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# **ALBANIAN WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE: CASE STUDIES**

GREATER ACCESS TO TRADE EXPANSION (GATE) PROJECT  
UNDER THE WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT IQC

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# INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared for the Albania mission of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) by the Greater Access to Trade Expansion (GATE) Project, Development & Training Services, Inc. (dTS), a task order for the USAID Office of Women in Development. This study explores the factors that make a successful Albanian agribusiness woman.

In 2007, USAID launched a five year activity, the Albanian Agriculture Competitiveness (AAC) program, to stimulate growth in Albania's agriculture sector, leading to the achievement of broad-based economic growth and poverty reduction in targeted rural areas. The focus of the AAC program is providing technical assistance and training to producers and other actors in the value chain to enhance the sector's competitiveness and productivity. The project has identified six constraints that significantly impede Albania's agriculture competitiveness: land fragmentation, lack of access to improved technologies, lack of understanding of how markets function, inadequate market information, lack of mutual trust and motivation for cooperation, and lack of capability to adapt to trade conditions and opportunities. USAID/Albania is committed to ensuring that both men and women benefit from AAC's interventions. However, the paucity of research on men and women in Albanian agriculture limits the ability of the Mission and the project to design targeted interventions that address gender constraints to competitiveness.

This study highlights women agriculture producers, an underexplored group of farmers in Albania. Their stories will increase USAID/Albania's understanding of the variables that influence the progress of women in agricultural enterprises. Research on gender and agriculture often discusses the following factors as determinative of women's involvement in commercial activities:

- Access to land
- Access to credit and capital
- Access to technical knowledge and skills
- Access to inputs (improved seed, agrochemicals, and farm machinery) and transport
- Gender division of labor and control of labor
- Cash and income received from commercial endeavors
- Participation in organizations, unions, and networks
- Gender ideology and economic systems<sup>1</sup>

The study explores the most important variables for successful, sustainable enterprises as well as the strategies women employ to mitigate constraints. The scope of exploration is limited to women involved in commercial activities in the AAC targeted commodities: vegetables, tree fruits, melons, and olives.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted over two trips to Albania in March and April 2008. The Albanian Agribusiness Council (KASH) and AAC Program were asked to identify successful women agriculture producers in AAC targeted commodities. The initial ten

participants were then each requested to identify one other successful woman producer. A total of twenty women producers were interviewed in the following regions: Berat, Diber, Elbasan, Fier, Korce, Lushnje, and Sarande.

Two sets of interviews were conducted with each of the women. The first set of interviews focused on the characteristics of the farm enterprise: household composition, education, gender division of labor, decision making, access to land, access to credit, and access to market information. The second set of interviews were semi-structured and further explored the variables identified in the first round of interviews as well as women's perceptions of constraints and strategies for mitigating identified barriers. To the extent possible, other contributors to the farm enterprise were also interviewed including spouses and children. In several instances, the entire household participated in the interview.

All interviews were conducted in Albanian and translated into English by GATE/Albania project assistant, Elisabeta Mema.

### **ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER**

Section one provides an overview of Albanian agriculture, highlighting the literature on gender and agriculture in Albania. Section two describes the sample of participants and includes a typology of women's farm management in Albania. The three types of farm management explored include: women managed farms without a husband present (due to migration and death); women managed farms with a husband physically present (including examples of husbands who are active and inactive in agriculture production); and joint-managed farms (where both men and women are active participants in the production and decisions of the agriculture enterprise). Section three spotlights eight successfully Albanian women commercial agriculture producers. The last section provides a comparative analysis and discusses key success factors.

# ALBANIAN AGRICULTURE: AN OVERVIEW

Eastern Europe was once referred to as “the peasant belt.”<sup>2</sup> In the 1930s, approximately 70 percent of the Albanian, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Yugoslavian population was dependent upon agriculture; 60 percent of Poland; and over 50 percent of the Hungarian population was dependent upon agriculture.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the late 1920s to the mid 1960s, communist state parties pursued agriculture collectivization policies. Such policies sought to consolidate individual land and labor into collective farms. Agriculture production played a vital role in the socialist economic system, as it deliberately followed different rules from market economies.<sup>4</sup> Two main types of farming emerged throughout the region: state farms and cooperative farms.

During the early 1900s, Albania’s land ownership system was dominated by the “ciflig” system which was characteristic of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>5</sup> Land was held by private landlords, the state, and religious institutions; peasants were required to contribute their labor toward agriculture production on one of three types of estates.<sup>6</sup> In 1912, when Albania gained independence from the Turks, land was distributed and controlled by five families. Each of the five families owned approximately 60,000 hectares of farmland and forests.<sup>7</sup> Directly following World War II, the communist regime swiftly enacted radical land reforms. The land was seized from the large landowners and allotted to landless families and those with access to only miniscule plots. By the mid-1945s, the Communist Party began to implement collectivization; whereby, farmers were required to pool their land and assets into agriculture production cooperatives (APCs). State farms were also established. By 1976 all Albanian land was nationalized. In 1983, 78.4 percent of all agriculture land was cultivated by APCs, 21.1 percent by state farms, and 0.5 percent by private users. Albania pursued the most stringent form of collective agriculture: the “Stalinist collectivization” model. The model was characterized by: low agricultural purchase prices; low co-operative incomes, predominately “in kind” wages; compulsory peasantry deliveries. Further, all machinery was held in state-owned machine and tractor stations and private plots of land were scarcely tolerated.<sup>8</sup>

The system began to decay in the 1980s when misallocations and inefficiencies led to widespread food shortages. The land reforms pursued in 1991 differ sharply from that of most other Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs). Privatization of land in Albania officially began in 1991 with the land reform law. Village land commissions were established to distribute the agriculture cooperatives land among the village families.<sup>9</sup> Unlike in other countries in the region where land was restored to pre-socialist owners, Albanian reform focused on the needs of current users. Each rural family received a portion of the land based on the size of their household. The land was designated as the private property of the family. While only the head of the household’s name appears on the certificate (*tap*), the land reform allotted agriculture land as family ownership and not individual ownership (See below for a more detailed discussed of the legal aspects of ownership).<sup>10</sup>

Albania has the highest percentage of private land farmed by family units in the Central and Eastern Europe. The Farming Individualization Index, the share of individual farms, is lowest in countries where former state and collective farms still dominate. For

example, in Slovakia only 5 percent and in Czech Republic 20 percent of the total area land is occupied by individual farms. In contrast, countries which have experienced a massive break-up of collective farms have the highest IFI: Albania is at 95 percent and Latvia is at 80 percent.<sup>11</sup> Table 1 provides an overview of land ownership and farming patterns in five Central and Eastern European (CEE) counties.

**Table 1: Land Ownership and Farming Patterns in 5 CEE countries**

	Albania	Bulgaria	Croatia	Hungary	Poland
<b>Area (000)</b>	29 km <sup>2</sup>	111 km <sup>2</sup>	88 km <sup>2</sup>	93 km <sup>2</sup>	313 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Rural Population (% of total)</b>	55%	30%	41%	30%	33%
<b>Agriculture share in GDP</b>	25%	12%	9%	3%	3%
<b>Percentage of labor force occupied in agriculture</b>	53%	11%	15%	6%	16%
<b>Property types protected under constitution</b>	Private, public	Private, state, municipal	Private, state	Private, state, municipal, cooperative	Private, state, cooperative
<b>Share of private land farmed by family units</b>	100%	56%	86%	54%	82%
<b>Average area of farm land owned</b>	.97 ha	2.3 ha	2.6 ha	4.5 ha	8.5 ha
<b>Average area of farm land cultivated</b>	1.72 ha	2.8 ha	-	4.8 ha	10.4 ha

Evtimov, V. 2006. Land Tenure Databases in Europe: Cases from Central and Eastern Europe. Italy, Rome: FAO.

## **GENDER AND AGRICULTURE IN ALBANIA**

Gender and agriculture is an under-explored topic in Albania. To date, only three studies have researched the topic; two of the studies were carried out in the 1990s. The discussion that follows is based on those three reports as well as the rapid appraisal on gender and horticulture production conducted by the GATE Project in September 2007. Additional studies and surveys are needed to understand the extent to which claims made in the early 1990s still hold eighteen years into the transition process.

### **PROPERTY RIGHTS**

As previously noted, during the privatization process land was distributed to families and not individuals. Albanian legislation, though, does acknowledge the landownership rights of both individuals and families. The Civil Code, adopted in 1991 affirms the right of "all citizens to own and inherit property."<sup>12</sup> At the same time, the Civil Code designated agriculture land as family land, not to be subdivided among individual members except under specific circumstances. However, customary property rights are often at odds with formal legal rights. Under customary rules, when a son leaves the household, he does not forfeit his rights to the land. However, when a daughter marries and leaves her natal household, she loses her rights to the family land. Heirs of the land are most often sons and not daughters.<sup>13</sup> Based on patrilineal and patrilocal norms,

women are perceived as not needing their birth family's land because they have access to their husband's family's land.

Women's legal and social rights to land are often linked to increased autonomy and control over resources.<sup>14</sup> The fact that agriculture land is family land with the title in the head of the household's name, which is often a man, raises some questions about perceptions of rights. A 1995 survey asked participants whether the signature of an individual on the *tapi* provided that person more rights to the land than other household members. The majority of respondents did not believe that the signatory had more rights to the land. Table 2, though, does show significant regional variations in these perceptions.

**TABLE 2: PERCEPTIONS ON RIGHTS AND THE TITLEHOLDER**

Region and Sex of Respondent							
Rights of the titleholder	Puka (North)		Lushnja (Central)		Vlora (South)		All Districts
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Has more rights	12	44	32	35	4	0	23
Does not have more rights	88	56	68	65	96	100	77
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Independent Forum on Albanian Women, Intrahousehold Property Rights Survey, 1995

### **GENDER DIVISION OF LABOR**

Albanian women have always played a significant role in agriculture. During the communist period, women's agriculture participation rates increased. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s women's participation rates on agriculture cooperative and state farms exceeded that of men's.<sup>15</sup> A survey found that women comprise 51 percent of the agriculture labor force. In addition, when comparing labor between husbands and wives, wives work more as full-time producers (50 percent) than husbands (44 percent) and husbands are more likely to work off the farm (14 percent) than their wives (4 percent).<sup>16</sup>

Lastarria-Cornheil and Wheeler found that the division of labor in rural Albania is by task and product.<sup>17</sup> Women are most often responsible for farm processing, subsistence crops, and dairy production, whereas men are most often responsible for cash crops, land clearance, and irrigation.<sup>18</sup>

A 2003 study explored the gender division of labor based on the major groups of farm enterprises: annual crops, greenhouse operations, perennial crops, and livestock. Within annual crops, the report found a division of labor based on commodity; women provide the majority of labor requirements for maize, while men are responsible for watermelons. Greenhouse operations, however, are divided by activities and not commodities. For example, women often perform the land tilling, planting, plant servicing, harvesting and grading. Men often apply pesticides and carry out management and marketing activities.<sup>19</sup>

## **GENDER AND FARM MANAGEMENT**

Lastarria-Cornheil and Wheeler found that headship does not necessarily determine management in Albanian farms.\* Their survey revealed that only 45 percent of households designated as man-headed had farms actually managed by the man head. The majority of women managed farms had men as culturally recognized household heads.<sup>20</sup> In woman managed farms, the man had either retired (38 percent), held a government job (29 percent), worked for a private enterprise off the farm (16 percent), or had emigrated (4 percent). The lack of interviews with women made it difficult for Lastarria-Cornheil and Wheeler to reach conclusions about the extent to which women managed farms operate under different conditions than those managed by men.

## **ALBANIA AGRICULTURE COMPETITIVENESS (AAC) PROGRAM**

While the structure of the Albanian economy has undergone significant change since its transition to a market economy in the 1990s, Albania is still primarily an agricultural economy. Although only 26 percent of Albania's land is available for agriculture due to the mountainous terrain, agriculture generates approximately one quarter of gross domestic product (GDP), down from 50 percent in 2001. The agriculture sector absorbs almost half the Albanian labor force. Approximately 49 percent of men and 54 percent of women are engaged in agriculture. Further, 80 percent of rural men and 89 percent of rural women are involved in the agriculture sector.<sup>21</sup> In light of agriculture's vital role, the USAID funded AAC Program, a five year project launched in 2007, seeks to help strengthen the sector's competitiveness. The AAC Program will address six constraints that significantly impede the country's agriculture competitiveness:

- land fragmentation;
- lack of access to improved technologies;
- lack of understanding of how markets function;
- inadequate market information;
- lack of mutual trust and motivation for cooperation; and,
- lack of capability to adapt to trade conditions and opportunities.

Through a value chain analysis, AAC identified four commodity types to target: olives, melon, apples, and vegetables. The section below provides a short summary of the commodities, which was drawn from AAC's value chain assessments.

### **OLIVES**

There are an estimated four million olive trees currently in production, and an estimated 150 olive processors in Albania. Increasing the surface area of olive orchards is a priority for the Government of Albania. In 2006, 498 olive producers received government subsidies for planting new saplings. The government has plans to more than double its subsidies in 2008.<sup>22</sup>

On average, 36,000 tons of olives are produced annually. Approximately 90 percent of Albanian olive production is consumed domestically either in the form of table olives or olive oil. The domestic production, however, is unable to meet the demand for olive oil.

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\* Management refers to the oversight and execution of decisions related to the farm enterprise.

Consequently, Albania is a net importer of olive oil. According to recent estimates, the Albanian olive oil industry only meets 8 percent of domestic demand.<sup>23</sup>

**FIGURE 1: MAP OF ALBANIA**

## MELON

Melons were introduced into Albania in the 1980s. The primary areas of production are Saranda, Djviaka, Berat, Fier, and Lezhe. Currently, there is approximately 80,000 hectares of melon production, with an average yield of 30-40 tons per hectare.<sup>24</sup>



Source: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/europe/albania/>

## Apples

During the communist period, the Korca region had the highest percentage of fruit production and processing in the country. Fruit production also occurred in the north. As of 2006, Korca had 673,185 apple trees, covering 75 percent of the total land area. Apple cultivation represents approximately 80 percent of Korca's horticulture structure. In the mid 1990s, Korca's fruit processing industry declined with the fresh fruit market. Today, the few processors that do still exist in the region are focused on processing cherries and plums into jams and compote. Currently, there are no companies in Korca processing apples.<sup>25</sup>

## Vegetables

Lushnja, Berat, and Fier are highly valued for their greenhouse vegetable production, while Divjaka is known for its field vegetables. Vegetables comprise approximately 70 to 80 percent of the horticulture structure in the three regions. All exported vegetables originate from Lushnja, Berat, and Fier. In 2006, Albania exported 160 tons of cauliflower, 60 tons of cabbage, 40 tons of carrots, 200 tons of tomatoes, and 100 tons of cucumbers.<sup>26</sup>

# ALBANIAN WOMEN AGRICULTURE PRODUCERS: KEY CHARACTERISTICS

## SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The sample included 20 women agriculture producers from seven regions: Berat, Diber, Elbasan, Fier, Korca, Lushna, and Saranda. All participants were involved in the commercial production of at least one targeted AAC commodity including: olives, melons, tree fruits, and vegetables. The participants were identified by KASH, AAC staff members, and other women producers. All participants were either primary or co-managers of their agriculture enterprises. Only one woman received direct assistance from AAC; three participants' husbands participated in AAC trainings. It is not clear the extent to which the women spotlighted in the study are representative of the total population.

Eighteen of the 20 participants were married, two were widows. The age range was 34 to 55, with a median age of 40. The women came from households with between two and seven members, the majority of households included four members. The average household size in Albania is 4.2. The participants had between one and six children; the median was two children. The average fertility rate in Albania is 2.8. Fourteen women had children below the age of eighteen living at home. Of the six women with adult children, four had adult children living at home and providing farm labor. Those with younger children reported that their kids' primary focus was school, but that children provided labor, as time permitted, especially during the harvest.

## FARM MANAGEMENT

At the beginning of the study, it was assumed that there was a link between household headship and farm management. Thus, the researcher anticipated that all identified "successful" women would be the socially recognized head of their household. However, such a link was not seen. Similar to Wheeler and Lastaria, this study found women farmer managers with socially recognized men heads of households present. Eight of the twenty participants identified themselves as the primary manager of the agriculture enterprise. Five of the primary women managers live in households where a man head of household is physically present. Among the five women, two had husbands active in the enterprise while the other husbands did not participate in farm activities or decisions. Two of the husbands were inactive because of illness. However, both women stated that even before their injuries and illnesses their husbands only provided farm labor and were not the managers.

Twelve of the women identified themselves and their husbands as joint-managers of the farm. When possible, this was confirmed by their spouse. Management was linked with decision-making power. Women, who stated, that they jointly managed the enterprise with their husbands made this evaluation based on the fact that key farm-related decisions were made together with their spouses, including: what to produce; when and where to sell products; whether or not to try a new production technique; and, whether or not to purchase farm equipment. In addition, in cases where the family hired laborers, the women were responsible for supervising some if not all the workers. All twelve joint-

managers stated that their opinions held equal weight in decisions, which most often came from their own technical expertise and or business acumen.

Comparison between women managed and joint-managed enterprises is limited due the small sample size. Conclusions are also limited by the variance observed within the two groups of management types.

## **ACCESS TO ASSETS**

Gender and agriculture literature stresses the importance of women's access to both tangible and intangible assets for success in commercial farming. This section examines women's access to assets including: physical assets, financial assets, human capital, and social capital.

### **PHYSICAL ASSETS**

**Land.** Four of the participants held the title to the agriculture land. Two inherited the land after their husbands died, and two received the sole title to the land during the 1990s privatization process. The amount of family agriculture land held ranged from .28 to 9 hectare, with a median of 1.4 hectare. Participants' land was divided into an average of 3 parcels.

As previously noted, the title to land is most often in the head of the household's name. When the participants were asked, "Is your name on the title to the land" almost all participants initially answered "yes." Follow-up questions had to be asked to determine if in fact the woman possessed the title to the land. In fact, the title was most often in their husband's name. However, land was stated to be property of the family and not just the head of the household. As Aneta, a melon producer in Xare stated, "It's my land too. His name may be listed on the title, but our family was given the land." For these women, their access to and control over the land was not impeded by the lack of individual land ownership rights.<sup>†</sup>

**Farm Equipment.** Less than half of the sample owned their own equipment including tractors, plows, disks, harvesters, and irrigation systems. The majority either rented or simply did not rely on mechanized tools. Several women stated that all the labor was done by hand. For several of the women, harvesters were not applicable to the types of commodities that they produce. In addition, producers without an irrigation system used gravity flow irrigation.

There was no clear relationship between women managed farms and the capacity to own or rent equipment. Table 3 provides a summary of the equipment owned or rented by the participants.

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<sup>†</sup> It has been noted that lack of individual ownership rights is important in cases of divorce. Women do not typically inherit land through their natal family, and therefore are dependent on their husbands land. This issue, however, was not raised by any of the informants in the sample.

**TABLE 3: EQUIPMENT OWNED OR RENTED**

Equipment	Own	Rent	Don't own or Rent	Total
Tractor	7	8	5	20
Plow	6	9	5	20
Disk	5	4	11	20
Harvester	1	5	14	20
Irrigation system	10	1	9	20

Seven women owned a car.<sup>‡</sup> Of those seven, four possessed a driver's license. The three others confessed that they regretted not learning to drive, but felt it was too late to start now. Women without a driver's license depended primarily on their adult sons to transport products to the market or run farm related errands. For three women who take their products to the market, the lack of a vehicle is a significant constraint. However, for the majority of the women, wholesalers buy the products directly from their farm.

### Storage Facilities

Fourteen of the women have access to or own a storage facility within a few kilometers of their house. However, only one woman has access to cold storage. All the women agreed that this was their most significant constraint to negotiating better prices with wholesalers. As Esma, a cherry and apple producer in Peshkopi, explained "The wholesaler knows that I don't have a refrigerator. He knows that if I don't accept his price for my cherries tomorrow they will be ruined. I have no power to negotiate." Mireadelina, an apple producer in Korca, stated "If we had cold storage, we could sell our apples all year round. Now, we can only sell them from September until the end of December. If we are lucky they are still good the first two weeks of January."

### FINANCIAL CAPITAL

For half of the participants, agriculture was their only source of income. Nine had husbands with non-agriculture jobs, and one woman received remittances from her husband who was working abroad. Only one woman held a non-agriculture job outside of the home. The sample included a disparate range of monthly incomes. Households whose only source of income was agriculture had a monthly income range of \$200 to \$2,000. While households with both agriculture and non-agriculture income had a range of \$550 to \$1,250.

Less than a third of the participants had ever taken out a loan. Of the seven women that had received a loan, three were the primary applicant, three were co-applicants, and one had jointly applied for the loan with her husband. Two of the women who applied for loans were required to have their husband's sign as co-applicants, but noted that men were also required to have their wife's signatures. One woman's husband had to receive signatures from all five of the family members. The sources of credit included: Albanian Union Foundation, the Agriculture Bank, Pro-Credit, and Opportunity Albania. In only one case, the producer received a loan from a wholesaler. The range of credit

<sup>‡</sup> It should be noted, though, that owning a car in Albania is still a luxury and not commonplace.

received was 300,000 to 5 million leke (approximately \$4,000 to \$65,000). Producers received loans in order to start new farms, buy plastic for mini poly-tunnels, build underground storage facilities, buy saplings, purchase tractors, and install ventilation systems.

Women who had never taken out a loan perceived that access to credit was not a major constraint, but the terms of the loan were, including interest and repayment rate. One woman stated, "Every day someone from either Opportunity Albania or Pro-Credit comes to my greenhouse and offers to give me loan." She, and other women like her, would like to take out a loan but fear a failure to repay the loan. Women spoke both of the high interest rates as well as the repayment schedule. Several reported that organizations, such as Opportunity Albania, did not have a product that fit the variability and vulnerability of the agriculture sector. At the same time, the Agriculture Bank does not provide loans small enough to meet the needs of several of the informants.

### **HUMAN CAPITAL**

All participants had at least an eighth grade education, 12 had a high school degree, and two had university degrees. Eighteen women grew up on a farm, only two grew up in an urban setting. Further, all the participants were former members of either an agricultural cooperative or a state farm. Four of the women were former *brigadiers*, and one was an agricultural specialist. The majority of women were producing the same types of crops that they produced during communist system. Knowledge of agriculture was perceived as a valuable asset. When asked about decision-making, women often responded "Of course I make decisions. I'm the expert." Bardha, who owns and manages a greenhouse stated, "My husband is a lawyer, he doesn't know anything about agriculture. Why would he make decisions about the farm?" Experience and expertise in agriculture was strongly linked to women's management and decision-making roles on the farm.

### **SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Social capital is an important strategy to decrease production costs. Several women discussed using their social networks to reduce the costs of renting equipment. Renting equipment in Albania includes both the piece of equipment and hired labor to perform the associated tasks. Instead of renting both the equipment and hired labor, several women were able to make arrangements with friends and neighbors to only rent the equipment.

Labor exchange was stated to be very important, both economically and socially. Only three of the woman in the sample stated that they did not exchange labor with their neighbors. When asked about labor exchange, Bardha responded, "Without a doubt, its part of our tradition to help our neighbors." During the transition process, Donika noted that the following saying developed, "All we have left is God and neighbor." In addition, Merita explained that members of her village perceive themselves as part of one large extended family. Family members are obligated to one another; therefore, helping one's neighbor during harvest or other labor-intensive periods is expected. It was because of this tradition of reciprocity that three women responded that they preferred to hire help than ask a neighbor because they did not want to have to return the favor at a later point in time.

**Differential Social Networks.** Post-socialist agriculture literature often discusses the differential social networks between former cooperative chairmen/women and managers and private entrepreneurs. For example, former cooperative chairmen and managers' extensive personal networks with local and national politicians from the previous system placed them in a particularly advantageous position to gain access to loans and state subsidies. Private entrepreneurs, in contrast, have faced a difficult economic environment lacking capital, subsidies, and ties with the retail sector.<sup>27</sup> In addition, former state and collective farm managers have often possessed an advantage in the transition process due to their social ties, expert knowledge, and extensive experience.<sup>28</sup>

Similar situations were observed in Albania. The former women *brigadiers* and agriculture specialists in the sample had more advantageous social networks than their former cooperative or state farm worker counterparts. Marjana recalled that her contacts as a *brigadier* and her technical expertise helped her not only to establish the private greenhouse, but also to access the land. She was the only *brigadier* in the state-run greenhouse to receive land. Similarly, Bardha's position within the former state-owned greenhouse was important for locating reliable, trained workers. As an agriculture specialist, she developed relations with the laborers and hired many former workers when she opened her own private greenhouse in the 1990s. Former *brigadiers'* networks have also helped them in accessing price information.

In contrast to the *brigadiers*, Donika Davidi and Leonara Cino, both greenhouse owners and widows, discussed how their social networks and knowledge were linked to their husbands. The death of their husbands meant a loss of access to those networks. Leonara stated, "My husband was a *brigadier*; all my training and knowledge came from him." While Leonara did work in a state farm as a *brigadier*, she worked in the finance department and did not build the same networks that have assisted Bardha and Marjana. Women joint-managers with husbands as former *brigadiers* discussed how their husband's positions aided in their businesses success. Luljeta, who jointly manages a greenhouse in Lushnja stated, "If my husband didn't have experience we couldn't do so well. He used his previous contacts when we started our business."

**The Role of Associations.** Since 2001, USAID has supported the development of a member-based agriculture association to support the Albanian agriculture sector with services and advocacy. Today, Albanian producer associations are often regarded as weak and ineffective. Lack of mutual trust among producers, between producers and processors or traders is seen as an impediment to the sustainability of agriculture associations. Of the existing associations, few are viable in terms of financial self-sufficiency and member services. Few, if any, associations effectively support farmers in terms of institutional technology: buying inputs, marketing products, sharing agricultural machinery, and administering irrigation. As several informants pointed out, "Associations don't work well in Albania." Since most agriculture enterprises are family run, the family is a member of the association and most often represented by the head of the household. Only seven of the women interviewed are members of producer associations, five are joint-farm managers and two are sole managers. Of the women

who regularly attend association meetings, the primary service received is information on plant diseases.

Bardha, who was the former KASH chair for Fier, was the only woman member when KASH first started. Even though KASH Fier has several women on their membership roll, women often send their husbands to attend the meetings. Bardha stated, “Women just don’t feel comfortable at these meetings.” She described several situations in which she, herself, experienced hostility because other members of KASH did not think it was appropriate for her, as a woman, to participate much less lead the regional office. In addition to both men and women’s perceptions concerning appropriate behavior for women, the space at which association meetings often occur serves as a hindrance to women’s participation. Producer associations that do not have their own facilities or do not have access to a community center, often meet at café bars. These spaces are often regarded as inappropriate for women, which negatively impacts women’s attendance rates.

In addition, women who are not association members also expressed ambivalence, citing that they did not see the benefits of joining an association. Aneta’s husband, for example, attends the Xare melon association’s meetings on a regular basis. When asked why she did not attend the meetings with her husband, Aneta responded, “No one is stopping me from going. If I wanted to go I could do, but I’m not interested.” Donika stopped her participation in an association because she was “not benefiting from the activities.” Mireadelina, whose husband is a member of an association, acknowledged that his membership was a “waste of time.” He himself rarely attends meetings and only goes if he thinks the topics may benefit their agriculture activities.

On the other hand, in Gostim, a village in Elbasan both husbands and wives attend the olive association meetings together. Members stated that they receive both technical assistance and literature on servicing the plants and protecting them from diseases. Meeting attendance was seen as beneficial to both husband and wife. Since the establishment of the association, couples have attended together. The couples interviewed said that this was Gostim’s “tradition.” During the communist period, men and women attended parties and social gatherings together; thus, it was perceived as “normal” for men and women to attend the association meetings together. CEFA, the Italian donor that funds the association, recognized these dynamics and has worked to ensure that women and men have equal access to the association’s activities and benefits.

Several women saw a real need for associations to advocate on behalf of their members. One area of importance for the producers was ensuring quality inputs. Their concern was not the price, but the quality. Marjana recounted a story of purchasing seeds for *bella* tomatoes, which turned out in fact to be the *victoria* variety. She is fortunate, though, that she has not had entire crops destroyed like her friend Bardha, who lost her entire pepper crop due to defected seeds. Marjana spends a great amount of time and energy buying her inputs from multiple suppliers in order to avoid a situation in which her entire crop is ruined. She said, “Albania has too many associations that are just paper associations. They don’t do anything. I need an association that will help me and others like me get proper seeds and fertilizers.”

## PRACTICES AND PARTICIPATION

### HIRED LABOR

Eleven of the participants hired either seasonal or full-time laborers. The range of hired labor included 2-15 full-time employees and 3-40 seasonal employees. Participants were asked questions about the types of activities they hire women to perform versus men. Bardha stated that she was biased towards women, “I don’t hire men. Women are more careful and committed.” Particular tasks are associated with women, such as harvesting, while plowing is considered a man’s task. Informants agreed that women were better at working in greenhouses. The association of men and plowing was linked to men’s perceived physical strength. Women noted that tasks such as fertilizing and plowing were physically too difficult for women. One woman equated women’s attention and care to vegetables in the greenhouse to caring for children, “which need lots of patience and special attention.” At the same time, women producers reported that they do perform land preparation tasks and will hire women if they cannot find a man to hire.

Donika also provided another reason for why women are preferred as agricultural workers. She said, “You can pay women less. Men have more chances to find jobs; women are willing to work for less. Men can go to town and find a job. Women can’t.” Other producers that hire both women and men denied wage discrimination and stated that they paid their employees equally, regardless of their sex.

### HOUSEHOLD DIVISION OF LABOR

Table 4 provides an overview of the division of labor at the household level. Participants were asked if the following activities were regularly performed by themselves; with their husbands (or someone else); never performed; or not applicable to their enterprise or household.

**TABLE 4: ACTIVITY PROFILE<sup>§</sup>**

Activities	Regular	Joint	Never	NA	Total
Plowing, disking, cultivating, or planting	4	11	5	0	20
Applying fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides	4	9	7	0	20
Irrigation	4	6	5	5	20
Harvesting	7	10	3	0	20
Sorting and grading	10	6	4	0	20
Running farm errands	5		15	0	20
Making major farm purchases	5	1	14	0	20
Marketing products, dealing with wholesalers or selling directly to consumers	9	5	6	0	20
Taking care of farm animals	10	4	0	6	20
Bookkeeping, maintaining records, paying bills	10	8	2	0	20
Doing household tasks like preparing meals, house cleaning	16	4	0	0	20

<sup>§</sup> Participants were asked if the following activities were one of their regular duties, something they helped out with occasionally, something they never do, a joint activity (with their husband or another person), or something that is not done on their farm.

The division of labor was not necessarily linked to decision-making or control over those categories. For example, the act of selling was not linked to control over household income. Questions concerning who received the benefits from the commodities produced struck most of the informants as odd: “The family, of course” was the typical reply. Land as a family resource and not an individual resource influences perceptions about who should benefit from the fruits of the land. Even women managed enterprises reported that profits they earned contributed to the family’s earnings, not simply their own. The women who are joint managers, and do not participate in the selling and negotiating processes did not believe their husbands withheld earnings for themselves. According to Aneta, “That’s stealing. You don’t steal from your family.”

Women who jointly manage the farm enterprise were quick to point out that just because they were not involved in the “act of purchasing” or the “act of selling” did not mean that they were not active in the decision-making. For example, informants repeatedly stated that while the men actually made the purchases they only did so after the couple had come to an agreement about the purchase.

In interviews with NGOs and international donors, it was stated that marketing and selling are men’s tasks. The interviews revealed a diversity of perspectives. For example, Luljeta explained that she does not participate in marketing activities because of her other household demands. Her husband drops off their tomatoes and cucumbers at night. She has young children and needs to be home to make dinner and take care of the kids. Luljeta described the division of labor, “During the day, we work together on the family farm. Then in the evening, my husband takes our products to the wholesaler, and I take care of things at home. We both work long days.”

Several women stated that they enjoyed negotiating with wholesalers and did not have any difficulties carrying out such tasks. For example, Garufo acknowledged that she was the more skillful negotiator and that she was the one responsible for finding markets for their melons. Often it was stated that in the south it is common for women to be involved in such processes, and that the north was a different situation. From limited interviews in the north though, two apple producers discussed how they enjoyed selling their products in the market and that they did not meet any cultural resistance to taking part in those activities. At the same time, Merita, a tomato producer in the south, discussed the shame she experienced her first year selling tomatoes in the market. For her, the act of selling was embarrassing because it revealed to others that she had to work and that her husband’s income could no longer support their family.

While men, in general, may be more active in marketing and selling activities, the interviews reveal that women are not necessarily precluded from these tasks. As such, training that focuses on marketing or market-linkages should not disregard women as potential participants.

## **DECISION-MAKING**

Decision-making correlated with management positions. While labor participation was important, it did not necessarily relate to decision-making power. For example, Garufo’s husband provides at least fifty percent of the labor on the farm, but because she is the one with agriculture expertise and business savvy, she is the one who provides

oversight and direction for the enterprise and makes important decisions. Garufo and her husband both agreed that she is the *brigadier* of the enterprise. In another example, Aneta and her two sister-in-laws perform the seed grafting for the family’s melon commercial farm. They also manage the hired laborers. These activities were deemed to entitle them to an equal voice when the brothers and their wives sit down to make decisions. As Aneta stated, “Without us they can’t do anything. They can’t make decisions without us or the enterprise would collapse.”

Husbands and wives, when possible, were both asked during the interviews about their decision-making role in the household. In households where both men and women were present, none identified one person within the relationship as higher or lower in status. As Merita said, “We are both the *brigadier*. The only way you can prosper is to decide things together.” Similarly, the Xare commune director stated, “There is no one boss in this family, my wife and I are equal. One hand washes the other, but both hands wash the face.” In joint-managed enterprises, the variable identified by respondents as key to success was cooperation within the family. Table 5 provides an overview of responses to questions concerning decision-making responsibilities.

**TABLE 5: DECISIONMAKING**

<b>Who usually makes decisions about</b>	<b>Self</b>	<b>Husband or someone else</b>	<b>Together with husband</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Whether to rent more or less land?	2		8	10	20
Whether to buy major household appliances?	5		15		20
Whether to buy major farm equipment?	4	3	13		20
Whether to produce a new crop?	8	1	11		20
When to sell your products?	8	2	10		20
Where to sell your products?	7	2	11		20
Whether to try a new technique	8	2	10		20
Whether you take a job off the farm?	2		2	16	20

# ALBANIAN WOMEN AGRICULTURE PRODUCERS: CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDIES OVERVIEW

This section highlights eight successful Albanian women agriculture producers out of the twenty interviewed. The cases chosen represent a range of crops, farm size, and management types. There are three family ownership/management strategies represented: three women own and manage the enterprise, two manage but do not solely own the enterprise, and three jointly-manage the enterprise with their husbands. The narratives are snapshots of each woman's entrepreneurial story. Each case study provides an overview of the woman's past experience in agriculture, description of her farm, commodities produced, household relations, challenges, and strategies for mitigating constraints.

The stories show that there is no clear, linear path to success for women. There are women who single-handedly established themselves as successful entrepreneurs, relying on the knowledge and experience gained during the communist period. There are also accounts of women who have built successful agribusinesses with their husbands through sharing the division of labor or specializing in particular activities. Each woman profiled continues to face challenges and opportunities that are bound in relationships and situations. For one woman, the death of her husband meant the loss of a business partner, market informant, and transporter. For another, credit is the only coping mechanism for rising input costs and volatile markets. As Cornwall observed, "As members of families, associations, and hearth-holds, women's abilities to make active, purposive choices are constantly reconfigured in relation to these others."<sup>29</sup>

The case studies show that given sufficient support and experience women can excel in agriculture in Albania. Experience during the communist period was a good base for launching into agricultural enterprises. Women desire to build on that base and acquire new skills and develop new products and markets. Family and spousal support are important but not critical inputs. Women agricultural entrepreneurs in Albania also appear ready to expand their businesses, but face the constraints that many agricultural enterprises face. The profiles presented here illuminate the transforming face of a changing agricultural sector.

## WOMEN DO THE WORK AND MEN RECEIVE THE CREDIT

### **Bardha Bega, Seman, Fier Greenhouse Owner Woman Owned and Managed Enterprise**

Bardha Bega, sleek in a business suit, stands in front of her lucrative greenhouse; an investment her husband thought was crazy. In 1970, the University-educated Agriculture Specialist went to work as an agronomist at the very first Albanian greenhouse. Following the dismantling of the state farms, Bardha chose an option to retain part of the greenhouse, but ended up only with the land. She chose to rebuild: "Agriculture is my passion and profession. This is what I know how to do best."

Throughout the communist period, both men and women were highly involved in the management of greenhouses in Fier. Women occupied over 50 percent of the *brigadier* or management positions in the vegetable sector, while men held the majority of management positions within transportation, tobacco, corn, and mechanical agriculture sectors.



With the dismantling of the state farms, former employees were provided with an option to receive part of the state owned greenhouse; however, only a few employees seized the opportunity. The greenhouses' infrastructure and equipment was either destroyed or pilfered in the early 1990s; former state employees only received the land where the greenhouses once stood. Bardha received the sole title to three hectares of land. In 1993, she decided to rebuild the demolished greenhouse in the previous style, a glasshouse.

Bardha produces green onions, spinach, eggplant, peppers, green beans, and tomatoes, but the last two are her primary commodities. Last year, she produced 50,000 kilograms of tomatoes largely *victoria* and *bella* varieties. Each year, she tries to adapt to the market demands. She has found that wholesalers, for example, prefer purchasing her thick skinned tomatoes, while retailers prefer thin skinned tomatoes. Bardha sells almost exclusively to Vlore wholesalers with whom she has verbal contracts. She says, "The market found me." The wholesalers pick up the products from her greenhouse covering all transportation costs. Last year, her average sales price of tomatoes was 50

leke/ kilogram. While she owns a storage facility across from the greenhouse, she has no refrigeration and must sell the same day she harvests.

The success of her agriculture enterprise has fluctuated over the years. The early 1990s were known as the “tomato and bean period” in Albania. The low economic position of most Albanians led to a high consumption of tomatoes during the summer months and beans during the winter. She saw her business flourish in the early years due to overwhelming demand. From 1997 until 2000, the political turmoil had ramifications on Bardha’s business. She experienced great difficulty accessing quality inputs, and the quality of her products significantly declined. Since 2002, her products have increased in quality and correspondingly so have her sales. In 2007, her sales amounted to 2.2 million leke.

Bardha owns and runs the greenhouse while her husband owns a notary office in Fier. Up until last year, she made all purchases for the farm, negotiated with wholesalers, and sold her products. When she took a full-time paid position with a Regional Development Program, she hired a full-time woman manager for the business. She hires eight full-time workers, and during harvest she hires up to 15 men and women seasonal workers. Several of the former state employees now work for her. Bardha admits to a bias towards hiring women workers. She perceives women as “more careful” and “harder workers” than men. While Bardha discusses major decisions regarding the greenhouse with her husband, such as whether to produce a new crop or make a major purchase, she ultimately makes the decision. As she notes, “My husband is not involved in the greenhouse. He always says, ‘You decide.’”

For the last three years, she was the chair for the Albanian Agrobusiness Council (KASH) regional office in Fier. When KASH Fier was first established, she was the only woman member. To this day, the majority of the region’s members are men. She acknowledges that in the early days of her business, being a woman was an additional constraint. Wholesalers looked down upon her, and assumed that because she was a woman she could be pushed around. As she gained negotiating experience and established herself as a producer, she became known in the community and her situation changed. While she believes that perceptions of women’s ability to manage all the processes involved in an agribusiness have changed, still “Most often women do the work, and men receive the credit.”

## THE HOUSEHOLD'S "MINISTER OF INTERIOR"

**Marjana Blido – Fier**  
**Greenhouse Owner**  
**Woman Owned and Managed Enterprise**



Marjana Blido stands formidably in front of her green house, the stereotype of her former profession, a communist *brigadier*. Marjana made a successful transition to private business, almost single handedly building up her greenhouse following the 1991 land reform. She has the sole title to her land, hires all her labor, and makes all important management decisions. She has strong opinions about her business, deals directly with wholesalers, and inspects her inputs critically. Her husband affectionately refers to her as the household's "Minister of Interior."

Marjana grew up on a farm in Lushnja. After completing a secondary education in agriculture, she worked in an agriculture cooperative with her parents for six years. She then moved to Fier with her husband, where she became a *brigadier* of a greenhouse, the same one she now currently owns. Marjana's work experience and position as a *brigadier* equipped her with the credibility and knowledge to establish her 0.5 hectare private greenhouse. Similar to Bardha Bega (previous case study), her share of the state greenhouse included only the land; everything else was completely destroyed in the transformation process. She too rebuilt the greenhouse in the state owned style, as a glasshouse.

She owns and manages the greenhouse with little assistance from her family members. Her husband has been ill for the last several years, and only provides labor in the realm

of maintenance and irrigation. Her two grown sons are not involved in the agribusiness. One son is studying dentistry while the other lives and works in Italy. Marjana's family is completely dependent upon her business for their income.

Marjana's main commodities are tomatoes and cucumbers. She also produces a small quantity of green beans, spinach, parsley, and dill. In addition to her own labor, Marjana hires two full-time women and one man. The women work in the greenhouse, while the man is employed as the guard. During the harvest season, she hires up to five women casual laborers.

Over the years, she has learned more about the market's demand and tailored her production varieties accordingly. For example, she said, "I've learned that the market doesn't like huge tomatoes. People prefer small tomatoes that aren't too hard and not too soft, somewhere in between." Last year was a good year for Marjana; she produced 50,000 kilograms of tomatoes which sold on average at 50 leke/kilogram. Like Bardha, Marjana sells mainly in the Vlore market. She did not seek out the market, but rather was first approached by the Vlore wholesalers.

Up until four years ago, she and her husband sold the tomatoes together to a retailer in Fier. They would work in the greenhouse during the day and then distribute the products in the evening. She and her husband jointly decided that they needed to hire a distributor. She now has an oral agreement with a wholesaler who picks up and sells her tomatoes during the months of May until the end of July. Before agreeing on a price with the wholesaler, Marjana calls Lushnje, Vlore, and Fier markets to determine the price.

Marjana and her husband discuss purchases for the farm and where to sell their products, but when it comes to producing a new crop and trying new production techniques she is the one who decides. She frequently discusses her agriculture activities and receives advice from friends, such as Bardha Bega.

Marjana is confident in her ability to sell her tomatoes, but is frustrated with the unreliable inputs on the market. She has learned to sample from different input suppliers, and never buys exclusively from one. Last year, for example, she bought seeds for *victoria* tomatoes, which turned out to be a mixture of different kinds of tomatoes, and not the one she selected. She says, "Even when you buy imported inputs that say they are 'certified' you never know exactly what you are getting." She sees a role for associations to ensure producers receive quality inputs. Marjana's family is dependent on the greenhouse and Marjana's capacity to grow the business. In this case, reaching one woman reaches many.

## **“THE HARD WORKER”**

**Donika Davidi, Lushnja**  
**Greenhouse Owner**  
**Woman Owned and Managed Enterprise**



The death of Donika Davidi’s husband in 2005 not only brought heartache, but also hardship to her growing business. Donika’s husband was the business partner, market informant, and transporter for the tomatoes and cucumbers produced on two plus hectares of land located in Myzeqeja, a region with highly prized soil. Now Donika is unable to hire full-time workers, must hire transport for produce, and relies on her teenage son and University-attending daughter for some agriculture tasks. She intends to build a storage facility and another greenhouse in order to obtain higher prices and compete with imported products, “I’m overworking myself, but what can I do?”

Located five kilometers off the main road to Lushnja, Donika Davidi’s 3,400 m<sup>2</sup> greenhouse sits next to a bar café. She was identified by community members as a successful women producer, but Donika was quick to point out that the relative success she is experiencing today is a result of her and her husband’s hard work, “Everything you see, he helped me build.”

With over 35 years of experience living and working on a farm, Donika attributes her love of agriculture to her parents’ influence, “They taught me to love the work.” After completing her secondary education in agriculture, she worked in an agriculture cooperative in the cotton, beans, and corn sectors. The region is known not only for its rich soil, but also for its long tradition of egalitarian relationships between husbands and

wives. According to Donika, “You won’t find a woman in the region who isn’t an active participant and decision-maker in the family agriculture enterprise; this is the tradition that our parents passed on to us.”

Donika’s two plus hectares of land are divided into five parcels, approximately three to four kilometers distant from each other. Of the land that she inherited from her husband, she is only able to work on two of the parcels of land because she cannot afford to plow the rest.

Before her husband’s death, Donika ran a small café in addition to working on the farm. It was through patrons of her café that she and her husband first found markets for their vegetables in Tirana, Fushe Kruja, and Lushnja. Since her husband’s passing, and having no car of her own, Donika hires a driver to pick up her crops at the end of the day and transport them to the market. The driver charges her 5 leke/per kilo for the transportation service. While she did establish her own contacts through the small business, Donika acknowledges that her husband had more connections to determine market prices. Over the last three years, Donika has found it increasingly difficult to obtain price information. Now she depends on friends involved in commercial farming to compare prices.

Previously, Donika and her husband were able to hire full-time laborers to assist with their agribusiness, but now she cannot afford the extra expenses. Donika’s teenage son is actively involved in all major production processes, and her daughter who attends law school in Tirana helps out on the weekends and during school breaks. Donika hires part-time women laborers for specific tasks such as pulling out weeds and harvesting – two tasks which are perceived as “women’s jobs.” Even though fertilizing and plowing are often socially regarded as too difficult for women, Donika performs all tasks on the farm, paying little attention to social categories of women’s work. She also depends heavily on labor exchange with her neighbors. In line with a proverb that developed during the transition process, “All we have left now is God and our neighbors.”

Donika sells her tomatoes from the end of June to mid July and her cucumbers from the end of March to the end of June. Last year, she produced 18,000 kilograms of tomatoes which sold at an average price of 40 leke/kilogram and 35,000 kilograms of cucumbers for 25 leke/kilogram. In order to cope with the increasing competition both domestically and abroad for both commodities, she plans to build a storage facility and a new greenhouse. A storage facility would reduce the pressure to sell on the day of harvesting and allow her to wait for better prices. In addition, the new greenhouse would allow her to diversify her commodities; she plans to produce eggplants, spinach, and peppers. In order to actualize her plans, though, she needs credit. While microfinance institutions such as Opportunity Albania and Pro-Credit approach her frequently with loan information, she cannot afford their high interest rates.

While her husband was alive, he received assistance from USAID and attended trainings on new technology and planting techniques. Since his death, Donika has been invited to attend trainings and receives similar assistance. In addition, Donika also participates in a women’s association funded through the Spanish donor organization. The purpose of the organization is to share information and experiences with other

women involved in agriculture. She, like other women producers, is frustrated by the lack of reliable inputs. Whereas imported seeds yield 250 kilograms of cucumbers per 1,000m<sup>2</sup>, Albanian seeds, on average, only yield 150 kilograms. Even when she purchases imported seeds there is no guarantee, “Sometimes the input suppliers cheat; the product will say ‘imported’ but it’s really from Albania.”

## TO EACH A TASK

**Garufo Gata, Lavidhia, Sarande**  
**Melon Producer**  
**Woman Managed Enterprise**



Garufo Gato and her husband stand as proud partners in front of one of four owned and leased agriculture plots in Lavidhia, an area of Albania bordering Greece. Garufo, one of a Greek minority in Albania, and her husband saved the investment capital for their farming enterprise while working in Greece in the early 1900s. Their partnership is one element of the successful business: “I never say that’s your task and this is my task. We both have our strengths and weaknesses.” But if they cannot reach an agreement, it is Garufo who makes the decision.

The family’s land is located in an area called Lavidhia, 40 kilometers from Sarande. During the communist period, Lavidhia produced corn, wheat, cantaloupe, watermelon, and vegetables. However, with the collapse of the cooperative the irrigation system was completely destroyed. The area now suffers from lack of access to water. The main commodities now produced in Lavidhia are vegetables.

Unlike other parts of Albania, scarcity and fragmentation of land are not major constraints for the farmers. When the agriculture cooperative was dismantled, the village divided all the land among its residents. Unlike in other areas where each parcel of land may be up to several kilometers from each other, all parcels in Lavidhia are relatively close by. For example, Garufo’s family’s land is divided into four parcels, which are no more than 500 meters apart from one another. According to Garufo, “There are hectares upon hectares of fertile land ready for cultivation. If I had a tractor, my husband and I would expand our farm.” With the vast out-flow of residents to Greece, land is in abundance. Garufo and her husband rent two to four hectares of land from their neighbors each year. Poorly irrigated areas are rented for 1,000 leke per

1,000 m<sup>2</sup>, whereas more easily irrigated areas are rented for 2,000 leke for the same amount of land. Access to rented land is established through informal, verbal agreements.

In addition to growing tomatoes, green beans, and peppers in her 0.5 hectare greenhouse, Garufo produces cantaloupe on one hectare plot of land. Last year, her crop yielded 50,000 kilograms of cantaloupe, which sold for approximately 30 leke/kilogram. Right now, Garufo and her husband sell their cantaloupe during the months of June to August. If the irrigation system were improved in the village, the growing season could be extended until September. Garufo sees opportunities to expand both in the Albanian and Greek markets. Her status as a Greek minority allows her to travel back and forth from Greece to buy inputs and supplies for the farm.

Garufo recognizes that there are still some families in the region which follow a very strict division of labor with women providing the majority of farm labor and men finding markets and selling the product. Garufo attributes the family farm's success to the strong relationship between her and her husband, "One person can't do it alone." Further, she perceives the delineation of specific tasks according to gender as an impediment to a businesses' progress. Garufo is the more talented negotiator of the two, and thus does the majority of the marketing and selling of their products. In addition to a strong belief in sharing all the production processes on the farm, she and her husband also share the household tasks of cooking and cleaning. According to Garufo her household is unique, "There are only few that operate this way." Based on her experience and secondary education in agriculture, Garufo perceives herself as the *brigadier* of the agribusiness. While all major farm-related decisions are discussed with her husband, Garufo is the manager of the enterprise, and ultimately makes the decisions.

## WITHOUT A LOAN YOU CAN'T MAKE IT

**Merusha Malasi – Syzes**  
**Olive Producer**  
**Woman Managed Enterprise**



Merusha Malasi climbs the steep hill with ease in her A-line black skirt and high heel pumps. Her 500 plus olive trees are perched atop a hill overlooking the village of Syzes (in between Fier and Berat). The winding, rocky path leading to the family's farm parallels that of her business trajectory. A tragic accident in 2004 left her husband severely handicapped and Merusha the sole manager of the family's commercial olive farm and primary care-taker for her husband. With the realities of increased input costs, she perceives credit as her primary coping strategy, "Without a loan, you can't make it."

In her mid-50s, she has over forty years of experience living and working on a farm. After attending the obligatory eight years of school, she worked for an agriculture cooperative for twenty-five years in various agriculture sectors. Shortly after the communist regime collapsed, she and her husband established their own private commercial farm. The area of Syzes is known for olive cultivation. Through the 1991 land reform, the households in Syzes acquired 2,400 m<sup>2</sup> of land and 12 olive trees per person. The family's five hectares of land is divided into three parcels, two of which are dedicated to olives. When Merusha's daughter married, she followed the local tradition of donating her land to her natal family. Through this donation, Merusha became a joint-owner of land. The title to the land that her daughter "donated" is in both Merusha and her husband's name.

The majority of Merusha's 500 olive trees are new; only 100 currently bear fruit. Seventy percent of the trees produce table olives and thirty percent produce olives for processing. She and her husband benefited from the government's efforts to invest in the production of tree fruits. By increasing the surface area of olive trees, they received 150,000 leke from the government.

Merusha has taken out several loans. When she applied for a loan from the Agriculture Bank not only did her husband have to sign as a co-applicant, but so did her three children. Since the land is regarded as the family's property, the bank required all five of their signatures before processing the loan. When Merusha decided to increase the number of tree fruits on the parcel that her daughter donated to the family, she decided to take out a loan. This time she approached the People's Bank, which did not require any co-applicants. With the realities of increased input costs, she perceives credit as her primary coping strategy. Like most of the olive producers in the region, Merusha does not have an irrigation system and relies on rain. Last year, there was little rain and she had to take out a loan to cover the costs of transporting water.

Last year, the olive trees yielded 7,000 kilograms of olives. Once harvested, Merusha stores the olives in a storage facility one kilometer from her house. The storage facility is located off of the main road between Fier and Berat. Merusha sells her table olives to wholesalers out of her storage facility. When her olives are ready for the market, she puts a sign in front of the storage facility to advertise. She does not have any formal or informal agreements with the wholesalers. The majority of her sales transpire during the months of November and December. Last year, she received an average of 150 leke/kilogram. Each morning, before deciding on a price, she calls six or seven wholesalers to gather price information. The olive sales comprise one hundred percent of the household's income.

Of her three children, only one still lives at home. Her son is a student and is not involved in the day-to-day work on the farm. Because of her husband's injury, she is the only member of the household who works on the farm. In addition to her own labor, she hires two to three seasonal workers each year. She hires men to prune and apply the fertilizer and women to harvest the olives. The division of labor is shaped by ideas of appropriate activities for men and women. Applying fertilizer requires a tractor; driving a tractor is perceived as a man's task. Pruning is perceived as too hard for women; yet, Merusha acknowledges that when there is a need for labor she does some of the pruning herself.

Merusha takes initiative on all major decisions concerning olive production, marketing, and selling including whether to buy major farm equipment, whether to produce a new variety; when to sell the olives; where to sell the olives; and, whether to try a new production technique. She consults with her husband on decisions concerning purchases and whether to produce a new variety, but ultimately the decision is hers, "We always find a way to agree. I take the initiative, but he supports me."

## NO ONE IS HIGHER THAN THE OTHER

**Nazmie Zaimi, Berat**  
**Olive Producer**  
**Joint-managed Enterprise**



Nazmie Zaimi is no slouch. She works 13 hours a day, seven days a week, dividing her time between managing the family's olive farm and their agriculture input supply shop. Though a *brigadier* by profession, Nazmie and her husband work together as equal business partners, "We are both engaged in the work; therefore, we are both entitled to make decisions. We are at the same level; no one is higher than the other."

Both Nazmie and her husband were born in the village of Blic. After finishing her secondary education in agriculture, she worked for the state farm in Blic as a *brigadier* for the vegetable and olive sectors. In addition, she was a member of the management board for the state farm.

After the state farm was dismantled, each family in the village received 1,000m<sup>2</sup> and 50 olive trees per person. She and her husband started their private commercial farm in 1994. They have 200 olive trees that they received as part of the land reform. Over the last several years, they have planted an additional 150 trees. Ninety percent of their trees produce table olives and only ten percent produce olives for processing. Last year, their trees yielded 11,000 kilograms of table olives and 2,300 kilograms of olives for processing. Their land is divided into three parcels, the largest contains their olive trees, the second a vineyard, and the third is presently not in use.

Nazmie's two adult children are in school and do not contribute to the farm labor. Nazmie and her husband hire three full-time workers and between 10-20 seasonal workers during the harvest. They hire workers to prepare the land, apply fertilizer, and spray pesticides. Nazmie's husband works with the employees to carry out tasks such as pruning and irrigation. Nazmie is responsible for supervising and managing the workers. Because Nazmie does not have a driver's license, something she regrets, her husband takes the lead on activities requiring transportation such as running errands for the farm and picking up equipment. However, such activities are pursued only after reaching an agreement with Nazmie: "We've been together for 23 years and have always done things together. This is normal in this area. During the communist system, people (men and women) always did things together." All major decisions concerning production, marketing, and selling are made jointly. If they have a disagreement, they try and consider each other's opinion. Nazmie perceives her and her husband as equals when it comes to decision-making, "We are both engaged in the work; therefore, we are both entitled to make decisions. We are at the same level; no one is higher than the other."

The village of Blic is known for its olive production. Twenty to thirty percent of commercial olive farms in Blic are managed solely by women due to men's out-migration. Wholesalers from Tirana come to Blic to purchase olives. Nazmie and her husband do not have contracts or verbal agreements with the wholesalers who purchase their goods. Both Nazmie and her husband are involved in negotiating the price and selling the olives to the wholesalers. Their olives are sold from late October through December. The couple does not store their olives; rather, they sell right after the olives are harvested. They recently took out a loan to build a storage facility. Once they are able to store their olives, they anticipate selling until late March during months when the prices are better because there is a lower supply. In the future, the couple would like to invest in equipment so that they can package and jar the olives themselves.

Like other producers, Nazmie identified high input prices (particularly fertilizer), irrigation, and lack of buyer contracts as the major constraints she and her husband face. Their strategies for mitigating the constraints include taking out loans, building a storage facility, working hard, and increasing their knowledge. Nazmie tries to learn more through reading about olive diseases, new techniques for servicing trees, and new cultivation techniques.

Ambitious yet practical, Nazmie is eager to learn new methods and techniques that will increase the production and profitability of the enterprise. She would also like to learn to jar olives, but she and husband are leery of taking out additional loans: "It's easy to get a loan; it's difficult to pay it back."

## THE BANK OF THE FAMILY

**Mireadlina Kadilli – Bulgarec, Korca**  
**Apple Producer**  
**Joint-Managed Enterprise**



Mireadlina and Astrid are a dynamic duo. Astrid possesses an entrepreneurial spirit, ever researching and chasing after new business opportunities for the family's apple orchard. From wholesalers, to processors, to candy manufacturers, Astrid's goal is to find markets for the range and varieties of apples he and Mireadelina produce. Astrid's efforts would fall short, though, were it not for Mireadelina's strong business acumen. Astrid provides the idea, Mireadelina delivers the business deal. Astrid acknowledges Mireadelina's talent and affectionately refers to her as the "bank of the family."

The Kadillis' apple orchard is located in the village of Bulgarec, in the Korca region. Unlike other Albanian producers who worked in agriculture production cooperatives and transferred their knowledge to their private farms, neither Mireadelina nor Astrid had significant experience in agriculture during the communist period. After two years of high school studying economics, Mireadelina worked in the Bulgarec state farm in tobacco, beets, and wheat for a year and half before marrying Astrid. Meanwhile, Astrid worked in the mine in a neighboring village. After marrying Astrid, Mireadelina left the state farm to tend to four elderly family members.

A year after the collapse of the communist regime, Astrid and Mireadelina established their private farm. In Bulgarec, each household member received 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of land. At the time of the 1991 land reform, the family had six people living in their household and

received 24,000 m<sup>2</sup>. For the last seven years, Mireadelina and Astrid have rented an additional 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> through a verbal agreement with a neighbor. Having no prior horticulture experience, the Kadillis have relied on outside expertise since the very beginning. They pay for an extension worker to help them on a continual basis. He visits the farm every 10 days, and more often when it rains. Both Mireadelina and Astrid trust him and follow his recommendations when it comes to inputs, techniques, and producing new varieties.

The Kadillis produce six different varieties of apples, both golden and red. Last year, their trees yielded 50,000 kilograms apples, which sold for an average of 43 leke /kilogram. Because they lack cold storage facilities, they are only able to sell their apples from September until late December. If they are lucky, they are able to sell through the first week of January; Christmas through the New Year are the most profitable time of year, while demand is high. Astrid is continually researching and coming up with new ideas for where to sell their apples. While they receive consistent business from wholesalers in Tirana, Vlora, and Shkodra, Astrid has sought new markets to sell apples that are of poorer quality or are damaged. Because there are no apple processors in the Korca region, Astrid looked for a processor outside the region. Last year, the Kadillis sold to a processor in Bulgaria who bought 1800 kilograms of damaged apples from Astrid and Mireadelina for nine leke/kilogram. In addition, he found a buyer in Tirana that makes candied apples out of smaller apples that are not readily sold in the market.

Their 19 year old son is involved in the day-to-day activities of the farm, while their 21 year old daughter takes care of their elderly uncle in between her university studies. On average, the Kadillis hire 10 seasonal workers; seven women are hired for harvesting and three men are hired for transporting. In this area, transporting goods which requires both loading heavy cases and driving is perceived as men's work, while women are perceived as more efficient and faster at harvesting. Astrid and Mireadelina are both involved in production processes. There are only two activities that Mireadelina does not take part in: applying fertilizers and pesticides and running farm related errands. Mireadelina is allergic to the pesticides and fertilizers and does not drive.

Not only do Astrid and Mireadelina consult each other before renting additional land, buying major farm equipment, producing a new crop, and decisions concerning where and when to sell their crops, they also discuss such decisions with their children. The farm is perceived as the family's resource and the manner in which it is used is seen as a matter for all members of the family to voice their opinion.

Astrid and Mireadelina spend ninety percent of their waking day working together on the farm. Astrid says that if he goes out to coffee, "It's for work, to ask about the market. I'm not a lazy husband."

## THE MEN CAN'T MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT US

**Aneta Buzuqi, Xare, Saranda**  
**Melon Producer**  
**Joint-Managed Enterprise**



In 2000, most women in Xare were restricted to their households. Today, Aneta Buzuqi claims if she wanted to drive a tractor she could. Aneta and her husband, along with her husband's two brothers and their wives, operate a 24,000 m<sup>2</sup> farm producing watermelon in the far southern part of Albania. Formerly restricted from traveling beyond the river that separates Xare from the rest of the mainland, people have been exposed to new cultural values and business practices. Greek experts introduced melon growing to the area in the 1980s and the Aneta's family invested savings from eight years in Greece in their farm. Aneta says the labor she and her sisters-in-law provide in grafting seeds and planting saplings make them an integral part of the farm: "The men can't make decisions without us."

Aneta grew up on a farm in Xare and worked for the state farm in livestock for two years after completing high school. Aneta's family began their private farm enterprise in 2000. Their watermelon production was started with Aneta's husband's two brothers. The three brothers decided to pool their land and now the three brothers and their three wives work and manage the commercial watermelon enterprise together. On their 24,000 m<sup>2</sup> farm, the family produces 7,000 kilograms of watermelon per 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of land. With vast amounts of fertile land and 70 percent of the population having emigrated, land is not a constraint for farmers in Xare.

During planting season, Aneta's family enterprise hires 30 to 40 workers; harvest requires 20 to 25 hired laborers. Often, they hire whole families from Lushnja, Fier, Berat, Puke, and Diber to work for the season. Women are hired primarily for seed grafting and sapling planting. The planting of saplings was likened to embroidery, a task that is not socially acceptable for men. On the other hand, men are primarily hired for the harvest because of the perception that watermelon are too heavy for women to carry and load on to trucks. Aneta attested to the fact that these roles are malleable; when there is a labor shortage she harvests watermelon alongside the men.

All decisions about the watermelon farm are made as a group, with the three brothers and three wives all contributing to the decision-making process. The enterprise's organizational structure is common throughout Xare among watermelon farmers. Men and women have clearly defined production tasks, but both contribute to the management and decisions of the farm.

While the men in the production group are responsible for taking the watermelon to market and negotiating with the wholesalers, Aneta advises her husband when and at what price to sell their products. She explained that "After he talks to the wholesalers and finds out the price, he calls me. I know our production costs and at what price we can afford to sell. Sometimes, I tell him to hold off and wait for better prices." Twenty percent of the family's watermelon is sold to Albanian wholesalers; the rest is sold to wholesalers from Macedonia, Kosovo, Germany, and Holland. The family does not have contracts, formal or informal, with any of the wholesalers: "We sell to whoever shows up."

Agricultural production is their only source of income. The high production costs coupled with the lack of reliable markets impacts their production decisions. Currently, they are not maximizing their production because they are afraid they will not be able to find a market for their products. Last year, was a terrible year for the family. They only received 9 leke/kilogram in comparison with the 30-35 leke the previous year.

The AAC program is currently working with several watermelon producers in Xare through the local melon grower's association, which has approximately 100 members. Association membership is by household, not individual. However, it is the head of the household, most often a man, who represents the household at association meetings. Aneta's husband and brother-in-laws attend the meetings. She said, "If I wanted to go, I could go. I'm not interested; I have other things to do." Aneta would like to learn more about plant nutrition, modern greenhouse cultivation techniques, and farm management. She says her interests are similar to other women watermelon producers in Xare. They are eager to access information that will help them increase their profit.

The village of Xare has experienced change with regards to gender relations over the last seven years. As of 2000, women were largely restricted to the confines of their household. It amazes many that today women ride motorcycles throughout the village and are highly involved in farm management. The change is attributed to two factors. First, most of the villagers have spent some time outside of Albania. Exposure to different understandings of appropriate behavior for men and women is said to have influenced changes in Xare. Second, labor shortages and economic difficulties have

necessitated women's involvement in the family farm enterprise. Whereas in other parts of Albania, women obtained management positions in agriculture production cooperatives, very few women in Xare were involved at such levels. According to Aneta, "Women now have more power. Women ride motorcycles, drive cars, and manage family money."

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that there are Albanian women actively managing and growing their commercial agriculture enterprises. While no woman's path to success is the same, several common factors emerged. Similarly, the data revealed common constraints for most of the women entrepreneurs. This section discusses the variables influencing success as well as constraints facing women agriculture producers.

### FACTORS INFLUENCING SUCCESS

Each woman's entrepreneurial story is different. Yet, four factors influenced each one's success: access to land; strong, supportive family relationships; agriculture experience during the communist period; and, legitimacy to execute farm-related decisions.

#### ACCESS TO LAND

While only four women in the sample held the title to agriculture land, all twenty had access to land. The 1991 land reform distributed land to households and not individuals. The title to family agriculture land is in the name of the head of the household, which is most often a man. Participants were confused by the attention given to the title of land being in their husband's names. One woman echoed others, "But you see, the family's entire name is on the *topi* (certificate). It's for the family, not just for my husband." Women perceived that the land belonged as much to them as to their husbands: "It's my land too, his name may be listed on the title, but our family was given the land." As members of families, the women had access to and decision-making power over the use of the land.

#### SUPPORTIVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Even though men are often socially recognized as the head of the household, women and men expressed the importance of cooperation and strong family relationships to the success of the business. As the Xare Commune Director stated, "One hand washes the other, but both hands wash the face." Women insisted that in order for the family agriculture enterprise to succeed all members have to work together. Not only must all members work together, but all members must decide together. In households where both men and women were present, none identified one person within the relationship as higher or lower in status, as Merita stated, "We are both the *brigadier*. The only way you can prosper is to decide things together."

#### EXPERIENCE

Women's previous experience in the agriculture sector is central to their current success. The sample included former *brigadiers*, agriculture specialists, as well as women who were producing the same types of crops that they produced during the communist system. Through their experience in cooperatives and state farms, women gained not only knowledge but also social networks. The women *brigadiers* and agriculture specialist had more advantageous social networks than their former cooperative or state farm worker counterparts. Through their social networks, women have gained access to land, reliable, trained workers, and price information.

## **LEGITIMACY**

Decision-making power within the farm enterprise is not exercised based on a hierarchy of roles; rather, it rests on legitimacy. Society may afford Albanian men structural positions of authority; yet, within the family farm enterprise it is individuals with the knowledge and experience in agriculture that have power. Women's expertise in agriculture and involvement in production provides them with legitimacy to execute farm-related decisions. As Nazmie stated, "We are both engaged in the work; therefore, we are both entitled to make decisions." Similarly, Aneta's integral role in seed grafting also gives her legitimacy to participate in decision-making processes. Lack of experience de-legitimizes one's decision-making role. Bardha's husband, for example, is a notary and not a farmer. He does not possess legitimacy to intervene in the agribusiness. Bardha may consult her husband, but as the expert she is the one who exercises decision-making power.

Further, the division of labor is not linked to decision-making over particular tasks. Men may perform the act of purchasing farm equipment or selling the crops, but that does not afford men greater legitimacy to decide what to purchase or when or where to sell. In joint-managed farms, for example, men make purchases only after the couple has reached a decision. In other situations, men may perform tasks but not have the legitimacy to execute the decisions. In Garufo's case, her husband provides labor, and may be consulted, but ultimately Garufo is the expert and makes the farm-related decisions.

## **CONSTRAINTS WOMEN FACE AS ENTREPRENEURS**

USAID identified the following six constraints as impediments to the competitiveness of the Albanian agriculture sector.

- land fragmentation;
- lack of access to improved technologies;
- lack of understanding of how markets function;
- inadequate market information;
- lack of mutual trust and motivation for cooperation; and,
- lack of capability to adapt to trade conditions and opportunities.

Key among the constraints identified by women were: lack of access to quality inputs and equipment, unfavorable loan terms, difficulty expanding physical capital, and lack of access to information. The lack of interviews with men agriculture producers limit this study's ability to discuss the extent to which gender-based constraints are embedded in the general constraints identified by women producers.

## **ACCESS AND TERMS OF CREDIT**

Albania has a range of financial services available to smallholder agriculture producers. Microfinance institutions such as Opportunity Albania and Pro-Credit have expanded into both rural and urban markets. Yet, producers voiced concern that the products are not appropriate for agriculture given the volatility.

## **ACCESS TO QUALITY INPUTS AND EQUIPMENT**

Women's limited access to financial services often affects their access to equipment and inputs. The case studies highlighted, however, do not posit financial constraints as the impediment to accessing better quality inputs. Rather, lack of standards and certification for inputs is a constraint for men and women. Producers discussed the deep frustration with purchasing seeds without certainty of the actual variety contained in the packet.

Unlike inputs, though, lack of access to equipment was linked to finance. Several respondents could increase their farm's enterprise productivity by purchasing a tractor or harvester. However, the lack of leasing options for procuring farm equipment limits producer's abilities to access such productive resources. However, it is unclear that men have greater financing options than women.

## **DIFFICULTY EXPANDING PHYSICAL CAPITAL**

The ability of women to negotiate better prices with wholesalers for some products is constrained by lack of access to cold storage facilities. Wholesalers know that producers must sell the same day as harvest; producers are price takers rather than price setters. The financial investment required for storage facility exceeds the financial capacity of all the producers interviewed, even with a great line of credit.

Further lack of physical capital also limits producers' ability to diversify crops. Donika, for example, recognizes that her tomatoes and cucumbers face great competition from domestic production and imports and would like to expand into new commodities. Without credit, however, such plans are not likely to be actualized. The expansion of physical capital is linked to financial capital. There is a need for financial institutions to develop products to address the needs of both large and small-scale commercial agriculture producers.

## **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Women's access to association services is constrained by perceptions concerning membership, training and meeting venues, and lack of attention to men and women's concerns. The perception that the head of the household should attend association meetings on behalf of the household limits women's attendance. Such beliefs are reinforced when association meetings are held at bar/cafes, spaces often regarded as inappropriate for women.

Beyond structural impediments to women's participation, it is not clear to what extent existing associations are providing services to meet women's needs. Women association members voiced dissatisfaction with the benefits received, while non-members expressed a belief that association membership was a "waste of time." That being said, women participants are eager to learn.

## **GENDER, AGRICULTURE, AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

Women's involvement in Albanian agriculture is not new. In several areas, women were both managers and directors of agriculture cooperatives and state farms. Yet, the experience of gender relations within smallholder farms has historically varied

throughout Albania. In some areas, the relations highlighted are a continuation with past, in others the egalitarian relationships described are a departure from the past.

In Lushnje, for example, women have long been considered *emancipated*. As Donika stated, “You won’t find a woman in the region who isn’t an active participant and decision-maker in the family agriculture enterprise. This is the tradition that our parents passed on to us.” In a village outside of Berat, though, the emergence of joint decision-making within the household, particularly regarding finances, does appear a split with the past. According to Nazmie, “Things aren’t like they were before (during the communist system); men no longer control the household’s finances. Men and women make decisions together.” Similar to Berat, gender relations are also changing in Xare. In contrast to Lushnje, where women were highly involved in agriculture throughout the communist period, the women of Xare did not have high rates of participation in household and agriculture decisions. As of 2000, women in Xare were largely restricted to the confines of their households. It amazes many that today women are highly involved in farm management.

Gender relations are not static, they change over time. As evidenced by the case studies, the socio-cultural relations between men and women vary from place to place within Albania.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study’s findings point to the need for both additional research and data on gender issues in agriculture as well as program interventions that effectively target both men and women for training, credit, and outreach.

## **RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS**

The USAID gender policy requires that programs answer two questions: how will gender relations affect the achievement of sustainable results and how will proposed results affect the relative status of men and women. It is imperative that gender relations be identified and understood, and that practitioners critically consider potential unintended gender consequences. Two areas needing additional research are the prevalence of women- and joint-managed farm enterprises and how men and women’s constraints to competitiveness differ.

**Examine prevalence of women- and joint-managed enterprises.** This study found that headship does not necessarily determine management in Albanian farms. While the sample size is small, the conclusion corroborates an earlier study by Lastarria-Cornheil and Wheeler.<sup>30</sup> In contrast to the earlier study, this study found several examples of joint-managed enterprises, where both the husband and wife were involved in the oversight and execution of decisions related to farm enterprises. No data currently exists to measure the prevalence of joint-farm management. Not only is additional data needed on the prevalence of women- and joint-managed farm enterprises, but also on their characteristics. As previously noted, this study did not examine men-managed farms. Therefore, it is not possible to explore the extent to which their characteristics differ. Understanding both the prevalence and the characteristics of the different types of managed farm enterprises is important to understand: who programs should target;

how access to information and services may vary by management type; and, how interventions may differentially affect enterprises based on management type.

**Explore gender-based constraints within agribusiness.** The participants identified challenges that face men and women producers alike. However, because the study focused exclusively on women it is not possible to determine the extent to which these constraints are exacerbated by gender (the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes associated with being a man or a woman). Current literature, for example, lacks data and analysis on the extent to which women's capital constraints and lack of access to quality inputs and equipment differ from men's. Additional information is needed to further understand gender-based constraints to increasing the productivity and competitiveness of agribusinesses. Identifying gender-based constraints is critical for developing targeted interventions.

## **PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations provided below are specific to the manageable interests of the AAC Project.

**Ensure Equal Access to Trainings and Seminars.** One stakeholder relayed the perception that women in her village believed that the AAC workshops were only for the head of the household. In a discussion with an AAC staff member it was stated that AAC had not invited any women to their workshops. Facilitating equal access includes addressing the time and venues of the training as well as how potential clients are identified. Thought should be given to how the space and time at which trainings are held will impact the ability of women to attend the events. Where there is a critical mass of women managed enterprise, for example Syzes, AAC should consider holding the workshops near the women's workplace instead of in town centers and/ or women-only trainings. In addition, women should be contacted directly. It was suggested that a respected woman producer in each region should go along with AAC staff members and invite women to the seminars.

**Include Women's Constraints and Interests in Training Topics.** In addition to issues of access, women also perceive that the topics discussed in agriculture trainings do not match their needs and interests. All of the participants were eager to learn more to increase the sustainability and profitability of their enterprises. The chart below summarizes the key constraints identified by the participants as well as the topics of interest.

## CHART 1: KEY CONSTRAINTS AND TOPICS OF INTEREST

Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of access to knowledge/information</li><li>• Lack of access to quality inputs</li><li>• Difficulty expanding physical capital</li><li>• Unfavorable terms of credit</li></ul>
Topics of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marketing and selling</li><li>• How to protect plants from and treat diseases</li><li>• Techniques on servicing plants</li><li>• Techniques on land preparation</li><li>• Information on new pesticides and fertilizers</li><li>• Information on bio products</li><li>• Access to farm equipment</li></ul>

**Do not use head of household as a primary indicator for data collection or targeting activities.** Research here and elsewhere finds that headship does not necessarily determine management in Albanian farms. As the program expands into new value chains, a more inclusive process for identifying primary clients should be developed. Using head of household is not conducive for identifying the person or persons actively involved in farm enterprise oversight and decisions. AAC staff members should ask questions concerning management when memorandums of understanding are drafted with new partners.

# ENDNOTES

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1. Spring, *Women Farmers and Commercial Ventures*.
2. Sanders, "The Peasantries of Eastern Europe," 24.
3. Ibid.
4. Swain, "Transitions from Collective to Family Farming."
5. Cugu and Swinnen, "Albania's Radical Agrarian Reform," 607.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Swain, "The Rural Transition," 5.
9. Lastarria-Cornheil and Wheeler, "Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property."
10. Ibid.
11. See note 4 above.
12. See note 9 above, 2.
13. Ibid, 3.
14. Wheeler, "Past and Present," 2.
15. See note 9 above, 23.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid, 22.
18. Ibid.
19. Women's Center, "Report on Gender and Agriculture."
20. See note 9 above, 25.
21. Nichols Barrett, "An Economic Snapshot."
22. Mehmeti, "Olives Value Chain."
23. Ibid.
24. Irwin, Melon Value Chain."
25. AAC, "Apple Farmers Value Chain."
26. Rapushi, "Value Chain."
27. Torsello, "Trust and Property."
28. Lampland, "The Advantages of Being Collectivized" 47.
29. Cornwall, "Of Choice, Chance and Contingency," 28.
30. See note 9 above.

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