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CENTRAL ASIA

SUCCESS STORY

DIVERSIFICATION OF DAIRY PRODUCTS INCREASES PROFIT AND CREATES NEW JOBS

USAID helps dairy producers in Tajikistan to increase profit and create new jobs



USAID Agribusiness Competitiveness Activity in Tajikistan

Abdulkarim Muzaffarov is dairy producer in the Panj district of southern Tajikistan

“One of the main things I learned from the study tour regarding sanitation and hygiene standards was to always use shoe covers on the factory floor”.

- Abdulkarim Muzaffarov, dairy processing businessman in southwestern Tajikistan

Abdulkarim Muzaffarov began working in the family dairy processing business, also called Muzaffarov in 2014, when he was 26. Muzaffarov is a small enterprise based in the Panj district of southern Tajikistan, just north of the Afghanistan border, and was established by his father, a local entrepreneur, Muzaffarov Safarbek, in 2011.

At the time, Abdulkarim had just three years of experience, but was excited to bring changes and innovations to the business. One of his first observations was that products produced by the business were no different than those made by other dairies in the region. Another challenge he noted was the lack of regional and international certification which precluded it from taking advantage of export opportunities.

In October 2019, Abdulkarim participated in a dairy study tour to Georgia organized by the USAID-funded Agribusiness Competitiveness activity in Tajikistan. During the study tour, he was exposed to the business practices used by some of Georgia’s premiere dairies. As a result, he improved his knowledge of how to diversify his products and standardized production practices and picked up easy to apply methods for improving sanitation.

After he returned from Georgia, Abdulkarim shared lessons learned and new ideas with his colleagues. He strongly advocated for the company to obtain an international certification and to diversify the range of dairy products produced.

Three months after he returned from Georgia, Muzaffarov was not only certified for export but its product line also included two new types of cheeses and a new low-fat yogurt. Going forward, the company plans to produce three new kinds of dairy products including butter and additional varieties of cheese and yogurt.

Along with expanding its production line, the number of staff employed by Muzaffarov has increased from five to seven. So far, this year they have sold more than one metric ton of new products, which have earned the company an additional 8,218 Somoni (or \$874). The products were sold locally in Panj and Jaihun districts with plans to expand to other neighboring districts during 2020.

The USAID Agribusiness Competitiveness activity in Tajikistan is a five-year (2018 to 2023), \$18.6 million project that works to expand and improve market systems in Tajikistan in order to stimulate economic growth, increase employment, and improve livelihoods by enhancing the competitiveness of Tajikistan’s agribusinesses in dairy and horticulture.