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Success story of Malkhaz Iarajuli on Goat initiative

Malkhaz Iarajuli is a small-scale family farmer- refugee from Abkhazia, shepherding goats in community pastures and woods of Dusheti for 8 years, having 1 ha of land in ownership. He works with his wife and son and is informally cooperating with 3 other similar goat farmers. The total number of goats of his family farm was 80 when he started working with FinExCoop project, with 50 productive females, now the number grew a little over 100 heads.



Darchi Iarajuli son of Iarajuli Family Farm



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The productivity of his goats was much low when he started working with FinExCoop project. He uses semi-extensive model of breeding and all his goats are local, with a genetic mainly used for meat.

Milk of the goats was processed into cheese at farm level and he used to get 10 000 GEL from his cheese sales, now after working with a project he sells more than 1000 kg of cheese to Tbilisi elite cheese shops which is 3 times more than before.

FinExCoop experts made initial analysis and identified a strength of the farmer in grazing by the shepherd all year round in the forests. One of the weaknesses was lack of surface, no structure, insufficient food autonomy.

Malkhaz plans to improve the productivity of his goats through using imported goat genetics implementing artificial insemination. With better genetics, better housing, and better feed in wintertime, he has reached much higher yields, at least 350 l/year. As there was no access to electricity in the neighborhood, he needed to process his milk in a modern dairy factory. For that reason, FinExCoop connected him with the dairy cooperative Kvaris Mta of Tianeti, which is located 15 km from his place.

Malkhaz plays a leadership role in his environment despite his limited financial resources. He also plays a positive role for the development of the goat value-chain in Georgia, for the following reasons:

- Malkhaz is a qualified person (he was a surgeon by profession who decided to “come back” to agriculture) with a high capacity to learn new technologies. His family is involved in his business,; his wife oversees cheese processing, and his young son of 21 years is also working in the farm. Through FinExCoop project his son went for three months to be



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trained in France. Malkhaz and his family have already proven their willingness learn as they actively participated in FinExCoop's online trainings on goats. They also happily share their 8-year experience in goat for milk with other goat breeders in bordering municipalities of Dusheti and Tianeti

- As it is the case in the other FinExCoop goat's pilot in Tsageri, the semi-extensive breeding model of Malkhaz, with goats spending most of the time in forests where they eat bushes, is positive one. It allows for an excellent environmental balance as goats can positively contribute to the growth of forests and CO2 sequestration if well-managed. It could be replicated on a much larger scale in Georgia, as bush territories are numerous and as this model does not require large investments compared with intensive breeding systems.
- Malkhaz willingly works with others. He cooperates with other breeders, he immediately connected with the Tianeti cooperative when FinExCoop put him in contact with it.

Malkhaz's strong cooperation with FinExCoop:

- FinExCoop project mobilized its technical expert on general goat farm management Guido Bruni who worked first on introducing modern practices of goat farm management, better buildings for animals and for humans (milking place in particular). And he also supported Malkhaz in introducing the know-how on genetic improvement with progressive transformation of local meat goats into productive dairy goats through cross-breeding with artificial insemination and/or imported bucks hardy Alpine bucks. Guido also advised him on animal health issues.
- FinExCoop project introduced better food ratio via Arnaud Brette -its expert on feed who visited the farm to analyze and propose improvement for feeding rations. Arnaud prepared feed audit of Malkhaz Iarajuli goat pilot and proposed better rations for various types of animals (mother goats, young goats). Previously Malkhaz was using community pastures and fruits found in woods during the summer period, while in winter he was using combination of hay, corn, wheat and barley. FinExCoop suggested the possibility of using the innovative feed already successfully tested with cattle (beer dregs, apple pulp, leftover from liquorice) and processed at a very low cost.
- Further FinExCoop linked the goat farmer with Patrick Anglade who worked with him on goat cheese production technologies. Trainings were conducted for goat cheese production for Iarajuli Family farm and neighboring goat farmers in Dusheti and Tianeti municipalities which took place in spring 2022. Farmers learned new technologies of goat cheese making to add value to their production.
- The national expert Sergo Baramidze provided technical consultation for business plan writing and via this business plan development their farm will be able to have access to donor funding. The developed grant proposal was selected by Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development Enterprise Georgia and now the Farm needs to meet the safety requirement to have access to grant funding for cheese processing unit.



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- FinExCoop sent Darchi Iarajuli son of Iarajuli Family Farm, member of family farm, to receive a professional training in France in goat management for three months. He is now able to provide support not only to the family farm but also to other goat farmers in the country.

