



UKRAINE

"With excellent soil and a great climate, there is tremendous opportunity for small landholders in Ukraine," says Fred Wall of Winnipeg, Manitoba. "There is fantastic potential, and a 'get on with it' attitude."

Agriculturally, Ukraine is a real challenge, with mixed farmers subsisting on small acreages. With MEDA's help, they can create a new system, develop technology relevant to their crops and access capital to buy assets.



UKRAINE

QUICK FACTS

- Former bread basket of the Soviet Union
- 25% of the world's topsoil
- Population 46.8 million
- 20% live below the poverty line
- Poverty gap between rural and urban reflects fast but unbalanced economic growth
- Underemployment, in part due to subsistence agriculture
- Crimea and southern Zaporiska lag in economic performance

BACKGROUND

Following the founding of the first Mennonite colony in 1789, Mennonites became a vital force in developing local communities. But they were later forced out in droves due to political and economic changes, losing everything as they fled to safety in North America.

Mennonites' spiritual ties to Ukraine remain strong despite family stories of hardship and suffering. Once again they can play a significant role in their ancestral land by helping to lift small farmers out of poverty.



Small farmers struggle to eke out a living on small parcels of land created from the old Soviet collective farms during privatization. These "pie-eesh-niks" are willing to work hard to become prosperous, but face barriers to their success.

Many have little understanding of a free economy that operates under market forces. They need to learn business skills, to forge linkages between their suppliers and buyers in the market, and they need access to capital not afforded to them in the local banking system.

5-YEAR PROJECT BUDGET



MEDA'S ASSESSMENT

MEDA is helping to return this historical breadbasket of Europe to its former glory. MEDA's new project, the Southeast Ukraine Planting for Prosperity and Economic Rejuvenation (SUPPER), is strengthening the capacities of 5,000 small farmers and agribusinesses in Crimea and Zaporiska.

With local partners, the Crimea Association of Farmers and Land Owners (CAFLO) and the agricultural extension service of Tavria State Agrotechnological University, SUPPER works closely with input suppliers, technology distributors, storage facilities and financial institutions to better respond to small farmers' needs.

With capital and training, small, labour-intensive farms can adopt modern technologies, increase productivity and deliver profitable, premium quality greenhouse crops and table grapes to markets in which they have a competitive advantage.

SUPPER is also establishing lead farmer (LF) networks serving as a bridge between small farmers, who need inputs, technology and access to markets, and agribusiness, which wants to trade with them. LFs are also mentoring small farmers in modern production and the 'business of farming' to better compete in the marketplace. These expanding LF networks promise to integrate thousands more small farmers into profitable agricultural markets long after MEDA's role has ended.

OUTCOME:

- 5,000 smallholder farmers in Crimea and Zaporiska – women, men and marginalized communities – will increase their incomes through the development of intensive, high-value crops that can be sold at higher profit margins.
- Creation of a sustainable system of linkages between suppliers, growers and buyers in the value chain