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Success Story

Kosovo Poultry Producer Enhances His Business

Tom Gjini operates a 10-ha arable and poultry farm near Gjakova in southwestern Kosovo. In addition to producing fresh eggs and chicken feed for the market, he owns an incubator in which he hatches 19,000 eggs per week.

“I have been working with poultry since I was 17 years old,” Gjini says. “I started with 3,600 chickens and despite total destruction of all livestock during the 1999 conflict, I have regenerated my business to its present size of 4,000 layers and capacity for 10,000 pullets, with international assistance channeled through the IFDC-supported Kosovo Poultry Farmers and Feed Millers Association (SHPUK).”

Tom Gjini was one of the first farmers to introduce commercial poultry farming to this region and the first post-war private hatchery operator. His incubator has enabled him to hatch large numbers of chickens for the poultry industry, which is proving a profitable activity. Profits have ranged from 20% to 30% in the three post-war years.

Gjini has a family of eleven, six of whom work on the farm alongside seasonal workers. The farm is operated intensively; wheat, maize and vegetables are all produced on his 10 ha of arable land. “Kosovar farmers face many problems,” Gjini says. “As producers and members of SHPUK, we are working with the UN administration and local authorities through the IFDC-assisted advocacy association, the Alliance of Kosovo Agribusinesses (AKA), to find solutions to the problems of restrictions on imports of poultry equipment and high customs duties on agricultural inputs that result in unfair competition in the regional market and inflated prices for inputs that renders our produce noncompetitive.”

IFDC is also assisting the poultry production and feed milling subsector through SHPUK with the extension of new techniques, marketing methods, and visits to overseas producers and organizations. In addition, IFDC is assisting the entrepreneurs in obtaining credit for new developments and identifying the sources of raw materials at competitive prices. With IFDC’s assistance, Gjini is applying for a \$100,000 loan from EU credit providers to purchase equipment and to prepare to breed chickens for the first parent stock chicken farm in Kosovo. IFDC is helping him develop the business plan required for a loan and is providing the technical data needed to plan his expansion. Gjini was also assisted by IFDC in his successful application for a \$16,000 loan to purchase soybean meal from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food for Progress program for processing in his feed mill.

Since 1999 Gjini has averaged an 18% annual return on investment. He borrowed money for the purchase of the incubator and repaid the loan ahead of schedule. He also purchased a 5-year-old German tractor and other farm equipment and has already repaid the associated loan. To assist the poultry industry, he plans to double the capacity of his incubator and develop the parent-stock breeding farm. His expanded operation will provide 10 new jobs and reduce the costs of day-old chicks to Kosovar farmers by 20%-25% by ending their dependence on expensive imports.

Gjini says that he plans to increase his production of fertilized eggs by at least 4,500 to complete the production cycle on his farm. “After all,” he says, “it’s all about chickens and eggs!”

