



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Azerbaijan

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Holland Pavilion at the 12th Azerbaijan International Agriculture Exhibition

The Embassy of the Netherlands in Azerbaijan participated in the Caspian Agro fair taking place from 16-18 May in the Baku Expo Center. The Embassy was present with a Holland Pavilion hosting seven Dutch companies: Rijk Zwaan, Ronar BV, Royal Brinkman, Geerlofs, Métier BV, APH Group, Delphy and the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture. Moreover, the pavilion hosted one startup company from Azerbaijan that was founded by an alumni from the Wageningen University.

The fair was visited by a trade delegation from the province of Limburg led by Rene van der Linden and representatives from the province. The Ambassador Onno Kervers and Rene van der Linden have met with the president and discussed the possibilities of expanding cooperation between the two countries in the following sectors: agricultural, water and renewable energy. In the meeting the president asked to share the Dutch vision on how to develop the agricultural sector of Azerbaijan.



As part of the program we have prepared for a seminar on the topic “Perspectives on Contributions of the Netherlands to the Agricultural Sector in Azerbaijan,” which would take place during the first day of the exhibition. Unfortunately, due a high level visit by the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, to the fair and to our Holland Pavilion we were forced to cancel the seminar.

On the other side this provided

the companies represented on the pavilion the delegation with the opportunity to welcome the president to our Holland Pavilion and tell him about the results of the Master Plan, which is a joint effort of Wageningen University & Research, Delphy, ADA University and the Azerbaijan-Netherlands Business Hub.

The fair lasted three days and the participating companies were able to hold some productive meetings and meet with useful contacts. Apart from the companies on the pavilion there were more Dutch companies exhibiting separately and just visiting the fair. The companies were emphasizing the positive developments in agricultural sector of Azerbaijan and seeing more opportunities on the market compare to the last several years.

Center for Agrarian Research to be established under Azerbaijan's Agriculture Ministry

On May 22 Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev signed a decree on establishment of a Center for Agrarian Research under the Azerbaijani Agriculture Ministry.

Under the decree, the Scientific Research Institute of Agricultural Economics under the Ministry of Agriculture will be reorganized into the Center for Agrarian Research with the status of a legal entity under public law in order to strengthen the activities of scientific research institutes in the agrarian sector, to conduct analysis, assessment and forecasting, to implement various services in the agro-industrial complex, including government orders, to create a database on the development of agriculture, to prepare of programs and projects, and to provide a strategic planning and innovative development of the field.

<http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan-economy/agrarian-industry/agrarian-research-center-to-be-established-under-azerbaijan-s-agriculture-ministry.html>

Agricultural Insurance Fund to appear in Azerbaijan

Agricultural Insurance Fund will be established in Azerbaijan, Executive Director of Azerbaijan's Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FIMSA) Ibrahim Alishev said at presentation of the bill "On Agricultural Insurance" in Baku on May 23.

Turkish model "TARSİM" for agricultural insurance was also presented at the event. The cooperation between the public and private sectors will arouse great interest among insurance companies and producers in this sphere.

Alishev stressed that FIMSA and the created working group have reviewed international experience in agricultural insurance mechanisms in the US, Spain, Israel, Canada and Turkey, as well as "TARSİM" model, which is an agricultural insurance mechanism in Turkey. He added that the bill will be the additional support to the development of the non-oil sector.

"The adoption of this bill will lead to an increase in business activity in this sphere," Mirza Aliyev, head of the State Service on Management of Agricultural Projects and Credits under the country's Ministry of Agriculture, said.

The guests and experts from Turkey, representatives of a number of state agencies, local and international organizations, with whom FIMSA cooperates, representatives of banking and

insurance companies, active members of the Azerbaijani Farmers Association delivered speeches at the presentation.

<https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2907375.html>

In 2018, 15 agricultural parks will start operating in Azerbaijan.

The remarks were made during the meeting of the country's Ministry of Economy stated May 22 during an extended meeting.

"Currently, work is underway to create agricultural parks, which are of particular importance in strengthening food security. At the moment, work is underway to create 45 agricultural parks in 30 regions of the country. The first stage of work have been completed in three of these agricultural parks, and in general, 15 agricultural parks will be commissioned in 2018," the ministry said.

During the meeting, instructions were given to the relevant structures of the ministry to continue studying the possibilities of creating large farms and agricultural parks in other areas.

It was noted that over the past period of 2018, the National Fund for Entrepreneurship Support under the Ministry of Economy issued 397 loans to entrepreneurs by using repaid loans, the total cost of projects of which is 371 million manats, as well as soft loans in the amount of 64.4 million manats. Around 69 percent of these loans fell on the agricultural sector and 31 percent accounted for industry and other sectors. As much as 92 percent of the granted loans fell on the regions. In 2018, at least 170 million manats worth preferential loans will be issued to entrepreneurs by using the returned funds. In general, to date, state concessional loans in the amount of 2.2 billion manats have been issued to more than 35,000 entrepreneurs. One billion manats of these loans fall to the share of the state budget, and the other part to the share of returned loans.

<https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/business/2906926.html>

Russia eyes to lift restrictions from trade with Azerbaijan: minister

Russia is working to lift restrictions from trade with Azerbaijan, Minister for Economic Development of Russia Maxim Oreshkin told the "Russia for All" website on the sidelines of the 22nd St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF).

"A concrete action plan on five directions has been proposed, and we are working as part of this plan to ensure that trade and economic cooperation between our countries grows and strengthens," he said. "The flow of mutual investments between our countries doesn't stop. We

have strong ties not only at the economic, but also at the human, cultural level. Many Azerbaijanis live in Russia and many Russians live in Azerbaijan. This connects our countries and allows to develop relations in all spheres of life, including in the economic sphere." Oreshkin stressed that Russia and Azerbaijan can achieve great progress in economic relations.

Azerbaijan's trade turnover with Russia amounted to \$2.14 billion in 2017, about \$1.5 billion of which accounted for the import of Russian products, according to Azerbaijan's State Customs Committee. The value of trade between the two countries grew 4.3 percent compared to the previous year.

<https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2908592.html>

Azerbaijan to implement European system of forecasting in agriculture

Azerbaijan will implement European system of forecasting in agriculture. A seminar on support for agricultural policy development through modelling was held in Baku. It was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

"We plan to hold several more similar seminars in June. Each of them will present a specific European model of forecasting. Then we will choose the model most suitable for Azerbaijan and start to apply it. After that, the prediction processes in agriculture of the country will be based on the European system, and this system will contribute to the long-term development of agriculture in Azerbaijan," said the Head of the Ministry of Agriculture Firdovsi Fikretzade.

"Agriculture in Azerbaijan is developing, methods of analysis are becoming more complex. Traditional, simple methods are no longer suitable here. Therefore, there is a need for more accurate forecasting and analysis," he added.

<https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2910800.html>

IFC seeks to help Azerbaijan boost competitiveness of agribusiness sector

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) plans to help the government of Azerbaijan boost the competitiveness of the agribusiness sector, Jan van Bilsen, IFC Regional Manager for the South Caucasus, said in an interview with Trend.

He said the agriculture sector, which provides jobs and income for about 40 percent of the population in rural areas, can become more productive and profitable through increased access to finance. "One way to help this is through agri-insurance, which mitigates the risks involved in

agriculture production, such as weather and price volatility. Europe and Central Asia Agri-Finance Advisory Project has worked with Azerbaijan's authorities to conduct various field surveys with the farmers, to draft a law on agricultural insurance and to develop an agricultural insurance system concept," he said.

Presently, the International Finance Corporation, together with Azerbaijan's Ministry of Agriculture and the Financial Markets Supervisory Authority, is working on a project to introduce an agricultural insurance system in the country. The government of Azerbaijan is inclined to use Turkey's TARSIM model of agricultural insurance. As part of the work on the project, the IFC is looking for the most appropriate options to introduce this model in Azerbaijan. In addition, the Azerbaijani Agriculture Ministry continues work on a bill on stimulation of the agricultural insurance.

<https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2911808.html>

Azerbaijan expands access to preferential agricultural loans

Another Azerbaijani bank, RabitaBank has entered the list of the authorized credit institutions of the State Service on Management of Agricultural Projects and Credits under the Ministry of Agriculture, the ministry announced June 4. A protocol of intent with the bank was signed by the Head of the State Service Mirza Aliyev and Deputy Director of RabitaBank Orhan Gultekin.

On May 24, the State Service on Management of Agricultural Projects and Credits under the Ministry of Agriculture signed a protocol with eight credit institutions operating in the country. The protocols have been signed with the International Bank of Azerbaijan, PASHA Bank, Kapital Bank, Turan Bank, Rabitabank, Aqrarkredit CJSC, Finoko OJSC and Finans Invest OJSC.

Until the end of the year, the State Service plans to issue up to 10 million manats of preferential loans to entrepreneurs engaged in the production and processing of agricultural products. The minimum loan amount is 1,000 manats, and the maximum amount is 200,000 manats. The maximum interest rate on loans is seven percent.

<https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2912372.html>

Azerbaijan intends to increase export of pomegranate products

Azerbaijan plans to increase exports of pomegranate and products derived from it in the coming years, Chairman of the Azerbaijan Pomegranate Producers and Exporters Association Farhad Garashov told Trend. "The figures are growing from year to year. From October 2017 to March this year, exports of both pomegranate and products made of it valued \$12 million. Usually the harvest

of pomegranate begins in October. With proper storage, the product is kept until March," Garashov said.

The chairman of the association noted that today the products made of pomegranates of Azerbaijani origin are exported to many countries, including Australia, Canada and Russia. "As for the pomegranate itself, today it is mainly exported to Russia. Our goal is to expand the geography of supplies, in particular to establish exports to Europe and North America," he said.

Garashov also said that in 2017, processing enterprises in Azerbaijan purchased about 20,000 tons of pomegranate from local farmers for production of juices, narsharab (pomegranate syrup) and other products. The Azerbaijan Pomegranate Producers and Exporters Association was established on October 31, 2016. Today it brings together 26 members.

<https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2908782.html>

Large complex for processing of pomegranate to be built in Azerbaijan

In 2019, Azerbaijan plans to begin construction of a large complex for the production of pomegranate products, Farhad Garashov, chairman of the Association of Pomegranate Manufacturers and Exporters, told Trend.

"Several members of our association have already prepared a business plan. To compile it, foreign consulting and audit companies were involved. The business plan is submitted to the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan, and we expect a positive response. The project can be financed through the National Entrepreneurship Support Fund," Garashov said.

According to the chairman of the Association, the complex can be built in one of the industrial parks of Azerbaijan. "It is planned that the complex will consist of 4 enterprises for the production of pomegranate juice, concentrate, processing of pomegranate peels and seeds. The total cost of the complex, according to the business plan is 25 million manat. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2019, completed by 2021," - said the head of the Association.

In general, according to Garashov, an important task is to increase the types of products obtained from pomegranate. "This will help increase the export potential in this area. From a pomegranate it is possible to receive juices, alcoholic drinks, narcharab. Pomegranate rind, as well as oil from its seeds are used in cosmetology, pharmaceutical production. That is, it is a non-waste product," Garashov said.

The Association of Pomegranate Manufacturers and Exporters was established on October 31, 2016.

<https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/business/2909000.html>

Azerbaijan to expand production of soy, lentils and peas

The National Entrepreneurship Support Fund (NFES) under the Azerbaijan Economy Ministry began to accept investment projects in the priority areas of development of the Sabirabad region, the Economy Ministry said in a message on May 23.

Following a business forum, the NFES considered it expedient to begin accepting investment projects to establish farms for soybean, lentil and pea crops production, large-scale farming, intensive gardening, cotton-growing, greenhouse complexes and a complex of livestock breeding, fruit and milk processing enterprises, production of bread and spices, enterprises for production of plastic containers and plastic doors and windows. Under the rules for use of the NFES funds, entrepreneurs can apply to the Fund through authorized credit institutions. Upon request of entrepreneurs, small projects can be fully financed through concessional loans.

NFES was established in 1992. The loans are issued to entrepreneurs through authorized banks and non-bank credit organizations, the total number of which is 54. In 2017, 146 million manats were allocated through the National Fund for Entrepreneurship Support. In 2018, according to the NFES, it is planned to provide concessional loans for a minimum amount of 170 million manats.

<https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2907307.html>

Ganja plant may expand production of "Belarus" tractors in 2018

The Ganja automobile plant and the Minsk tractor plant may extend the contract for production of the "Belarus" tractors in Azerbaijan until the end of 2018, director of the Ganja automobile plant Kamran Nazarov told Trend June 5. He noted that the Ganja automobile plant took part in the international exhibition Belagro 2018 in Minsk.

Nazarov said at the exhibition negotiations were held with the general director of the Minsk tractor plant (MTP) Fyodor Domotenko, during which expansion of the model range of tractors produced in Azerbaijan, as well as increasing the number of tractors that will be produced this year in Ganja were discussed. "In the near future, the plant will complete the assembly of tractors under the previous contract, involving the production of 1,000 vehicles. Thus, there is an opportunity to extend the contract until the end of this year. The number of tractors to be assembled at the enterprise under the new agreement will be determined during the negotiations," Nazarov said.

He noted that the project of the Ganja automobile plant on production of export-oriented products and technologies, access to the markets of third countries, involving the construction of a plant in Turkey, was also discussed. "Construction of a new enterprise is going at an accelerated pace. On June 5, the construction site of a tractor factory in Turkey was visited by the governor of the province of Kirikkale, Ilker Haktankacmaz, who got acquainted with the work," said Nazarov.

At the end of last year, the Ganja and Minsk plants signed a strategic cooperation agreement, which opened up opportunities for the Azerbaijani enterprise to establish production in Turkey. The agreement, in particular, involves expanding the geography of the brand presence and increasing the sales through the creation of a joint venture in Turkey for further promotion of tractors in that market.

<https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2913228.html>

Increasing tax on cigar production in Azerbaijan will not have major impact

Increasing the tax on cigars and cigarillos (thin cigars), produced in Azerbaijan, will not have a major impact on the market of tobacco products in the country, Azerbaijani MP, doctor of economic sciences Rufat Guliyev told Trend June 6.

It is proposed to introduce changes to the Tax Code, which provide for an increase in the tax on cigars and cigarillos produced in Azerbaijan. According to the changes, a tax of 20 manats will be levied for every 1,000 cigars and cigarillos produced in Azerbaijan. Today, this tax amounts to 10 manats. The changes will be discussed at a plenary session of the Parliament of Azerbaijan on June 12. "If changes are made, it will not have any serious impact on the tobacco market in Azerbaijan. Today, cigars and cigarillos account for a maximum of 0.1-0.2 percent of the market in the country. They belong to a higher class of tobacco products than cigarettes and are not products of mass use," said Guliyev.

An informed source told Trend that the production of cigars and cigarillos will start in Azerbaijan in the near future. According to the State Statistics Committee, in January-April 2018, tobacco products amounting to 11.51 million manats were produced in Azerbaijan. Compared to the same indicator in 2017, this figure has increased by 2.7 times.

<https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2913783.html>

Azerbaijan's Agjabadi agricultural park may be commissioned in late 2018

There are plans to commission Azerbaijan's Agjabadi agricultural park at the end of this year, Azerbaijan's Economy Ministry said in a message.

At an event held in Agjabadi district, it was noted that 1,412 entrepreneurs from Agjabadi district have so far received preferential loans worth 72.6 million manats, along with other spheres, investment projects on the creation of a greenhouse, a poultry farm, a livestock complex and a stern mill were financed. Thirty-six entrepreneurs, operating in the Aran economic region, received preferential loans worth 776,600 manats, which will mainly be directed to the development of

livestock breeding, cotton growing, processing of milk and other spheres. Implementation of investment projects using these loans will create an opportunity to open more than 60 new jobs.

A total of 570.3 million manats of preferential loans were allocated for financing 13,800 investment projects of business entities operating in the Aran economic region. Agjabadi agricultural park was created on the territory of 5,000 hectares. A modern irrigation system was created in the agricultural park at an area of 1,215 hectares, soybean was planted at an area of more than 1,000 hectares. It is also planned to create a plant for the production of vegetable oils.

The work is underway in 30 Azerbaijani districts to create 45 agricultural parks worth a total of 1.4 billion manats at an area of 191,800 hectares. Investments worth 311.8 million manats at the expense of state have so far been made for the creation of agricultural parks. (204.2 million manats were invested for activities related to the laying of water, gas, electric communications and roads, land improvement measures and other work, the creation of infrastructure)

State preferential loans worth up to 110 million manats were allocated for the creation of 15 agricultural parks worth more than 400 million manats and investment promotion documents were issued in 14 agricultural parks for 24 investment projects worth 565.5 million manats.

<https://en.trend.az/business/2917726.html>

Local Production Unable to Produce High Quality Grain

The State Agency for Material Reserves operating under the Ministry of Emergency Situations announced the purchase of high-quality grain produced in Azerbaijan.

In past years, the Grain Fund was unable to purchase high-quality grain, which means its actual absence. Statistics show Azerbaijan's high dependence on wheat imports, which indicates the decline of the industry. Imports of wheat in January-March this year increased to 316.1 thousand tons, an increase of 54.7% compared to the reporting period in 2017, the State Statistics Committee informs. This circumstance testifies to the reduction of local production to the previous year that could be, by the way, remembered with the fall in cereal yield by 4.4% (136,237 tons) - to 2,928,845 tons. The yield of cereals in 2017 was 29.8 quintals per hectare against 30.6 quintals per hectare in 2016.

Thus, we should expect a decrease in the already meager amounts of local wheat entering the elevators of the Ministry of Emergency Situations - Sangachal, Ganja and Absheron Takhil, as well as LLC Devechi-Dayirman, LLC Karat-Holding, LLC Carmen, LLC Ganja-Dayirman, JSC Baku-Takhil named after N. Guliyev, JSC Aveta, JSC Neon Firm, LLC El-Babaturk, LLC Pak-Nur Firm, LLC Khirman, LLC Reshad, LLC Sema FF, LLC Avropa, LLC Sari Sunbul, LLC Azeri-Arapoglu US, LLC T. Ltd. BM, and LLC Sphinx.

Having announced the purchase price of 300 manat per ton of cereals, incidentally, changing depending on the market conditions, the State Agency extended the requirements for quality, noting that the grain that does not meet them will not be accepted.

In this perspective, last year's statement of the head of the Grain Fund, Zulfugar Mammadov, shows that of the total wheat harvest at 1.854 million tons that was collected the year before, only 58,000 tons of cereals conditionally suitable for baking bread were provisionally delivered to grain elevators by November.

In March last year, the Grain Fund purchased from local producers no more than 100 thousand tons of grain of appropriate quality. As it turned out, local farmers do not pay enough attention to hard wheat and produce low quality crops that do not meet the requirements of the State Agency.

"Despite the government's decision to take 750,000 tons of wheat annually from local farmers to the State Grain Fund, all this volume is imported," the agriculture expert Vaheed Maharramov said.

Despite state support for the industry, the annual subsidies and state funds allocated to raise grain yields for grain areas - 65-70% of the land suitable for agriculture, the domestic demand for 1.4 million tons of wheat depends entirely on imports. At the same time, the curious situation with import and local production indicators continues - the Ministry of Agriculture insists on domestic production of 1 million 800 thousand tons of wheat, despite the data of the State Customs Committee on the annual import of 1.4 - 1.6 million tons of this cereal mainly from Russia.

The domestic demand for bread and flour in Azerbaijan is almost entirely covered by imports. For example, last year, wheat was imported in an amount equal to the demand (1 million 274 thousand 434 tons) for this product. Import of cereals, excluding wheat, in monetary terms amounted to 291,524,000 US dollars. Products of the milling industry were imported in the amount of 17 million 822 thousand dollars, and finished goods from grain and flour were imported in the amount of 77 million 218 thousand dollars. In the aggregate, they imported flour and grain products for AZN 680 million.

(Newsletter from: <http://www.turan.az>)

Harmful Seeds Found in Russian Wheat

Seeds of the creeping ivy, a weed, have been found in wheat imported from Russia.

The information of the State Phytosanitary Control Service at the Ministry of Agriculture says the creeping ivy forms weeds in sown areas, gardens and meadows. This plant takes nutrients from autumn wheat 2-5 times more, and toxic substances in the ivy affect crop plants.

The Ministry notes the seeds of this harmful plant were identified from wheat imported from Russia in the amount of 1,636.02 tons.

The Ministry plans to purify this wheat by means of special aggregates, as well as the destruction of the separated weed seeds.

(Newsletter from: <http://www.turan.az>)

Eighteen Cotton Companies Merge

On June 13, 18 agricultural companies announced their merger with LLC P-Agro. All of them are related to the cotton giant Gilan Holding.

In February 2017, 18 companies were established in the cotton areas of the country, which later turned out to be engaged in sowing cotton. The land for them was allocated mainly from the state land fund. All of them enjoyed special care and attention from the Ministry of Agriculture. However, according to the press secretary of this department, they in any form did not concern the Ministry of Agriculture. According to Turan's source, who asked to remain anonymous, the founders of these companies are the same who own Gilan Holding and other cotton enterprises of the country.

LLC P-Agro was established on May 5 this year with a capital of 100 manat. Its director is Azer Alizadeh. The legal address of this company is Baku, 92 Academician Hasan Aliyev Street, Apartment 34. On May 3 and 4, five companies were registered at this address (LLC Roya 1970, LLC Victoria Trade, LLC Raman-2017, LLC Amazing TM and LLC Oasis TM) with a capital of 10 manat each. The legal representative of all these companies is Fikret Gasimov. In open resources there is no information about these persons.

(Newsletter from: <http://www.turan.az>)

Azerbaijan workers poisoned in cotton fields for second time in a week

Two incidents of mass poisoning of cotton field workers occurred over the past week in Azerbaijan.

The first was on 10 June in Simada village, Saatli district. Twenty-four people were hospitalized, while some had to be sent to Baku for treatment. The second incident took place on 16 June in Seydimli village in the Terter region. Fourteen people were affected, with some sent to intensive care units in a critical condition. No deaths were reported in both cases.

According to preliminary data, the workers were poisoned by a chemical pesticide called Formula 5-FEC, which is used to control weeds.

The General Prosecutor's Office initiated a criminal case under Article 249.2 – 'Violation of Safety Rules in the Fight Against Weeds and Pests Which Entailed Grave Consequences', as well as Article 314.2 – 'Negligent Attitude to Official Duties'. The fields owners will be held responsible.

The Zerkalo news outlet [The Mirror] referred to Adam Aliyev, the deputy chief doctor of the Saatli district hospital, who stated that the workers were poisoned because they returned to the fields too quickly after the chemical was sprayed, while, according to safety rules, one needs to wait a certain time.

According to Telman Zeynalov, the head of the National Center for Ecological Forecasting, the land owner had to notify the local branches of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Sanitary and Epidemiological Service prior to using this chemical.

Over the past few years, the government of Azerbaijan has been paying special attention to cotton, hoping to make it one of the leading (and, respectively, profitable) areas of the non-oil sector.

<https://jam-news.net/?p=108273>