy change represents a complete reversal from that of his predecessors. Under previous administrations' tenure, the government imported untested seed to Armenia. Based on our years of experience in the field and on scientific data, we strongly voiced our concerns to the contrary in both English and Armenian papers in the US and Armenia.

The previous policy resulted in over 5,000 farmers obtaining bad wheat seed from the Government with no up-front cost. However, the seed loan purchases were collateralized by property deed liens payable upon completion of harvest. Poor production and low-quality grains resulted in farmers being unable to repay the loans with many losing their farms and many others in court trying to save their farms, whereas others abandoned their farms and migrated abroad.

During this grand experiment, private seed growers suffered dearly. The common grain growers had anticipated government support. And, although the supply was never enough to meet local demand, the seed producer's association members were unable to sell their seed inventory to grain growers even as late as November. This brought an immediate hardship to local seed growers no longer able to make a living.

The Prime Minister's recent governmental decision to remove itself from the seed producers and grain grower's equation was welcomed by ATG affiliated grower, Hovhannes Gaboyan and other seed growers. **"Within five days of the Prime Minister's announcement, we were able to sell our seed inventory. Grain growers are aware of our seed quality. By the end of July we were completely sold out"** said Gaboyan.

To that end, Mr. Aram Mkhoyan, Artsakh Minister of Agriculture, personally traveled to Armenia and purchased 32 MT of three newly harvested wheat seed varieties from our growers and transported them to Artsakh!

Center to ATG's mission is the belief that a strong farming sector is the foundation for building a nation with a healthy and viable market economy!