

IMPROVEMENTS TO DAIRY IN RESNIK BENEFITS ENTIRE VILLAGE



Jermenic Dairy has four long-term employees and buys its raw products from several local milk producers. By increasing its capacity, the dairy expects to employ seven more people



"Both my company's income and my family's has dramatically increased. However I do not want anything too big – just a normal life"

With the support of the American People, CHF has awarded Jermenic Dairy \$12,000 through the Community Revitalization through Democratic Action program, implemented in Southern Serbia by with USAID funding. Situated in Resnik near Sokobanja, the purchase of new machinery will significantly improve its dairy production. A new vacuum machine will enhance the shelf life of the dairy's products. The new equipment has also allowed the dairy to commence production of four new types of half-hard cheese, including "Sokobanja cheese role" which contains smoked ham, mushrooms, and nuts.

Gordana Stevanovic, the owner of the dairy, has been producing cheese for the last several years, but with much smaller production levels. Her son began school this year and her husband works in a local TV station. Their family income has been, until now, only enough to cover their most basic needs. "A few months ago I heard that USAID and CHF had begun operating in our village and were willing to support business development. I acted immediately: I sold my car, took out a loan and used this money to renovate an old building I had inherited from my father" says Gordana.

Gordana's cheese has received excellent remarks in East Serbian markets and she now plans to further develop her business by entering new markets across Serbia.

"My business is important to me and my family, but also to the entire village. My dairy pays milk producers very good prices for their milk. This helps improve the development of cattle raising and increasing the income of families that we cooperate with".

There are now plans to start breeding goats which will support the extended demand for goat hard cheese. Packing of whey is also being planned as it is an extremely healthy product with rumored healing capacities. The four employees of the dairy employed on a permanent basis will also soon be joined by several additional employees to cope with the expansion.

Sokobanja is an idyllic location and the mountains in which Jermenic Dairy's cows graze are famous for their medicinal properties. Gordana says that there is well known saying that in Sokobanja cows do not graze on grass but on tea. It is for this reason that the hard cheese of this region is so famous and widely appreciated.

"USAID and CHF have helped me a lot. I found new strength to work and develop my business. Everything they have promised they have delivered and they also acted as the guarantor for the bank's loan. If they hadn't have come we would've been struggling for years. Their aid means that my family and my company will receive a lot more money in the future securing us a better life", says Gordana Stevanovic.