



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

KOSOVO

SUCCESS STORY

Better Feed Brings Milk and Income

Efficient, healthy feed rations improve production and sales



Photo: Arben Musliu, Chemonics International

As morning milking starts, Osman Mazreku makes sure the pumps move the milk to the tank outside the barn.

In six weeks the Mazrekus saw their monthly income double — an increase of some \$8,500.

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Osman Mazreku and his family had invested over \$600,000 in their new dairy. Now Osman wished he had their money back: his cows were underweight and, producing only 10.5 liters of milk a day, they were losing money.

Osman, his brother Azem and his father Sadri had built the dairy in Malisheve/Malisevo (the town's Albanian/Serbian names) in November 2004. They had no experience in milk production or managing a dairy farm. By their own admission, they were not cattle people. But they knew that Kosovo imported a large percentage of its milk, that agriculture was a key to the Kosovo economy and that a business opportunity existed in dairy farming. They invested in 100 Simmental cows. Yet after four months, milk production was well below the breed average of 25–30 liters a day.

When USAID first visited the farm in March 2005, Mazreku was marketing 1,050 liters of milk a day — an extremely poor average that indicated the cows were literally being starved to death. The Mazrekus admitted they didn't know how to feed the animals properly and were convinced that if milk production failed to increase, the dairy would go bankrupt.

A USAID dairy nutritionist developed the most cost-effective rations to benefit the Mazrekus and other Kosovo dairies. Better feed quickly improves milk production and the cows' health. In addition, milk fat percentage and milk quality improve — two components for which processors pay a premium. Working with the Kosovo Association of Milk Producers, USAID showed farmers that the best ration is the one that makes the dairy producer the most money, not necessarily the cheapest one.

Within a week of improving the rations on the Mazreku farm, daily milk production increased to 15 liters per cow; within six weeks it hit 20 liters. It was still below the breed potential, but given the cows' previous health, 20 liters was a wonderful improvement. The cows' weight also improved, and the Mazrekus increased their income by nearly \$8,500 a month.

The Mazrekus have resurrected plans to double their herd size and are expanding their barns. They are also changing the herd mix to include more Holsteins, confident that they know proper feeding practices. Now, Kosovo's large milk processors are purchasing their milk from the Kosovo producer.