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CATTLE BREEDING PROGRAM IN ARTSAKH

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The Cattle Breeding Program has been implemented in 11 villages of Martuni, Martakert and Askeran Regions in Nagorno-Karabagh Republic. The project aims at improving the socio-economic conditions of socially vulnerable families. Since 2007 till the end of 2014 year already 241 (134 original and 107 POG /passing on the gift/ recipient) families have been assisted in the framework of the project. The program has two components: animal husbandry and breed improvement (AI).

Within the animal husbandry component, families in targeted villages received gravid heifers (one per family) to establish and run their own small scale farms. The farmers receive theoretical and practical trainings on advanced farm and animal management, as well as technical assistance (veterinary medicines and supplies). This enables families to increase production, improve their nutrition and ensure food diversity. After three year period the original recipient families pass on the gift of a gravid heifer of good quality, as well as the acquired knowledge to another vulnerable family in the same or neighboring village.

Regarding the breed improvement component DP has acquired high quality and certified dairy cattle semen (Brown Swiss and Jersey, imported from the U.S., via CARD Service) for artificial insemination. Along with high quality semen, the program provides supplies for insemination, theoretical and practical trainings to community veterinarians. The families originally received gravid animals (inseminated naturally by local breed bull) and during the second matching the animals were artificially inseminated. The genetic improvement helps the families to receive crossbreeds, which offer higher levels of milk productivity (hybrid vigor) in a more cost effectiveness manner. The AI component of this program ultimately contributes to the improvement of genetic diversity in the region.