



## SUCCESS STORY

# Diversification Through Drying

**By sun-drying tomatoes, farmers expand produce to tap into new markets**

Through the assistance of USAID-funded projects, Kyrgyzstan's agriculture sector is slowly improving, with farmers generating higher personal incomes and having more opportunities to improve their standard of living.



Photo: Winrock Intl

A USAID-funded project is working with southern Kyrgyzstani farmers to dry tomatoes for export to the United States and Europe.

***In southern Kyrgyzstan, farmers plan to produce about 10 tons of dried tomatoes out of 200 tons of fresh tomatoes as part of a USAID-funded project to diversify their businesses.***

A USAID project has introduced new opportunities for tomato farmers in Kyrgyzstan. It aims to develop profitable agricultural product value chains by linking farmers to specific markets and assisting them to cope with all the challenges they face in bringing their products to market. Participating farmers learn to work as a group and are introduced to new technologies, business planning, and delivery contracts. By helping farmers deliver higher value products to markets, the project ensures that these farmers receive higher incomes.

Since fresh tomato production is already profitable, the project launched an initiative on tomato drying in southern Kyrgyzstan. It showed farmers how to grow and dry tomatoes, and provided loans through a microcredit agency.

To tap into the continuously growing demand for sun-dried tomatoes in the United States and Europe, project staff helped farmers sign a contract with a local trading company to sell sun-dried tomatoes in the United States.

Farmers are planning to produce about 10 tons of dried tomatoes out of 200 tons of fresh tomatoes. They've successfully mastered the tomato sun-drying process and are now installing the necessary equipment to extend the tomato drying technology. They are also planning to acquire an additional 10 hectares (24.7 acres) of land to expand production. With additional land and technology, the farmers intend to triple their dried tomato exports.