



International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education (ICARE)
Foundation



REPORT

on trip to the Wageningen University for the joined

AIAEE and ESEE conference

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Background information:

The goals of the InnovATE/Armenia project are: increase the capacity of ICARE in its activities related to institutional advancement including development of the research and outreach division, empower ICARE to become a full partner in international research and development projects, assist ICARE in bringing the most innovative research and training for development of agriculture in Armenia, and engage local and international stakeholders interested in sustained development of agribusiness in Armenia.

One of the main goals of the Innovate-Armenia project is strengthening research and outreach division and building its capacity to establish long-term partnerships and conduct collaborative research. In April-May 2015 ICARE Research Director Anna Yeritsyan attended the 31st Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE) conference and the 22^d European Seminar on Extension and Education (ESEE) that were jointly held in Wageningen University in the Netherlands. The topic of the conference was “Competence and Excellence in Extension and Education”.

Goal and objectives of the visit:

Build the capacity of the research office in agricultural research and extension field, as well as getting to learn international experience in this field and establishing connections with researchers from around the globe.

Monday, April 27**Activities**

- Meeting Virginia Tech team
- Visiting open air museum in Arnhem

Outcomes

Visiting open air museum in Arnhem provided some insights on the development of the Netherlands from rural country towards industrial economy. The history and the economy of the country were presented starting from 17th century up to the early 21st century. The exhibition was a bright example of how agricultural and rural tourism combined with little history (and Armenia has a lot of history) can be turned into a profitable business.

It was also very interesting to find out that just as in Armenia there are certain professional vacancies in the Netherlands that are very hard to fill, and just as in Armenia those are the specialties taught in craftsmanship schools.

Later in the afternoon during the meeting with Virginia Tech and Innovate team the networking strategies were deliberated and conference agenda was discussed. Virginia Tech team was

represented by Dr. Tom Hammett, Ms. Emily Van Houweling; Dr. Pavli Mykerezzi; and Dr. Kurt Richter.

Tuesday, April 28

Activities

- Registering for the conference
- Attending the poster session at the Wageningen University

Outcomes

Conference was taking place in the Forum Building of the Wageningen University campus. It hosted more than 200 researchers from leading Universities and Research and Extension Centers from USA, Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and even Australia. During the poster session the contact was established with researchers from Malawi, Iran and the USA. Meeting Glenn Shinn and his wife, as well as Gary Briers from Texas A&M University was a big surprise – Dr. Shinn and Dr. Briers spent several years in Armenia and worked on USDA Marketing Assistance Program and had active participation in ICARE establishment.



Wednesday, April 29

Activities

- Attending conference sessions
- Networking during breaks and lunch

Outcomes

During the second day of the conference main topics of conference sessions visited were devoted to effective agricultural extension practices, including assessment of potential for online based teaching in agricultural extension, as well as empowering through agricultural extension and training. Particularly the



session held by Naser Zamani-Miandashti devoted to use of mobile apps for entrepreneurial knowledge and information sharing agricultural students and entrepreneurs can be applied to the Armenian case. During the lunch break a connection was established with FAO team who presented their new project - FAO's research and extension branch that is focused on providing technical assistance to rural extension services. The project can be interesting for the Armenian situation, because it creates enabling environment for family farming.

Thursday, April 30

Activities

- Attending conference sessions
- Networking during breaks and lunch

Outcomes

Useful contacts were established with Roger Hanagriff and Robert Strong from Texas A&M University, who are involved in wine marketing and branding analysis and were very interested in collaboration if the opportunity develops. Interesting discussion was held with Virginia Tech team around supporting TVET in Lesser Developed countries (on an example of Uzbekistan).

Friday, May 1

Activities

- Visiting tulip farm
- Trip to Keukenhoff gardens

Outcomes

Visiting half hectare tulip farms at Hillegom, where you could walk and collect your own bouquet of flowers was a great cultural experience. The flower farm was managed by a successful farmer, who supplies flowers to different shops across the country. Not surprisingly, there were special events that attract a lot of tourists and boost the business, such as the flower decorated car parade. The practice of creating an event or a tradition around the main business in the area has been adopted by village Areni in Armenia where every year they host Areni wine festival.





After the farm visit there was a lovely trip to the flower park Keukenhoff –the biggest attraction of the season in the Netherlands. Spacious 32 hectares of flowers, surprising inspirational gardens, and pavilions with exotic flowers are presented to public from early April to late May. The highlight of this year was the flower bulb mosaic of a 'self-portrait' of Vincent van Gogh made up of thousands of tulips.



