

FIRST EXPERIMENTAL POTATO DEMONSTRATION PLOTS IN YARDIMLI DISTRICT!

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Launch event, Deman village, Yardimli District

We are thrilled to share news of the successful launch of the first Potato Demonstration Plots in five villages of Yardimli district, of Azerbaijan. This initiative by the project "EU Support to Lankaran-Astara Economic Region of Azerbaijan" is geared towards improving the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable value chains in the district.

On April 4, 2024, the launch event took place in Deman village, attended by the Deputy Head of Lerik District Executive Power, Director and staff of SADC, Regional Director of Small and Medium Business Development Agency in Lankaran and 40 farmers.

After the opening ceremony the Deputy Director of Scientific-Research Institute of Vegetable Growing - Baku introduced the four varieties of seed potatoes contributed by the institute and provided hands-on training on planting and care of potatoes, providing local farmers with valuable knowledge for sustainable potato cultivation. The training encompassed soil testing and preparation, planting techniques, irrigation methods, pest management, harvesting practices, post-harvest storage techniques, and quality assessment to enhance the market readiness of the crop.



Discussion on practical techniques and best practices for potato planting



Traditional potato storage, Deman village, Yardimli

As part of this initiative, 3,015 kg of premium local and foreign seed potatoes were distributed among eight farmers from Arvana, Avash, Deman, Khanbulag, and Kurakchi villages. The 4 local varieties, Sevinj, Chanlibel, Vagif, and Amiri, and the 4 foreign varieties Colomba, Orchestra, Soraya, and Bernina were carefully selected for their adaptability to a mountainous terrain and yield potential. Across the 1-hectare of demo plots, these seed potatoes will be nurtured with proper agro-technical care based on expert advice. To provide adequate care, soil samples were taken from the farmers' fields for testing. Based on the results individualized care and cultivation tables for each variety will be prepared to guide farmers throughout the potato production cycle.

The demo plots have led to collaboration among the farmers and the Yardimli Potato Producer Group has been formed. Iskander Isayev a member of the group stated his firm resolve to through the demo plots increase the production of ecologically grown potatoes for which he is well known. A WhatsApp group has been created with the experts and project staff to provide farmers with ongoing support and information on potato cultivation techniques. The project team, along with experts, will conduct regular monitoring visits to potato plots to observe the growth, gather data to arrive at the varieties which are most productive for the district and suitable for further propagation among farmers. Follow up steps include forming a modern collaborative hub for producers strengthening their links to the value chain, branding the potatoes and increasing access to markets. The first experimental Potato Demonstration Plots in the district represent the first step in the direction of a more prosperous future for farmers in Yardimli district. Stay tuned for more updates from the "EU Support to Lankaran-Astara Economic Region of Azerbaijan" project.



Seed potatoes for distribution, SADC, Yardimli



Hands-on aspect of potato planting explained to farmers