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in Transition Economies

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P R E S S R E L E A S E 09/2016

Experts highlight the need for more targeted agricultural export promotion practices

Promoting and diversifying agricultural exports is one of the key priorities for the agricultural sector in the Europe and Central Asia region. As the countries of the region are experimenting with developing institutions and implementing programs to address the challenges associated with diversifying exports, taking stock of the results and sharing of experiences becomes vital.

Halle (Saale), Germany, 26 May 2016 – Experts from Latin America, Europe and Central Asia met on May 24 and 25 in the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) in Halle, Germany, to exchange experience and lessons learned from the implementation of various export promotion programs. Country case studies on policies and programs in Brazil, Chile, Estonia and Poland, among others, developed with support by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), served as the basis for the consultations.

During the two day Expert Round Table “Best practices in export promotion: Experiences in Latin America, Europe and Central Asia”, organized jointly by FAO and IAMO, the participants discussed the existing evidence and best practices that would contribute to the development of export promotion strategies and plans in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The experts highlighted that exporting agricultural and food products to new destinations requires a thorough analysis of the requirements and consumer preferences in export markets and strengthening testing and certification procedures to ensure the quality of the products. Moreover, an active stance on positioning national products abroad, including through trade fairs, and developing a positive country image and brands were deemed essential. Many countries have specialized agencies for export promotion that have been critical in supporting private sector in exporting activities. Examples in Latin America include ApexBrasil and ProChile. The key role of trade missions, with presence of agriculture attaches and representatives, in establishing commercial links and resolving trade issues was also highlighted.

In Poland, according to Dariusz Gozsczyński, Deputy Director in the Department of Agricultural Markets at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, campaigns focused on creating a positive image, establishing quality systems and promotional activities have been successful in generating interest in traditional Polish products and creating new niches. Similar approach focused on quality was shared by Estonia.

In the CIS region, export promotion policies that would benefit agriculture and food industry are still taking shape. Dmitry Bulatov, President of the National Union of Food Exporters in Russia, mentioned that an Export Promotion Act and an accompanying Action Plan have been prepared by the government. Similarly, in Kyrgyzstan, an Export Development Plan 2015-2017 has been adopted. A number of countries, including Kyrgyzstan and Moldova, have undertaken a prioritization exercise to identify products and markets where promotional efforts should be focused. Among the challenges to developing agricultural exports, the participants mentioned lack of specialized expertise in the food producing sectors and the need to strengthen sanitary and phytosanitary systems and certification that would help obtain market access. Greater attention to trade facilitation, in particular simplification of customs procedures and border crossing, was also mentioned as a priority area for action.



Participants of the Expert Round Table. Photo: Antje Elsner © IAMO

All in all 32 participants from 18 nations presented their insights at the Expert Round Table, among them experts from FAO Headquarters and Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, IAMO, Ministries of Agriculture, Ministries of Economic Development and Trade, associations of exporters and academia from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Chile, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan Moldova, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan and Ukraine. “The Expert Round Table was very fruitful and deepened the expert’s knowledge on export promotion in Latin America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. To bring all these people together and have them discuss the topic from various perspectives will offer new paths of thinking and knowledge exchange in the future”, concluded IAMO researcher Ivan Djuric, one of the main organizers, after the event.

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Photo for media reports

Participants of the Expert Round Table “Best practices in export promotion: Experiences in Latin America, Europe and Central Asia”. Photo: Antje Elsner. © IAMO

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About IAMO

The Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) analyzes economic, social and political processes of change in the agricultural and food sector, and in rural areas. The geographic focus covers the enlarging EU, transition regions of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, as well as Central and Eastern Asia. IAMO works to enhance the understanding of institutional, structural and technological changes. Moreover, IAMO studies the resulting impacts on the agricultural and food sector as well as the living conditions of rural populations. The outcomes of our work are used to derive and analyze strategies and options for enterprises, agricultural markets and politics. Since its founding in 1994, IAMO has been part of the Leibniz Association, a German community of independent research institutes.

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