



STRAWBERRY FIELDS UNDER PLASTIC

On April 10, 2010, a Crimean farmer put a greenhouse into operation on a plot that is LINC's base for sowing and growing agricultural know-how on the peninsula



Andriy Bohomolov caught at the idea of strawberry greenhouse cultivation with enthusiasm: "I'm willing to experiment. And I thank LINC for inviting me to the working group and opening my eyes to new winds in the agrarian business"

Andriy Bohomolov, a farmer from Crimea's village of Novovasylyvka, Bakhchysaray Raion, is a member of the agricultural working group formed by the USAID Local Investment and National Competitiveness (LINC) project to focus on increasing the peninsula's agricultural sector competitiveness. The group unites over 50 members – farmers, seed companies, wholesale companies, equipment suppliers, retail chains, etc.

When LINC suggested holding a Day of Field in mid July to demonstrate a broad range of crops and up-to-date cultivation technologies, Mr. Bohomolov was one of seven working group members who joined in a partnership to implement this initiative and show how a small parcel of land can be used with maximum efficiency.



The greenhouse on Mr. Bohomolov's land just a few days before commissioning. As the farmer and LINC have agreed, this land parcel will be the base to experiment on growing various crops using protected-ground techniques

Mr. Bohomolov's contribution to the partnership was 1.48 acres of his land (including 0.79 acres for the greenhouse), a 25-year gardening experience, and willingness to experiment. Following a cost-benefit analysis for various crops, LINC experts came to conclusion that strawberry would be one of the most profitable in Crimea, and LINC sent the farmer to a large-scale strawberry-growing enterprise in the Kherson Oblast to learn strawberry cultivation under plastic.

Mr. Bohomolov bought materials for the greenhouse, which was mounted with financial assistance from LINC and will cover not only strawberries but also lettuce and table grapes. Other partnership members provided seeds and agronomist's services. The part of LINC, among other things, includes coordinating activities of all those involved in the Day of Field and organizing training in advanced production technologies and marketing.



Oleksandr Lekhno, LINC Agribusiness Specialist: "Why do we call it experiment? On this territory – the Bakhchysaray Raion – they have not been growing some of the crops for a long time. That is, we restore the historical traditions of the region – but with application of modern technologies"

Agriculture is a Crimean sector selected by LINC for support in enhancing competitiveness. Says Oleksandr Lekhno, LINC Agribusiness Specialist:

"Competitiveness depends on a whole lot of factors. There are things, however, depending directly on the producer, such as the choice and quality of produce, growing period, marketing strategy. To be competitive, a farmer has to apply cutting-edge technologies, cultivate crops in highest demand, harvest before his competitors, and promote his produce with the use of a trade mark, up-to-date packaging, etc.

"However, the producers, though professionals in the business of growing per se, have little time and resources to follow world trends, familiarize themselves with new production and marketing technologies, and thus cannot help but rely only on their own intuition. Experimental plots and events such as the LINC Day of Field will help fill up this gap."