

SUCCESS STORY: *Increasing Rural Employment*

ARDI PROGRAM (Advanced Rural Development Initiative)

COMMUNITY – YELPIN, VAYOTS DZOR
OWNER – AVAG NAZARYAN
BUSINESS – CHEESE MAKING
PROJECT – SMALL GRANT PROJECT
YEAR – 2015



ARDI is a five-year program funded by USAID. Launched in September 2013, the program aims to increase rural employment by tackling constraints to rural economic development in select rural communities of Syunik, Vayots Dzor and Lori provinces of Armenia.

The program supports interventions **in three main rural economic sectors and value chains: dairy processing, fruit processing and rural tourism.**

Avag Nazaryan is a young entrepreneur with good experience in animal husbandry. His family owns a small farm consisting of 40 milking cows in Yelpin community. Avag along with his extended family started a small business of cheese production couple of years before. The family has all the necessary know-how and experience in cheese processing. They were planning to take the business to next level and develop it. For that purpose financial investments were necessary.

Last year Avag completed Entrepreneurship training organized by the ARDI program, and successfully joined the Seed Grant project, received 700,000 AMD grant for his business financial investments. He co-financed and purchased a vacuum packing machine. This machine increases the prolonged shelf life of the produce, hygiene and marketability. Avag's knowledge gained from the training, ARDI program's (15%) and his own (85%) financial contributions were good points to take his business to the next level.

Delicious, ecologically clean cheese made its way to Yeghegnadzor grocery stores, restaurants and even far, reached to Yerevan city big supermarkets: "Yerevan City" and "Titan". Last year "Lori" and "Chanakh" type cheese were made. In just six months their progress was significant and sales were increased. Indeed, since joining the program, they sold 6 tons of cheese worth of total 10,3 mln AMD. The owners plan to start new lines—Brinza and "Yeghegnadzor" type cheeses, plain yogurt and tan (yogurt drink.)

With the help of ARDI program Avag's family members participated in the annual Areni Festival 2015 and presented their cheese assortments. Their produce was consumed even before the end of event and was marked as highly demanded. In addition they made new connections for more markets to sell their product.

"My goal is not only to enhance my family business but also to increase employment in the region. With new jobs we can help our families to stay in homeland and have income," said Avag.



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