



Modern Irrigation System in the Village of Orja

One of the main issues that hinders agricultural development in the Akhalkalaki Municipality is the lack of proper irrigation. In general, the Samtskhe-Javakheti irrigation system covers only 15% of the total cropland and this makes for an enormous challenge for the local farmers.

Young people from the village of Orja came together to solve this issue and founded a cooperative, called Melioration, which is composed of three women and six men. In order to cover the costs associated with the establishing of a modern irrigation system, the group addressed the Akhalkalaki Local Action Group (LAG). The LAG gave them recommendations and instructed them on how to prepare a project proposal in order to apply for the grant competition announced by the European Union. The project won and the cooperative started implementation procedures.

Nair Harutunyan, a Melioration member, said that the cooperative used the grant money to procure mobile pumps and portable pipes. It cultivates 45 hectares of cropland. Formerly, they harvested ten tons of potatoes per hectare but nowadays this amount has doubled and they get 20-25 tons of potatoes thanks to the irrigation system.



Employees: 10 locals
Total udget of the project: GEL 64,448.00
EUhare: GEL 52,300.00
Co-financing: GEL 12,148.00



The cooperative installed sprinkler irrigation which distributes water over the surface of the soil with a raindrop-like pressure. This method of irrigation is a modern and efficient way in which the sprinkler sprays water into the air which gives the effect of rain while other methods distribute water directly to the soil.

According to the representatives of the cooperative, this proper irrigation system has had a positive impact on the out-migration rate from the community. Previously, people went to Russia to find a job but now young people are able to find a seasonal workplace locally and have their own income. The cooperative takes care of its neighboring croplands as well and they water them once their own plots are irrigated.





“Our system is portable and this gives us the opportunity to assist our neighbors as well. It takes nearly six hours to water one hectare but the result is amazing. We did not expect that productivity would rise by 100-150%. On behalf of the cooperative, I would like to express our gratitude towards the European Union, GIPA and the LAG for supporting us in implementing this essential project in our region,” said Nair Harutunyan.

The initiative has been financed by the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) through the project of promoting new approaches in Rural Development in Akhalkhalaki.

Project is being implemented by the Department of Rural Development and Vocational Education (DRDVE) of the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA). Project Partners are Mercy Corps, Elva - Community Engagement and West Cork Development Partnership.

The European Union supports agriculture and rural development of Georgia through the programme of ENPARD, which has been implemented in Georgia since 2013. The total budget is 179.5 mio EUR. The main goal of the ENPARD is to reduce the rural poverty. The main priority of the first phase of the program was to support agricultural development, whereas the main aim of the second and third phases is to promote economic opportunities and capacity building of people living in the rural areas. For the additional information, please follow the link: www.enpard.ge