

PRESS RELEASE

Yerevan, 25th May 2009

FAO implemented project „Support for Pesticide Quality Control and Residue Monitoring in Armenia“ has started

Based on initial discussions with the Greek government and on the findings of a mission fielded by the Plant Protection Service of FAO in November 2007 reviewing the situation regarding pesticide control measures, both pesticide quality control as a ‘beginning of pipeline’ measure, and pesticide residue monitoring as confirmation of adherence to Good Agricultural Practice in Armenia, the *project GCP/ARM/003/GRE, “Support for pesticide quality control and residue monitoring in Armenia”* was developed and agreed with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in Yerevan. The project will contribute to protecting public health and ensuring the safety and quality of food for consumers.

The medium-term objective of the project is to enable the country to control the quality of pesticide products on the market in line with international standards and to carry out pesticide residue surveillance monitoring programmes in order to improve the quality of agricultural products.

The project was officially approved by the Greek Government in February 2009 with a budget of US\$ 2.000.000 and will be implemented by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture over a period of three years.

The immediate objectives are as follows:

- upgrade the national pesticide formulation control laboratory (so-called "Toxicology Laboratory") to analyse pesticide products in accordance with international specifications and standards;
- support the Veterinary and Food Laboratory to strengthen the national institutional capacities to undertake pesticide residue surveillance monitoring programmes for food and feed;
- introduce internationally recognized laboratory management systems for both laboratories leading to accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025; and
- increase awareness on pesticide-related problems and improve Good Agricultural Practices.

Within the course of the project, a number of training measures, supported by experts from various fields, such as for instance laboratory design, pesticide quality control or residue monitoring will be implemented. The two laboratories involved will receive modern analytical equipment and be brought in line with international standards. Apart from training-on-the-job there will be workshops comprising all stakeholders as well as a study tour to experience implementation of pesticide control measures in other countries. An important part of the project activities will also be the feedback and translation of results into recommendations for the extensions services of the country.

Presently, an inception mission of the project is led by Ms Yong Zhen Yang, Agricultural Officer in Pesticide Management from FAO Headquarters in Rome, Mr Nedzad Ajanovic, Field Programme Officer of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, and Mr Klaus Ziller, Technical Advisor. The implementation workplan is being discussed with Armenian government officials.