

Pistachio and walnut development in Central Asia

Subregional workshop

TCP/KYR/3203

Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan
10-12 September 2012

A subregional workshop on pistachio and walnut development in Central Asia, organized by the FAO of the UN, was held in Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan, 10-12 September in the frame of TCP/KYR/3203 project. The workshop discussed the problems and prospects of pistachio and walnut development in Central Asia, productivity of plantations, the quality improvement of pistachio and walnut, and the development of local and foreign markets.

The workshop brought together the researchers and the leading experts from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, who represented the Ministries of Agriculture; State Agencies and Committees on Environment Protection and Forestry; State Agency on Construction and Regional Development; Forest and Land Users Associations; Jalal-Abad Regional Administration; as well as the NGO, international organizations and farmers.

The representatives of the Central Asian republics briefly informed about the national status of pistachio and walnut, the orchard management and propagation, presented data on production and statistics. Mr Damiano Avanzato, FAO International Consultant, presented information on advanced technologies, applied in the leading countries of the world, to cultivate pistachios and walnuts, and which are easily applicable in the Central Asian logistic and climate conditions. Mr Hafiz Mumindjanov, FAO expert, spoke about the FAO activities on plant production and protection in the Central Asian countries. The FAO National Consultants, Mr Sovetbek Kenjebayev and Mr Davlet Mamajanov informed about the achievements of TCP/KYR/3306 project on "Pistachio and walnut development in the Kyrgyz Republic".

The participants were demonstrated the budding and grafting techniques for pistachio and walnut, both in the field (in Arslanbob) and in the nursery (in Jalal-Abad) project sites. They also visited a plantation established with walnut early-bearing varieties and with apical bearing types.

All participants agreed that the forests of walnut are a rich and precious natural heritage of biodiversity to be preserved but exploited for scientific researches aimed to develop recommendations on conservation, restoration and increase in productivity of walnut forests. Participants have emphasized the importance of forests in land and water conservation, and their great economic potential for increasing income, employment and reducing poverty. However, the current forestry management revealed that this potential is not fully achieved, and the pistachio and walnut productivity is still low. The FAO project results have demonstrated the possibility to increase pistachio's productivity through its re-modeling and by creating modern walnut plantations, which will result in a better preservation of this oldest and unique walnut forests in the world. Participation of local people, farmers' communities and local authorities is essential for the proposed innovation in sustainable management and use of forest resources in Central Asia.

The follow-up recommendations of the workshop:

- to consider the possibility of replicating and extending the achieved results of the pistachio and walnut development project and the possibility of introducing the project achievements in other Central Asian countries;

- to establish a Nut-network for the Central Asian experts in order to share experience and develop joint projects and activities;
- to develop state programs on walnut production, considering the role of pistachio and walnuts in economic development and local poverty reduction;
- to develop a mechanism for government backing in the initial stage of pistachio and walnut plantations' establishment;
- to encourage exchanging of experience, upgrading skills of forestry workers and farmers through workshops in the field;
- to work together with research institutions in, among other things, protecting forests from pests and diseases, establishing protective stands, increasing productivity of walnut forests;
- to expand the pistachio and walnut plantations' area in order to lower the load on natural walnut plantations, and to enrich the knowledge in reconstruction of existing dense pistachio stands by upgrading (re-grafting of male pistachio trees into females) and crown formation;
- to increase the cultivation of graded walnut and pistachio planting materials, by introducing advanced techniques of micro-propagation;
- to strengthen ties between science and production in order to introduce advanced forest management techniques;
- to develop a methodology on managing pistachio and walnut plantations with the help of advanced technology;
- to establish a pilot post-harvesting processing unit for improving nut quality and increasing its international marketing value;
- to organize school educational programs on forest protection and walnut development in order to enhance younger generations' perception about environment;
- to organize a school campaign on health property of nuts in order to enhance the student's knowledge about the anti-cholesterol properties of nuts whose specific components (Omega 3 fats) help to prevent heart attacks;
- to intensify the dissemination of information about pistachio and walnut development through mass media, brochures, booklets and other publications.

