

POTATO DEMONSTRATION PLOTS TO IMPROVE THE TRADITION OF POTATO CULTIVATION IN LERIK DISTRICT

European Union Support to
Lankaran–Astara Economic
Region of Azerbaijan



Funded by the
European Union

EU4LANKARAN NEWS FLASH

MAY 2024

VOL 3



Launch event, Kelvez village, Lerik District

A significant milestone was reached by the ongoing project "European Union Support to the Lankaran-Astara Economic Region of Azerbaijan," with the establishment of the first experimental Potato Demonstration Plots across 1 hectare in several villages of Lerik district. Lerik District is known in the Lankaran-Astara Economic Region and to a lesser extent in Baku for producing highly valued mountain potatoes. However it was seen as a result of the value chain analysis of potatoes in the district that farmers did not know the variety of potato that they were cultivating and were obtaining seeds from Iran and Jalilabad that were not certified as high quality and productive.



Traditional method for potato planting

To improve the production of potatoes which is a significant crop in the district, 1 hectare of Potato Demonstration Plots covering eight farmers from Kelvez, Yukhari Amburdara, Razgov, Kalakhan, Hiveri, and Mahlaabad villages was launched. These farmers received a total of 3,155 kg of seed potatoes. These included 8 varieties, four local varieties (Sevinj, Chanlibel, Vaqif, Amiri) and four foreign varieties (Colombo, Orchestra, Sorayya, Bernina). These varieties were chosen based on their suitability for growing in mountainous areas. For the first time soil samples from each plot were tested and based on test results, guidance tables were prepared to assist farmers in caring for each variety during the growing season. The initiative was further developed as a collaborative effort and the Lerik Potato Producer Group was formed. A WhatsApp group was created for the members with experts on hand to provide continuous support and information on cultivation, care, and post-harvesting techniques.



Hands-on aspect of potato planting explained to farmers

A launch event was held for the Potato Demonstration Plots, on April 6, 2024, in Kelvez village. The opening was attended by the Deputy Head of Lerik District Executive Authority, Deputy Director of Scientific Research Institute for Vegetable Growing, Baku, Director of the Regional Station of the Institute in Lankaran, Regional Director of the Lankaran Regional Office of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency, Director and staff of the State Agriculture Development Center, agricultural experts, and local farmers.

Following the ceremony, the Deputy Director, the Scientific Research Institute conducted a practical training session on the proper scientific techniques for planting and nurturing potatoes. This session provided farmers with the necessary skills to optimize their potato yields and promote sustainable agricultural practices. Sahib Qurbanov, Chair of the Producer Group expressed confidence that the group would benefit from this initiative and would become multipliers in their community spreading the knowledge they gained and would help to popularize the varieties that were found most productive for the district.

The Project team along with experts from the institute, will continuously monitor the progress of the plots, at the same time providing expert advice. The demo plots serve to promote innovation, knowledge-sharing and collaboration among local farmers. Follow up steps include creation of a modern collaboration hub, branding and marketing of the potatoes, contributing to the increased competitiveness of the fruit and vegetable sector in the district and region.



Planting of seed potatoes by farmers



Seed potatoes being planted with instruction from expert

Stay tuned for more updates from the "EU Support to Lankaran-Astara Economic Region of Azerbaijan" project.