

Albania: Farmers Increase Dairy Production

Shkelqim Hallulli's farm is located in Spitalle in the Durrës district of western Albania. Hallulli bought 10 pregnant Holstein heifers from Germany in December 2004 through the Livestock Entrepreneurs Association of Albania (LEAA). He purchased them through a loan of 2 million leke (or the equivalent of \$19,415.21) provided by the FFP warranty fund. All of the cows are now in lactation and he gets 250 liters of milk from them with an average production of 25 liters per cow per day.

LEAA specialists have closely supported Hallulli in farm management, providing recommendations on barn construction, animal feeding, animal health, market information, etc. LEAA believes that Hallulli's good attitude and his willingness to apply recommendations are the key factors for his success. Hallulli accurately applies the feeding ratio provided by the LEAA specialist and has his cows checked periodically by the local and LEAA veterinarians. He has been in negotiations with the area artificial insemination technician to inseminate his cows with imported Holstein semen from World Wide Sires. Hallulli has kept all the calves on the farm and, unlike many farmers, he is applying a fattening program to sell the male calves at an older age for a better price.

In addition to the cows feeding ratio during lactation and dry period and the preparation of the fattening program for calves, LEAA specialists have prepared record books to be used in this farm on: (1) milk and meat production, (2) insemination applied, and (3) offspring (male and female) record.

Due to the use of a recommended feeding ratio, Hallulli improved the general health condition of his cows, increased milk production, and lowered costs. Initially, Hallulli used his own mix of 3 kg of corn, 2 kg of wheat bran, and 2 kg of soy per cow, combined with 10 kg of alfalfa grass and 5 kg of meadow grass. Based on this ratio, Hallulli used 422 leke (\$4.17) per cow per day for feeding, getting an average of 20 liters of milk per cow per day, spending 21.1 leke (\$0.21) for fodder per liter of milk.

LEAA specialists introduced Hallulli to another feeding ratio obtained from the Aiba Company, which included 7 kg of concentrate, 10 kg of alfalfa grass, and 5 kg of meadow grass. As a result of applying this ratio, average milk production was increased from 20 to 25 liters per cow per day, spending 17.5 leke (\$0.17) on fodder per liter of milk.

Considering the progress so far, LEAA believes that Hallulli will continue to be known as a progressive farmer and will expand his farm in the future.

Bari Pepa is a farmer in Sejmenas, Lushnje district, and a member of LEAA since 2001. He is currently managing 30 Holstein cows imported from Germany through the association. All of the cows were purchased with his own capital. Initially, Pepa bought 17 cows in May 2004 and then he bought 5 more cows in December 2004 and another 8 cows in July 2005.

Production on his farm varies from 25 to 35 liters of milk per cow per day. A key factor for such results is related to feeding. Pepa applies all recommendations provided by the LEAA specialists in terms of feeding ratio concentrate mix and use of supplements, health care, reproduction, and hygiene. Working with LEAA specialists, he planned the cropping structure on his farm, considering the number of cows and their feeding needs, based on corn for silage, alfalfa, and lolium (ryegrass). LEAA helped him to calculate the surface for each crop and assisted during corn harvesting time and preparation of silage. This way Pepa managed to feed cows the proper amount (20 kg/herd) of good quality corn silage all year round. He used the corn silage in combination with alfalfa hay, lolium, wheat straw, and forage beet.

He also purchases concentrated animal feed from local companies and uses 6-7 kg/day as part of the feed. Pepa is one of the leading farmers to use vitamins as supplements and also mineral blocks in the feeding ratio. The use of Vita late and Aminovit has increased milk production on his farm. Because of Pepa's success, LEAA has used his farm as a demonstration farm to teach other farmers and transfer technology and good management practices to them.

