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BELARUS

SUCCESS STORY

Volunteer Aids Agricultural Businesses

Helping Belarusians build better dairy farms



Photo: CNFA

USAID volunteer, David Kammel (left), inspects cow housing facilities with local Belarusian hosts.

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SIS, a Belarusian company that provides consulting services to agricultural businesses shifted its focus several years ago to designing cow houses. During the summer of 2009, the company was involved in the reconstruction of eight dairy farms and the building of an entirely new dairy complex. However, the market was quickly changing and SIS specialists were in need of further training in order to become leaders in this niche of the Belarusian market.

Specifically, SIS specialists needed to become better acquainted with modern cow housing design, to learn how to work as independent consultants, and to receive recommendations for further development of their company.

USAID’s Farmer-to-Farmer program, which connects farmers in developing countries with experts from the US who share knowledge, sent David Kammel, an agricultural engineer who has done vast research on the designing and building of milking centers, to assist SIS and share his specialized knowledge. Kammel traveled from Wisconsin for a two-week volunteer assignment in Belarus.

He visited with SIS specialists and provided several training sessions. Each session addressed a different aspect of cow housing technologies and milking practices. In addition to his training sessions with the SIS staff, Kammel met with some of SIS’s current and potential clients. These visits allowed him to look at actual facilities and provide specific recommendations, ranging from the design of various kinds of barns to ventilation systems that would ease summer conditions.

During his time in Belarus, Kammel developed strong relationships, including one with Alexander Lapotko from the Livestock Department of the Belarusian Research Institute of Animal Breeding. Lapotko greatly enjoyed the exchange and is planning a visit to the US, which will allow him to become better acquainted with American dairies.

The Belarusian specialists have noticed the benefits of the exchange with their American counterpart. Alexander German, the owner of SIS said, “We really appreciate the recommendations from David Kammel and are thankful to USAID for bringing him to Belarus. He offered possible solutions that we had not been able to receive previously. Our company continues to grow our client base and number of employees. Now we are very close to achieving the goal of becoming the best dairy design firm in the country.”