



©FAO/Buletin Dorin Goian

11 percent reduction in food-borne diseases in Moldova: 12 348 (2014) to 11 049 (2017) people affected by diarrhoeal disease

Project highlight:

Moldova and Eastern Europe aim to have safe and high-quality agriculture (TCP/MOL/3402-3601, TCP/RER/3503 [SO4], and TCP/MOL/3502 [SO2])

“Salmonella and campylobacter are the first cause of food-borne disease in Eastern Europe. They have been found traditionally in raw meat and eggs but they are expanding now to plant origin food” (Eleonora Dupouy, FAO Nutrition officer).

Outbreaks of highly dangerous pests and quarantine pests occurring not only in Moldova, but also in Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine and many countries in Eastern Europe were clear indicators that IPM had not been implemented by farmers, and that food and phytosanitary control systems needed to be strengthened.

“Safety and quality of food is at the centre of FAO’s mandate and is a long-standing area of work due to its implications for food security, nutrition, food losses and waste, along with the associated impact on the environment and the responsible use of resources” (Eleonora Dupouy, FAO Nutrition officer).

FAO supported the compliance of the alignment of Moldova’s food safety legislation with EU regulations and the modernization of its food control system, in the context of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. This timely intervention was implemented in parallel to similar projects for strengthening phytosanitary control services in Eastern Europe, and spread the use of IPM as well as conservation agriculture practices among farmers in Moldova. The the European Commission, USAID and the World Bank among others, complemented FAO’s support in related fields.

FAO’s work also served to increase the awareness of food business operators on food safety hazards and the new legal food safety requirements to develop capacities to apply good hygiene and manufacturing practices, food safety systems based on HACCP principles, and traceability systems. “Before, we used chemicals once every 10 to 12 days, as we learned from the old standards... we produce vegetables for human consumption and we have to understand that these vegetables go directly to the person’s table” (Cibotari Tudor, apple farmer).

Conventional agriculture has been shown to have consistent negative effects on the environment and leads to pest outbreaks. Pesticides are overused by farmers, and as a result, the maximum residual levels on agricultural products are exceeded, and pesticide resistance is developed by pest populations.

FAO brought the FAO-WHO assessment tool for food control systems to identify gaps. As a result, FAO supported the preparation of four normative drafts and four sets of guidelines on food and hygiene standards and practices, including on methodical indications for laboratory diagnosis of campylobacteriosis and mercury incident management and remediation options.

The project supported the design of a rapid alert system and the creation of multiagency control groups created in Moldova with a roadmap for dealing with emergencies. Moldova has now prepared its National Food Safety Emergency Response Plan.

National Codex structures (contact points and committees) were strengthened through 10 trainings. Capacity and knowledge of national food control authorities, including the recently operational National Food Safety Agency of Moldova, were strengthened by training 133 people through 10 workshops. Two study visits to Ireland and Finland (June and December 2015), showcased exemplary food control systems with single authorities for the entire food chain.

Avicola Axedum LLC, a slaughterhouse and processing company, and Pasarea Argintie LLC, an egg production company, were technically supported in the elaboration and implementation of HACCP-based food safety management systems for regulatory compliance. Dissemination of good hygiene practices for raw milk collection was conducted in cooperation with the Association of Milk Producers

At farmers’ level in the dissemination of IPM, FAO reached 3 497 farmers in Moldova. “After I started to use integrated pest management techniques, the harvest increased. The FFS was attended by farmers from our district and neighbouring districts. Some of them call me to ask how to do a particular work,” reports Maxim Usatii, farmer of tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers from Glodeni in Moldova.

FAO provided Maxim with a sprinkler, a shadow mesh, a mosquito net and pheromone and light traps to protect the plants against insects. Farmers benefited from 157 field days and 37 zonal-regional and local field days implemented through 32 FFS. The awareness-raising campaign continued in the national press and during the specialized exhibitions Farmer 2016, Moldagrotech 2016 and Moldagrotech 2017.

Today, FAO's TCP seed projects have catalysed technical support from the Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority of Romania to apply risk analysis by food control competent authorities and food business operations. The FAO-Turkish Partnership Programme supported the preparation of a guide to help convey food safety requirements and good practices to small-scale producers of milk and to food business operations.

Project titles

Support to Strengthening the Food Safety System in Moldova

Strengthening capacities of the national phytosanitary control services in four Eastern European countries

Support for adaptation and implementation of Integrated Pest Management

Programme countries

Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine

Key results in Moldova

4 four normative acts on food safety and hygiene regulations and standards drafted and awaiting approval.

8 ToT sessions implemented for 32 FFS facilitators.

85 phytosanitary inspectors trained.

648 hectares used for 6 demonstration plots with CA and IPM for maize, tomato, potato and apple trees.

3 497 farmers benefited from FFS on IPM.

Incidence of food-borne diseases decreased. In 2017, 11 049 people were affected by diarrhoeal disease, compared to 12 348 in 2014.

Key results in Eastern Europe

Phytosanitary personnel and inspectors enhanced their capacity in implementing international standards, pest risk analysis and pest surveillance procedures.

Plant quarantine staff and phytosanitary inspectors strengthened their capacity to detect quarantine pests associated with consignments.

Laboratory equipment, surveillance tools and machinery were procured for training purposes and distributed among the countries.

Catalytic effects

A technical manual on the implementation of pest surveillance procedures for phytosanitary personnel and inspectors was prepared and distributed to all project countries. Armenia and Moldova took actions for Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation.

4.2 Agriculture and food systems

FAO's TCP projects support farmers, small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises (SMEs) and agribusiness companies to exploit the synergies and added value of working together along the food value chain.

Consumer demand is increasing for safe food with low environmental impact. This trend offers new opportunities for organic agriculture. At the same time, public systems of food supply and marketing have become more demanding, and smallholder farmers often lack the ability to capitalize on these opportunities because of both institutional (e.g. non-inclusive frameworks) and market factors (e.g. high costs of certification, low productivity related to losses along the supply chain and a lack of market information).

Extreme cases of non-inclusive agricultural and food systems are characterized by a lack of food self-sufficiency, lack of competition in specific market segments and trade imbalances.

This assistance helps producers gain access to international markets and develop their businesses through export sales and investment.

Family farming increases its revenues and local economies increase their productivity, expand their exporter base to include more SMEs, diversify trade flows and create jobs.

Consumers see their food security and nutrition enhanced thanks to increased production of food with greater quality standards.

TCP action identified and leveraged existing training programmes for national agribusiness bodies, such as those developed by the Centre for International Private Enterprises and the Institute for Organizational Management, and adapted to the local context.

FAO harnessed its convening power to bring different parts of the government to work together. At the farmer level, projects used FFS as a tool to bring together different actors along the value chain and generated opportunities to link producers to large players in food value chains.

Following the implementation of TCP projects:

Myanmar continues to test the technologies introduced, such as low-cost solar dryers.

Smallholder farmers in participatory guarantee system groups have improved their selling conditions, income and livelihoods. The volume of participatory guarantee system production in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic is estimated to be more than 1 000 tonnes per year, mainly of vegetables and fruit, representing a gross value of more than USD 900 000 per year.

In El Salvador, an inclusive model for the implementation of the strategic reserve of basic grains was developed.

In 2018, FAO operationally closed **23 projects** for *agricultural and food systems* totalling **USD 5 126 035** and directly benefiting **23 countries**:

- Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
- Brazil
- Cambodia
- Chile
- Colombia
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Eritrea
- Eswatini
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic
- Mexico
- Myanmar
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Uganda
- Vanuatu
- Venezuela (the Bolivarian Republic of)

TCP projects in this SO4 field provided:



Institutional strengthening

Strategies for more inclusive public systems of food supply and marketing as well as linking rural family agriculture to food procurement systems and school feeding programmes (22 policies, programmes, strategies, action plans, legislation);

Training for national agribusiness departments and investment promotion agencies (670 technical government staff trained);

Creation of regional agribusiness platforms;

Development of agribusiness public-private partnership frameworks to promote private sector investment and develop agribusiness support services (5 full project proposals; and mobilization of USD 28 090 000);

Development of participatory guarantee systems (PGS).



Industry and market strengthening

Training on agribusiness management, food processing and harvest and post-harvest loss reduction for SMEs (37 technical documents);

Market surveys and information as well as marketing campaigns (40 outreach products);

Technical support to improve input, seed and feed supply and to link agriculture to growing sectors (10 485 non-government staff trained; 323 training sessions).

Enhanced capacity of extension officers and training for smallholders on good agricultural practices will also support sustainable agricultural production beyond the life of the project.

Regional agribusiness partners in Africa share information on agribusiness related issues.