

## NEWSLETTER

#3, 2007

Side by side with farmers



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Success Story**

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EAST-EAST PROGRAM  
OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

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## ***Dear friends,***

We are happy to have a chance to welcome you once again on behalf of the Green Lane team via the new edition of our newsletter.

The fact of having an opportunity to share all our achievements and success stories with you as well as to hold an open discussion on the problems we and our partner farmer groups are facing makes us feel stronger and more confident of the future success. With every new issue of the newsletter coming out we enjoy the pleasure of having a lot of responses from our colleagues and friends. This is of great importance to us as it helps the Green Lane team to better and improve our activities.

This new edition of the Green Lane newsletter is dedicated to the issues of sustainable agricultural and rural development, which, as we believe, has farmer cooperation as a pivot. We are glad to state that cooperatives and farmer groups active in Armenia now are doing a lot of useful work creating business relationship and developing partnership between farmers on one hand and processors and traders on the other.

Based on their own experience, the experts and specialists who work with Green Lane NGO believe, that cooperatives and farmer groups have a potentially great role to play in the sustainable development of the agricultural sector and rural communities in Armenia. The experience evidences that these forms of cooperation not only promote economic sustainability and development for resource-poor small scale farmers but also contribute to social and economic development of rural communities. Development of the farmer cooperation at the community level can help us in solving another big problem; namely it can help increase participation of the farmers, and especially small and medium ones, in the decision making process and management of the resources at the local level.

Our organization attaches great importance to the establishment of new agricultural cooperatives and farmer groups as well as to the further strengthening and development of the existing ones.

The Green Lane team thanks all its partners for trusting us and assisting in the realization of all our projects and initiatives.

We express our deepest appreciation to the OSI team for their assistance to us. This is already the second issue of our newsletter that comes out thanks to the financial support provided by OSI.

Thank you very much!

***The Green Lane Board Members***



**NUNE SARUKHANYAN,**  
*Green Lane NGO  
President  
Yerevan*



**HRUNIK MANUKYAN**  
*JERAOVIT Cooperative  
President, Farmer  
Ararat*



**ARMINEH MURADYAN**  
*Farmer Local Extension  
and Research Group  
Leader, Farmer  
Lori*



**RAFAEL SARUKHANYAN**  
*Green Lane NGO  
Advisor, Economist  
Yerevan*



**EMMA HAKOBYAN**  
*Farmer Field School on  
Organic Agriculture,  
Group Leader, Farmer  
Tavoush*

***Two more members  
representing two other regions  
of Armenia - Armavir and Vayots Dzor -  
will join our Board this year***

## SUCCESS STORY



**HRUNIK MANUKYAN**  
*President of JERAOVIT Cooperative*

**Q. What was the main aim of the establishment of your cooperative?**

A. The cooperative was established through support from the USDA Marketing Assistance Project. We received really huge help and assistance from Mr. Larry Yager, who has been working with the USDA MAP as a marketing specialist, and from Dr. Rafael Sarukhanyan, the leader of the Cooperative Development Group. Consultancy provided by these highly professional and experienced specialists helped us launch and develop our activities in the most efficient way. I have to stress that we owe the largest part of our success to the local and foreign professionals who gave us a start in our activities. Dr Allan Lines, former director of the USDA MAP, and Dr Dora Rumsey, who has been working in Armenian as a consultant for AGROGITASPYUR (Local agricultural extension service) were amongst those professionals and supported us greatly in formation of our Local Extension and Research Group. In the period when we had these specialists working here in Armenia, agricultural sector evidenced a real blooming in development of different types of farmer unions, cooperatives, farmer groups and credit clubs.

We created JERAOVIT Consumer Cooperative with the aim of supporting our members in improving their farming activities and marketing production in the most beneficial way. We are sure that this will contribute not only to sustaining the economic activities of our member farmers but also to improvement of the living standard in their communities.

**Q. You are cooperating actively with Green Lane NGO. Why?**

A. In 2004, when the USDA Marketing Assistance Project approached the end, we found ourselves being in a very difficult situation. At that time, our cooperative was not strong enough and we extremely needed both consultancy and technical support. Besides, it was necessary to us to become familiar with the experience of the local, foreign and international organizations similar to our one. Thus, it was of great importance to us to have an organization linking us to Armenian and foreign counterparts and providing necessary information and knowledge. That's why we, along with a group of our colleagues, decided to create a unit that could put together farmer groups, individual farmers, agricultural specialists and researchers working in different regions of Armenia. That was the initial idea behind the establishment of Green Lane NGO. Mr.

JERAOVIT Consumer Cooperative of Masis region (province of Ararat), the members of which are mainly involved in vegetable production, was established in 2002. In 2003, the members of the cooperative formed two other units - a Local Extension and Research Group (LERG) and a Credit Club - to improve their activities. It can be stated now that formation of those two farmer groups was a very important and necessary step taken by the members of the cooperative to achieve a real success in their activities. The work done by the LERG and the credit club in succeeding years contributed significantly to strengthening the cooperative itself.

We asked Mr. Hrunik Manukyan, the President of JERAOVIT cooperative as well as a founder and a board member of Green Lane NGO, to tell us about the cooperative and the work done during the recent years.

Jeffrey Engels, the former director of the USDA MAP, our foreign colleagues and, of course, 23 founder members, who really believed in the future success of Green Lane, supported us in establishing this agricultural assistance NGO. At present, Green Lane NGO works hard towards strengthening and developing its member consumer cooperatives, farmer groups and individual farms in different regions of the country.

It's of great importance to us to be honest with farmers. We do our best to help them and never give them hollow promises. We really value the trust between us and our beneficiaries. Certainly, cooperatives and Green Lane itself face a lot of problems but we know the ways to solve them. Very often we invite foreign specialists or ask our Armenian colleagues working with other organizations to help us.

To summarize the above, I would like to stress that when we say "Green Lane" we mean all of us members of our origination along with all our problems...

**Q. How does the LERG support the members of the cooperative?**

A. Our LERG mainly provides the members of the cooperative with consultancy. Let me say, that seven members of that group (four of them are women) are also members of the Green Lane NGO. They conduct research that mainly relates to the testing and cultivation of new crop varieties, organic techniques of pest and disease control, etc. Over the last two years, we implemented four research projects in cooperation with Green Lane NGO. In addition, our LERG supports the members of the cooperative to market their produce. Today I can state that the members of the groups are able to identify all the problems faced by the community and offer

effective solutions. Of course, sometimes we appear to be unable to solve a problem, even when we have the clue. But we always do our best and effectively deal with the problems when the solution depends on our internal resources.

**Q. Any wishes and expectations for the future?**

A. Our wishes and expectations are very simple; we don't need humanitarian aid, what we really need is a better legal and economic environment to work successfully. For instance, it would be great to have an opportunity to benefit from long-term credits with low interests. This could help us in improving our economic activities. In addition

to the existing production of vegetables, fruits and grape, we could have post-harvest crop collection and storage stations. This could provide us with an opportunity to expand the crop areas, increase the crop production along with the effectiveness of the marketing.



**Sweet corn is already a traditional crop in Jerahovit community**



**Dr Dora Rumsey, a U.S. consultant, meeting the members of the group**



**By DAVID C. SLUSSER, USA  
Consultant  
to Farmer Cooperatives**

***The Green Lane NGO, as well as the farmer groups and specialists cooperating with our organization, owe their success to many U.S. professionals that have been working in Armenia in different periods.***

***David Slusser is one of those American specialists. In 2002-2005, he has been working in Armenia with the USDA Marketing Assistance Project as a Consultant on Dairy Livestock Breeding. What he did for the Armenian livestock-breeding sector was a real revolution. He contributed significantly to the development of milk consuming cooperatives. David's work was mainly directed to introduction of the standards of animal keeping, feeding, housing, etc as well as to improvement of the hygiene and sanitary conditions on the dairy farms.***

***It was David's suggestion to train the members of the Milk Marketing Cooperatives established by the Cooperative Development Group through the USDA MAP support to keep accurate records of incomes and expenditures. This record-keeping system being used by the cooperatives since 2002 helped the Armenian dairy farmers become more sustainable.***

## **FARMER MARKETING COOPERATIVES IN ARMENIA**

***By working together, they did what they could  
not do as an individual...***

Farmer Cooperatives play a major role throughout the World in food production, marketing, and agricultural economic development. In every major free market country, agriculture develops along with all other aspects of the economy in order to obtain long term economic stability.

First, let's talk about farmer cooperatives. Cooperatives are involved in marketing of crop and livestock products; can provide supplies such as fertilizer, and animal semen and services such as veterinarian services. Individual farmers do not have much power when it comes to setting prices, or purchasing supplies, however when they work together as a group, they have much more power. Generally the larger the group the more influence they have. They can do together what they can not do on their own. This is especially true in Armenia where the vast majority of the farms are small.

Armenia has an excellent example of successful marketing

cooperatives. They are marketing milk to many of the major milk processing and cheese plants. Over a 5 year period from 2002 to 2006, milk marketing by cooperatives grew from under \$30,000 to nearly \$800,000. In every village where there is a milk marketing cooperative, it is the major source of cash to the village. There are at least 12 successful milk marketing cooperative in Armenia, and they are growing in size and numbers.

The milk marketing cooperatives were first started by the USDA-MAP program in 2001, but really became successful under the leadership of Rafayel Sarukhanyan. Rafayel and his team introduced financial accounting, transparency, board leadership, and marketing concepts to each of the cooperative board of directors. He also developed a successful working procedure to establish a cooperative in a village.

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The success of the Sarukhanyan team is remarkable. These cooperatives are now self-sustaining, growing, and providing steady cash income for thousands of farmers in over 20 villages. Rafayel Sarukhanyan is now the cooperative development specialist for Green Lane NGO.

Starting a cooperative is possible in every village in Armenia, however since 2001, mistakes were made. If your village wants to start a cooperative, it is very important to involve a specialist who has started many cooperatives.

Cooperatives help villages help themselves. The village of Lejan is a good example. Four years ago at the annual membership meet of the Lejan Milk Marketing cooperative several members said that they needed a health clinic in the village. After much discussion, the members voted to deduct 2 drams per liter from each member's milk sales, to start a fund to build a health clinic. Two years later, they built their clinic, have a full time nurse, and have a doctor visit the clinic one day a week. They had some extra money, so next door they have the Lejan Public Library. By working together, they did what they could not do as an individual.

Cooperatives are worth the effort that it takes and they take effort, and good honest leadership. They require the village commitment to want to help itself. They require a small loan that must be paid back, and some village labor to build or remodel the building for the collection center and milk bulk tank. For more information, contact the Green Lane NGO.

## WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL BUILDING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN TAVOUSH REGION

Since August 2004, World Vision International Christian Humanitarian Organization is carrying out a Project for Building Sustainable Livelihoods in Tavoush (BSLT). The project is a three-year initiative being implemented within the framework of Tavoush Area Development Project (ADP). 40 communities, 66,430 farmers and peasants will benefit from this project funded by European Union, World Vision Germany and World Vision Ireland.

To secure sustainable development of eleven farmer unions (nine non-governmental organizations, one farmer cooperative and a Limited Liability Company) established under the Building Sustainable Livelihoods in Tavoush project, sows, cows, and colony bees have been granted to the farmers along with the required quantity of forage, sugar, as well as a feed mill, a small universal tractor, other equipment and tools. The granted sows will be kept by three farmer unions: "Yerevak" NGO of Noyemberian region, "Yeritasard Tavoush" NGO of Ijevan region, and Artsvaberd Farmers' and Seed Producers' Union; the cows have been granted to the Support Center of Berdavan village, "Emulik" consuming cooperative of Gandzaqar village and "Aigedzor Nursery" Ltd. The colony bees passed into the possession of "Garun-Veratsnund" (Berd), "Farmers of Voskevan", and "Yeritasard Koti" non-governmental organizations.

Within the framework of BSLT, the Green Lane specialists and experts conducted a series of trainings and seminars on establishment, management and effective operating of farmer unions and associations.

In the previous issue of the Green Lane Newsletter we told about the support received by our partner Farmer Field School of Gandzaqar village of Tavoush region from World Vision Inter-



Andranik Ghaltakhchyan, President of ACHA JUR Farmer Union, and his father Volodya Ghaltakhchyan

national. However, that was a small part of the activities of World Vision in Tavoush region, which one of the poorest areas of Armenia. It should be emphasized that the Organic Wheat Production Project being carried out in cooperation with Emulik Co-operative is a novelty for this area.



"Support provided for the farmer associations will promote sustainable market-oriented production and encourage new members and beneficiaries to join those associations and unions", Curt von Boguslawski, the Director of BSLT, and Nikol Vardumyan, the Agricultural Projects' Coordinator, say.

# BIOTERRA. OUR RELIABLE PARTNER IN EASTERN EUROPE

**Bioterra Association of Organic Farmers is the largest association of biofarmers in Romania. It was founded ten years ago, in 1997, and initially had 26 members. Four of the members were Swiss. By 2003 the number of the Bioterra's members increased up to 3,150, of whom 2700 were certified biofarmers. These farms have a total area of 32,000 ha and 8,500 animals.**

Bioterra Association founded the first nationally accredited organic inspection and certification body in Romania- EcoInspect.

Bioterra is a member of IFOAM (International Federation for Organic Agricultural Movements).



Representatives of Bioterra and Green Lane  
visiting the Armenian community of Gerla, Romania

The main goals and purposes declared by our Romanian colleagues are promotion of organic agriculture in Romania, development of harmonious relationship between the human beings and the environment, and conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.



Organic milk collection center in Moldova province, Romania

Each year Bioterra holds a conference being attended by approximately 250 participants:



Albert Imre, the Executive Director of Bioterra,  
is one of those people, who helped us  
to start the Green Lane NGO

professors from the Cluj-Napoca University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine (USAMV) , representatives of the Parliament, Ministry of Agriculture, local authorities, representatives of similar organizations from Eastern and Central Europe.



Professionals from different counties  
attend the conferences and exchange programs  
offered by Bioterra  
to learn more about the organic agriculture in Romania

Since 1999, Bioterra publishes its own magazine in Romanian and Hungarian, which is distributed all over the country.

The Association offers consulting and education services in organic farming as well as consultancy in developing project proposals and business plans.

You can find more information on the Bioterra's website: <http://www.bioterra.org.ro>



## THE MEETING THAT INFLUENCED THE FUTURE...

**By NUNE SARUKHANYAN**  
**President of Green Lane NGO**

**Sometimes only one meeting or participation in a professional event can influence one's career and predestine his or her further professional activities. That's how I, as an agronomist and extensionist, and Green Lane, as an organization providing assistance to farmers, became interested in organic agriculture...**

It was in the spring of 2002, when at the invitation of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) I visited Poland to take part in the "Organic Farming in an Enlarged European Union as an opportunity for development of rural areas" workshop.

It was a great opportunity to meet many professionals and organizations working in the organic agriculture domain. Those meetings have made me feel and realize afresh what a huge damage we suffer when, lacking in knowledge, people are unable to live in harmony with Nature. Just at that precise moment I realized that there was a lot of work to be done in Armenia to solve imperious environmental and human health problems.

In Warsaw I first met Albert Imre, the Executive Director of Bioterra, the largest organic farming association in Romania. He invited me to Romania to partake in the annual conference of Bioterra that autumn.

The more I learnt about the activities of Bioterra, the more I found myself to be inspired and filled with enthusiasm. After seeing the success that Romania, a former socialist country with the current rate of economic growth approximately similar to the one of Armenia, achieved in developing the organic sector of economy, I asked myself "Why not to have a similar organization in Armenia?"

I returned to Armenia, met colleagues from AGROGITASPYUR - Extension Department of the Agrarian University, and the USDA Marketing Assistance Project to share with them my plans and ideas regarding the future development of organic agriculture in Armenia. It was a great pleasure to see them interested in the issue. With support from my Armenian colleagues I started seeking information and knowledge resources.

In 2002, we started working towards establishment of a new organization that we expected to become one of the pioneers in organic movement in Armenia. By visiting different countries and establishing relationships with a number of international organizations we created a comprehensive database on organic farming. After gaining sufficiently large theoretical knowledge and experience, in 2003 we received a grant from the USDA MAP and established our first Organic Farmer Field School.

After seeing a lot of people lining up behind the concept of organic agriculture, we decided to start an organization, Green Lane NGO, that would be dedicated to the promotion of biofarming along with supporting conventional farmers in solving their problems.

Each year Bioterra Association invites the representatives of Green Lane to Romania to partake in both conferences and exchange programs. Albert Imre, the Executive Director of Bioterra, and Dr. Cornel Man, the President of Bioterra, encouraged us to enlarge collaboration with different organizations. They helped us significantly in developing grant projects. As a result of that fruitful cooperation, in 2006 our organizations successfully implemented a joint project - Days of Organic Agriculture in Romania and Armenia - funded by the Open Society Institute's East-East Program.

([http://arm.agrowebcac.org/newsletter\\_12.pdf](http://arm.agrowebcac.org/newsletter_12.pdf))

Over the recent years my colleagues and I took part in several dozens of international conferences, workshops and exchange programs on organic agriculture. As the years pass, our experience and knowledge grow and we are having more and more positive results. And Bioterra still remains as the best model to follow to promote organic sector's development in Armenia.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN ARMENIAN AGRICULTURE

As an advisor to Agrogitaspyur, Dr. Dora Rumsey worked with Armenian farmers and families in 2003-2004. She returned to Armenia in 2006 as a volunteer with ACDI/VOCA to work with Green Lane NGO. She made a great contribution to the establishment and further development of AGROGITASPYUR Agricultural Extension Service in Armenia. Dr. Rumsey provided great support, both financial and advisory, to our organization helping us and our partner farmer groups sustain our activities and become more successful in our efforts to develop agricultural and rural sectors in Armenia.

**By Dr DORA RUMSEY, USA**  
**Friend of Green Lane**

Farmer Field  
Schools and Local  
Extension Research

Groups are an important component in the success of the agricultural industry in Armenia. These groups value education as a means of improving their agricultural practices, capabilities, and ensuring the maintenance and output of their food production resources. A closer look at the value of education for farmers reflects a greater satisfaction with life, optimism about the future and sense of control over one's life.

Motivation for farmers' change comes from different sources including environmental sustainability, healthier foods, and improved economics. An active learning environment is created as the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Local Extension Research Groups (LERG) share their own experiences, conduct on-farm research projects, and attend educational programs offered by local and international agricultural experts.

Dr. Nune Sarukhanyan formed FFS and LERG groups in 2003 to encourage analytical thinking and creative problem solving by the group members. Success in farming requires a great deal of

knowledge in many areas including technical agricultural topics and managerial skills.

Success in modernizing agriculture in Armenia and in developing the full potential of the rural sector will depend in large measure on leaders in the agriculture industry who can promote change and harness the vast potential of Armenian agriculture. The investment of education for farmers opens the windows of opportunity for this and future generations so they can look to new horizons and aspire to progress.

Education provides farmers with a comparative advantage to promote the competitiveness of agriculture and rural economic activities, to dream dreams of greatness and have the tools to achieve productivity increases and an expansion in food supply to meet the growing food needs and market requirements. Educated farmers guarantee the continued progress of the Armenian rural economy. Green Lane NGO will continue to provide educational classes, consulting and resources to farmers and encourage the development of additional Farmer Field Schools and Local Extension Research Groups to strengthen the Armenian agriculture.

## JIM KRENEK's VISIT TO ARMENIA



**JIM KRENEK, USA**  
**Friend of Green Lane**  
**Market Development Director**  
**Michigan Food and Farming System**  
**Lansing, Michigan**

We are very glad and proud to state that the number of the Green Lane's friends and members as well as the number of the farmers and agricultural specialists who trust us and are willing to cooperate with our organization, is constantly increasing.

This year, in April, we had one of our friends and honorable members, Jim Krensek, visiting Armenia to help Green Lane in further developing our activities. This new meeting with Jim became possible thanks to support from ACDA/VOCA, as this time he came to Armenia as an ACDA/VOCA volunteer.

As always, Jim's visit to Armenia appeared to be very fruitful and useful to us. Jim is one of those people who believed in us when in 2004 we stepped forward with an initiative to create Green Lane NGO and to start working as an independent organization in the field of agricultural extension. From the very beginning he assists us in fund-raising and capacity building. We rely on his advice very much.

Once again Jim made a significant contribution to our organization. He donated a laptop to the Green Lane team and, in addition, brought a portable seeder donated to Green Lane by our honorable member John Bobbe. We thank our friends very much for their support.

On his visit to Armenia, Jim had a meeting with the active members of our organization helping us develop the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan of Green Lane. This is of great importance to us in terms of securing further development of the organization. In addition, he helped us establish new relationships with some organizations operating in Armenia and in other countries.

He had a meeting with the members of the Farmer Field School of Gandzaqar village



Jim Krensek presenting the portable seeder

(Tavoush region) helping them also in strategically plan the FFS activities for the upcoming years.

This is also of great importance and use to the Green Lane team, as being familiar with the strategic plans of our partner farmer groups, we are able to plan and develop our own activities and programs in the way that allows us to meet their requirements and to satisfy their expectations effectively.



**By ROGER W. BENTON, USA**  
*Friend of Green Lane*

## ALFALFA GROWING TECHNOLOGY IN ARMENIA

Roger Benton and his wife Mary were among the first people to welcome the idea of establishing the Green Lane. But not only that; he also provided a moral and financial support to the newly established NGO.

Mr. Benton worked in Armenia during 1992-2004 as an agricultural consultant and director of the Armenian Technology Group (ATG) and later with the USDA Marketing Assistance Project as consultant in feed production. He has made a significant contribution in the overall development of the Armenian agriculture. He believed and still believes that the best way to achieve improvement of lands and development of animal breeding is to expand the areas under forages focusing especially on legumes: alfalfa, clover, seinofoin, vetch, etc.

Mr. Benton shares his knowledge and experience with our farmers involved in alfalfa growing.

**Land cultivation and seeding.** Land cultivation activities should be performed basically in the fall starting with 25-30 cm deep plowing. Application of phosphorus and potassium should be applied in the fall and incorporated into the soil after plowing and before cultivating to smooth the surface. In spring, a shallow tillage (5 cm) to break the soil crust, then rolling/packing of the soils is to be done. Planting depth of the alfalfa seeding in the rolled field should be 0,9-1,2cm. After planting roll the surface again to firm the soil around the seeds for good germination and root development. It is critical to use rollers for leveling the soil, since it contributes to settling and solidifying of soil, as a result of which the seeds will be at the same depth and will germinate simultaneously. Although this instrument is very important, it has not yet found a mass usage in Armenia, the main reason being the lack of sufficient amount of agricultural machinery. Remember, missing the rolling activity will damage intensely the future yield and hence the future income.

Because of the limited technical resources, seeding of alfalfa is very often performed with a cereal drill or, even more often, with hand. In both cases it is necessary to roll the field, since it prevents evaporation, decreases the degree of weediness and promotes uniform germination. In future, it will be critical to bring in appropriate machinery to encourage the mass growing of forage in the Republic of Armenia.

In the conditions of Armenia, seeding is performed in lowland areas, starting from March, and in the mountainous and pre-mountainous regions - starting from April, as the very first opportunity to work in the field

occurs.

**Fertilization.** To have a high and quality yield of alfalfa, it is necessary to check the fertility of the soil, though the farmer does not always succeed in this. During one year, 60 kg of phosphorus (on the account of impact substance). Availability of potassium in soil is also important, though Armenian lands are mainly rich in potassium. Microelements are also essential.



**Seed inoculation.** There is no need to fertilize with nitrogen; rhizobium bacteria will fill in the shortage of nitrogen in soil. Make sure to inoculate the seeds with rhizobium bacteria prior to seeding, since currently there are almost no nitrogen-fixing bacteria in most of the soils. Following the inoculation, seeding should be done rapidly to avoid the inoculated seeds getting sunburned. The inoculation of the seed prior to planting will allow the alfalfa to yield more than any other management practice. The investment of 300 drams/ha will help the alfalfa to manufacture up to 180,000 drams/ha worth of soil nitrogen during the 5 years of stand life. A well managed alfalfa stand can last 7 years or more.

**Harvesting.** To ensure good yields and quality of alfalfa, it is critical to determine the right time of cutting. Carbonates produced as a result of photosynthesis are accumulated in the roots and provide the energy for plant growth again after harvesting. Early cutting does not allow the plant to accumulate enough nutrients for further re-growth. The blooming period indicates the degree of the plant maturity. In Armenia, farmers normally cut alfalfa in the mass blooming or even in the final phase of blooming pretending to have more feed mass. However, amount of protein in the green mass of the plant in this phase is dramatically decreased. This is the reason that we recommend to perform the alfalfa cutting when only rare blooms appear in the field or when 10 % of the field is bloomed. Cutting at this stage will increase milk production and increase overall yield.

**Irrigation.** It is of critical importance to provide irrigation in the beginning stage of the plant's growth and development. Alfalfa grows well in the conditions of sufficient moisture in the soil. However, Armenia has brought in and introduced such varieties of alfalfa that are good enough for non-irrigated conditions as well and have provided good yields in Lori, Syunik and Shirak regions. Properly organized irrigation will promote the increase in yield, while wrong irrigation (excess water) may bring to more expenses for farmer than the expected income.

## A FORMER SCHOOL TEACHER IS NOW A MANAGER

*The milk producing Shaghat consumer cooperative in Syunik region was established in 2006, through technical support from the Green Lane and financial support from Accion contra el Hambre (Action against Hunger). The cooperative collects milk from dairy farmers in three communities of the region: Balak, Shaghat, and Mootsk and sells it to Ashtarak Kat company, thus providing stable income for the villagers.*

*We asked Rouzanna Mehrabyan, the newly elected chairperson of the cooperative, to tell about the activities of the cooperative. Until recently, Mrs. Mehrabyan was teaching Biology in the high school of Shaghat village. By the way, Rouzanna is one of the only two women chairpersons of 30 western-structured consumer cooperatives established in Armenia during the recent 7 years.*

**Q. Rouzanna, how did you feel about your being elected as the chairperson of the Shaghat cooperative last March?**

A. Honestly, if you don't take it as immodesty, I was expecting this result of the election; even prior to March, the main workload was actually my responsibility; I was providing the milk analyses, the sanitation of the milk collection center, the record keeping, etc.

**Q. Which means almost all the work. But why should all this work be done by just one person?**

A. Yes, actually the only activity that I did not do, was the milk transportation. The reason for this is that the cooperative is just "warming up", and the volumes of the milk collected and marketed started to increase only in May. We did not have enough incomes to hire more employees and we had to save our resources and time, so I had to complete work for a few people.

**Q. What organizations do assist you in your activities?**

A. The two major supporters are the Green Lane agricultural



Rouzanna telling about the cooperative's activities

assistance NGO, which developed the cooperative establishment and development project, the Accion contra el Hambre international foundation, and the Ashtarak Kat dairy company. These three entities kind of add value to each other's assistance, and this joint effort is responsible for the current stabilization of the cooperative's activity.

**Q. As a woman, how do you combine the complicated duties of a cooperative chairperson, a caring mother, wife, and the housewife.**

A. This is a difficult question, however I should confess that there are not really strong complaints at home so far... I think they realize my situation. Only my daughter who is a first-grade elementary school student, requires more attention.

**Q. Any additions for our readers to what has been already said?**

A. I would like your readers to overcome easily and enthusiastically all the hardships in their lives and never lose hope. You should always try to see the light in the horizon.

## COOPERATIVE CHANGES OUR LIFE AND MENTALITY

*The milk marketing cooperative in Tolors village, Syunik region, is now one of the well-known ones. It has a history of 6 years, however it is actively operating only since 2005.*

*Seyran Matevosyan, the accountant, has had a good contribution in the success and the good reputation of the cooperative. He not only performs his direct responsibilities as the accountant, but also helps two other cooperatives, Shaghat and Lor, to introduce efficient principles of accounting. Below is a brief interview with Mr. Matevosyan.*

**Q. Seyran, what would be some of the basic achievements of your cooperative so far?**

A. I would not be scared to name what we achieved during the last two years an economic miracle. The 53 member farmers have marketed 213 tonnes of milk during 2006; this is 3.3 times more than in 2004. For this amount of milk sold the farmers had a total income of 19.7 million drams (approximately 58,000 USD), which 3.5 times exceeds the income volume of 2006. We have planned to market 250 tonnes of milk this year. This will make 24 million AMD.

I should also mention that the members of the cooperative had only 160 cows in early 2005, while in spring 2007 the number of the heads reached to 300.

**Q. What did the success start with?**

A. Everything began with a visit in March 2005 paid by Raphael Sarukhanyan, the Green Lane consultant; he was invited by the Action against Hunger (ACH) to try to prevent further failure of the 3 dairy farmer groups established by this organization as well as strengthen the cooperative in Tolors. What do you think Mr. Sarukhanyan started with? It was the record keeping and financial management. He had a significant contribution, jointly with the ACH, in pasture management. Most importantly, he taught us how to work as a team and collaborate.

**Q. What has the cooperative given personally to you and to your family?**

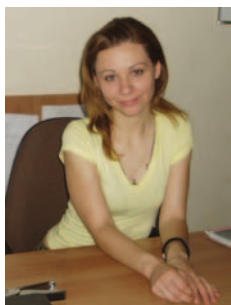
A. Over the recent few years, the social status of my family has significantly improved. To prove my words, it is enough stating that the uninterrupted sales of milk and being paid regularly once in every 15 days allowed me to increase the number of my cows from 1 to 5, with the perspective of reaching to 10 heads by 2009.

**Q. Is there any message you would like to pass to your fellow villagers?**

A. I would like them to look ahead to their success, and the success can be achieved with the cooperative rather than by working individually. I would like them also to know that the cooperative in Tolors is not all about the milk marketing; it is also about finding solutions to many other social, economic, and, if you will, physiological issues.



Seyran shares his experience with the members of LOR Cooperative



**By SUSANA DORDEVIC**  
**University of Ljubljana,**  
**Slovenia**

## This internship was a great experience...

This is the second year since Green Lane started to offer internship programs to European students. This year we had Suzana Dordevic, a student from Slovenia, undertaking her internship program at our organization. In a remarkably short time Susana became a full member of our team, all Susana's Armenian friends and colleagues highly appreciate her being very helpful, friendly, hard-working and assiduous. She is always ready and willing to learn and to share her knowledge with colleagues. It was great pleasure to all of us to have such a wonderful person and young professional at our organization. We hope that visit to Armenia was interesting and useful for Susana and helped her to take a step forward in her professional growth.

Dear Susana,

Thank you very much for taking active part in our projects and initiatives. We are always glad to meet young people like you so much enthusiastic in their work, study, and their willingness to help people to live better. We hope to meet you again in Armenia!

To complete my undergraduate studies in Business at the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana, I had to undertake an internship in a certain company. Since I am a type of person who likes to learn different things and explore new places, I decided to search for internship outside my country. When a job opportunity in Armenia was offered to me, I was a bit confused, since I hardly knew where it is. But I was enthusiastic to get to know better this country and its culture and that is why I decided to accept this internship.

Coming here and working at Green Lane has been a great experience for me. At my work place I have been surrounded with exceptional people who are highly motivated to bring a positive difference in the Armenian agricultural sector. Their main aim is to improve working conditions and living standard of the farmers here. They introduced me to agricultural situation in Armenia and showed me the principles of the agricultural business.

I had a chance to travel to different regions of Armenia, meet farmers and learn about their work and life. I was pleased to observe their positive spirit and high work energy which were combined with their strong willingness to raise low economic conditions that they have been faced with. The optimistic spirit of these farmers and the spirit of other people that were coming across with me in my working place, motivated me to learn more about the problems accrued in the Armenian agriculture.

I studied different researches conducted in the Armenian and foreign agricultural markets and read about different factors influencing the agricultural sector. According to the information I found in the survey, I concluded that there is an available market space for Armenian farmers to promote and sell their

products, as well for some of them to specialize in the organic products market niche. But before they start to expect a potential success on the market, they need to solve their main problems such as that of being too small for their own market production, lacking of updated agricultural knowledge, technical equipment and being in big need of economic consultancy.



To overcome these problems, they can turn to different organizations for help. Green Lane is one of these organizations, since it joins together agricultural and economic specialists who are willing to pass over their knowledge to farmers. As well Green Lane tries its best to connect smaller farmers of different regions to farmer groups and then points them to different production and market opportunities that they can benefit from. There are many other good things that Green Lane does for all agricultural sectors in Armenia, it is almost impossible to put into words all the qualities that this NGO possesses. I am very happy to have this opportunity to make an internship here and I take pride for being a part of this organization. It has been a big pleasure for me to collaborate with and to learn from such positive people. This internship was a great experience and I will never forget my staying here.

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP - 2007

In January, the Green Lane NGO became a member of the **World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)**.

In February, our organization took part in **BioFach-2007 International Organic Trade Fair** hosted by Nurnberg, Germany.

In March, Green Lane became a member of the **Global FFS Network**.

In May, cooperation with **ACDA/VOCA** enlarged. New project intended to start cultivation of non-traditional crops in Armenia has been launched as a part of the **Water-to-Market Activity** being carried out under the **Irrigated Agriculture Project** funded by **Millennium Challenge Account-Armenia (MCA-Armenia)**. A number of experimental plots have been established to test different varieties of non-traditional crops.

In June, Zaruhi Andreasyan, one of the Founder Members of Green Lane, partook in the **"Agriculture in transition:**

**analysis, design and management of sustainable agriculture" training course (International Agricultural Center, Wageningen, The Netherlands).**

In June, Dr. Tigran Chitchyan, Green Lane Consultant on Livestock Breeding and Animal Husbandry, attended the **Workshop on the Further Development of The Farm Animal Welfare (FAW) Web Network** held by the **World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)** in High Tatras, Slovakia.

In June, Green Lane and **Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding to express their willingness to cooperate in developing local, national and regional projects aimed at the environment protection and nature conservation.

In August, Ruzanna Mkhitarian, a member of Green Lane, will take part in a training course on **Forest biodiversity: forest genetic resources conservation and management** to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

## Advertisement

Farmer groups in different regions of Armenia have started cultivation of a number of non-traditional crops. All crops are produced without using chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

You can buy sweet corn, asparagus, broccoli, kohlrabi, red cabbage, lettuce, green bean, greens, etc.

If you are interested in buying fresh vegetables produced by our farmers don't hesitate to contact us by the phone: (+374 10) 577979 or visit the Green Lane's office:  
16/29 Heratsi St., Yerevan, Armenia



*The Green Lane team expresses deepest appreciation to all our friends, partners, sponsors, donors and volunteers, who have helped us in our work on behalf of Armenia's farmers. We share all our success with you.*

## We thank Green Lanes' friends

**Dr. Dora Rumsey, USA** (Equipment & volunteer work)

**John Bobbe, USA** (Equipment & seeds, volunteer work)

**Sylvia Ehrhardt, USA** (Volunteer work & financial support)

**Roger Benton, USA** (Financial support)

**Dr. Padruot Fried, Switzerland** (Financial support)

**James Krenek, USA** (Laptop & seeds, financial support)

**David Slusser, USA** (Volunteer work)

**Larry Yager, USA** (Volunteer work)

**Dale Redding, USA** (Laptop)

**Pamela Karg, USA** (Volunteer work)

**Suzana Dordevic, Slovenia** (Internship)

**Diego Armando Molano, Colombia** (Internship)

**Shavarsh Sarukhanyan, Armenia**, student of ASAU (Volunteer work)

**Gayaneh Khachatryan, Armenia**, high-school senior (Volunteer work)

**We express our gratitude to all donor organizations:**

**ACDI/VOCA, World Vision International, Accion Contra el Hambre (ACH), AVALON, OSI AF-Armenia**

## HELP US TO HELP OTHERS!

Green Lane's wish list

	ITEM	Quantity	Estimated Value
1	Projector	1	\$ 1400
2	Screen	1	\$ 200
3	Portable seeder	3x \$ 70	\$ 210
4	Portable cultivator	3x\$ 80	\$ 240
5	Used car for use of staff travel	1	\$6000 - \$8000

**Contact us to learn more about our activities and the terms of membership**

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**SOS AVETISYAN**

Editor-in-Chief