



Building Capacity for Macedonian Higher Education,  
Research and Policy Analysis in Agriculture  
- with a focus on Agricultural Economics

UniCoop

# NEWSLETTER

Issue 2009:3

The Story of a Swedish-Macedonian Development Co-operation  
Two Agricultural Universities, Two Departments and One Common Interest for Agricultural Economics

## A Season of Change

This issue of the newsletter covers the months May to August 2009. Although this is not the most hectic period of the year there is plenty to tell about the activities that have taken place in the framework of *UniCoop - Building Capacity for Macedonian Higher Education, Research, and Policy Analysis in Agriculture - with a focus on Agricultural Economics*.

In this issue of the newsletter you can read a **report** from the halftime seminar of Gordana Manevska Tasevska, the first PhD-candidate involved in the project to reach this point. In June, Jordan Hristov defended his MSc-thesis on the effects of land fragmentation in Macedonia and you can of course read about this **event** too in this newsletter. Find also the latest **news** from our new educational centre, *BICA - Balkan International Centre for Agricultural Economics* that started its admission process in June.



Macedonia and EU-27

The Institute of Agricultural Economics at St Cyril and Methodius University in Macedonia (UKIM) has been co-operating with the Department of Economics at SLU in Sweden since 2000. Visit our [website](#).

## Swedmilk and EU Accession Negotiations in the Media

During the fall, the Macedonian dairy processor Swedmilk has received a great deal of **attention** in Swedish media. The company which filed for **bankruptcy** earlier this year was established with support from Sida through **Swedfund**, Sweden's risk capital company specialized in investments in developing countries. The bankruptcy and the debacle of the brand new dairy plant outside Skopje have been heavily debated in Macedonia for some time already since both farmers and workers still are waiting for their pay check. Our project, UniCoop has no linkage to Swedmilk and its failure but Swedmilk as a phenomenon is being **studied** by Emelj Tuna as part of her PhD-studies at the department of Economics at SLU.



Emelj Tuna is making research on Swedmilk



Another news event during the fall was the **announcement** from the EU Commission that they finally are able to recommend the opening of accession negotiations with Macedonia. According to the Commission, Macedonia has made convincing progress and sufficiently fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria. The name dispute with Greece remains to be resolved but the accession negotiations will now start. This is great news and it will also have implications for UniCoop. More about this in the next issue of this newsletter.

## New MSc-students

Do not miss the opportunity to get to know the two new master students from Macedonia at the Department of Economics at SLU. Iva Joveva and Aleksandar Joncevski have been in Sweden since August with scholarships from UniCoop. They will stay three semesters in Uppsala before the returning to Macedonia to work on their MSc-theses. Get to know them [here](#).

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This newsletter is published by the Department of Economics at SLU, Sweden and the Department of Agricultural Economics and Organization (UKIM) at St Cyril and Methodius University, Macedonia. The aim is to create a venue for news and discussions for all interested in education, policy and economic analysis related to the agricultural sector in FYR Macedonia.

Questions or comments? E-mail us at [Erik.Pelling@ekon.slu.se](mailto:Erik.Pelling@ekon.slu.se)

### Halftime Seminar for First PhD-Candidate

Gordana Manevska Tasevska, which was one of the first students from Macedonia that took a [MSc](#) at SLU, started her PhD-studies at the Department of Economics (SLU) in July 2007 and held her well-attended half-time seminar on May 14. She is writing a dissertation with the preliminary title *Efficiency analysis of the commercial grape growing family farms in the Tikvesh vineyard district - efficiency coefficients and determinants mapping*.

To date Gordana has finished all her courses, collected all the data and also made an extensive literature review for the planned papers. This was more than enough to give her the evaluation group's approval and she will now focus on writing the four papers that will make up the dissertation.

Besides her studies, Gordana has also been the PhD-candidates representative for one year and actively participated in the SLU-department's environmental group, as well as worked in Skopje on the MAASP-led initiative to develop best practice protocols for the crop production in Macedonia.



Gordana Manevska Tasevska

The half-time seminar is a compulsory part of the PhD-education at SLU and is organized to discuss and evaluate the PhD-candidate's progress and plans. The research results obtained so far is also presented and discussed. One of the objectives with the seminar is to determine if the PhD-candidate's progress and plans will assure that the dissertation is finished within the remaining two years of the programme. Please contact [Gordana Manevska Tasevska](#) for further information on her research.

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### Progress Report - BICA

[BICA](#), the Balkan International Centre for Agricultural Economics has progressed to a great extent in the last months of the initiation phase. We feel ready to start offering the international master's programme to students. There have been 20 applicants so far, from which 9 have been endorsed by SLU, and 4 are waiting the SLU's decision to be brought. In this regard, we are using this opportunity to wish the students a good luck with their upcoming studies at BICA.

During the period we have prepared facilities (one classroom and three offices have been completely renovated) to make a comfortable study for students and a pleasant work for teachers. We have also strengthened the library with course books available for students, having 5 copies of each. The course compendiums will be available for students as well.

Slight changes have been made in the study programme and the teaching staff but we are trying to overcome these difficulties in the cleverest way so the success at the end is evident.

The latest preparations are aimed for the promotion of BICA on September 23, 2009. The Ambassador of Sweden and the Rector of the University "Ss Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje are expected to come, along with many other guests from Sweden and Macedonia. The next day follows the III SLU-UKIM Workshop that will be held in Ohrid. This will be a splendid opportunity for teachers from both universities that will teach at BICA to meet and share ideas about conducting the common course. When this is written, we are at the start of the academic year and eagerly waiting to see how BICA will proceed. More of this in the next issue of this newsletter.

Ana Krstevska

### New MSc-Students from Macedonia

As part of the capacity building within the project students from St Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje have had the opportunity to apply for a scholarship and become MSc-students at SLU. So far, six students from Macedonia have graduated from SLU in either agricultural economics and management. Two of them are now PhD-students at SLU and a third one is in the process of starting his PhD-studies at SLU. Currently there are four Macedonian MSc-students at the Department of Economics at SLU. Blaze Jordanov and Jasmina Milevska will return to Macedonia after the fall and three semesters in Sweden to write their MSc-theses. Iva Joveva and Aleksandar Joncevski, which will be the last ones to receive the scholarship, arrived this August and are just beginning their MSc-studies.

Iva Joveva, 25, BSc in Agroecology

*"So far all of my expectations are fulfilled. I am very satisfied from the concept of education at SLU and the open collaboration between students and supervisors. Beside that I met a lot of people from different backgrounds and learned a lot for the cultures around the world. Sweden is a beautiful country that has so much to offer so I use every free time that I have to explore its beauty. All of these things make my stay in Sweden more comfortable."*



Aleksandar Joncevski, 28, BSc in Agroecology

*"The post graduate studies which are not offered in my country brought me to Sweden. It has been a new and positive experience so far. Meeting a lot of students from all over the world. Great program at the university but very bad weather."*

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### Report from a "Swedish Day" in Skopje

On May 4, early in the morning I went to Macedonia for the first time in my life. As director of Undergraduate Studies at the Department of Economics at SLU, I was going to join the "Swedish Day" at the Institute of Agricultural Economics in May 5. Unfortunately it could just be a very short visit this time and much of the time was spent on aeroplanes and airports.

The purpose with the Swedish Day was to arrange a meeting where the students who have already obtained a MSc degree at SLU could introduce the undergraduates in Macedonia with the educational aspects, as well as the way of living and studying in Sweden. My primary role was to present and discuss the MSc programme in Agricultural Economics and Management at SLU. This programme is to a large extent copied in BICA's MSc programme and the Swedish teachers will take active part in the Macedonian programme for a couple of years, though to a decreasing extent.

During the seminar we were about 25 participants, of which most were BSc students in their final year/s. I started with an overall presentation of the programme that we offer at SLU and described the single courses included in it with respect to course objectives, content, etc. We continued by discussing various topics related to education including all from specific course content and course structure, how a typical Swedish lecture is designed, literature costs and how to write the master thesis, to housing, Student unions, "Nations" (nationer) and various aspects of social life in Uppsala.

I was happy to get so many questions from the participating students. I was also happy to listen to the very interesting presentations and discussing with the other invited speakers in the seminar, Ana Krstevska, Elena Simonovska and Blagoja Tosevski, who talked about possibilities to study at BICA and about living in Sweden based on their own experiences.

Finally, I was also impressed by the Macedonian "smörgåsbord" that followed after the seminar. After a glas of excellent red wine with the Dean, it was time for me to return to the airport again. Next time I definitely hope to be able to stay for a bit longer, so that I can see some more of the beautiful country that I just caught a glimpse of in the taxi between Skopje and the airport.

Daniel Lunneryd

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### Seminar on Effects of Land Fragmentation

In early June, Jordan Hristov successfully defended his master thesis "Assessment of the high fragmented land impact over the productivity and profitability of the farms" at the Department of Economics at SLU. Jordan's analysis shows that land fragmentation indeed has a negative effect on the productivity and profitability of vegetable growers in the two regions he studied, namely Skopje and the Southeastern region, and that land consolidation would increase the output.



The Swedish supervisor Hans Andersson, the opponent, Jordan Hristov, and the Macedonian supervisor Dragan Gjosevski at Jordan Hristov's MSc-thesis in defense in June.

Read his [thesis](http://www.ekon.slu.se/macedonia) at: [www.ekon.slu.se/macedonia](http://www.ekon.slu.se/macedonia)

Jordan's dedication to his graduate studies and his hard work with the thesis was recognized when he in late May was chosen as the project's final PhD-candidate. He will commence his PhD-studies in September.

### Epilogue

This issue of the newsletter covers the period from May to August this year. Before you receive the next issue that will be distributed in January 2010 a fall full of project related activities will have taken place. In September a large group of staff members from Uppsala and Skopje attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop on Research and Education in the Field of Agricultural Economics in Ohrid, Macedonia. BICA - the



Balkan International Centre for Agricultural Economics was inaugurated in Skopje, Macedonia on September 23 and the first course led by Dragi Dimitrevski, Ana Kotevska, and Bo Öhlmer started a few days later. The Centre will be based in Skopje and will offer an internationally recognized high-quality master program. At the end of November both parties will meet in Uppsala to discuss and plan the activities for 2010-2012. In December Dragan Gjosevski, Ana Krstevska, and Monica Campos will commence the second course at the new centre.

### Merry Christmas and a Happy New 2010!

/ Tina Ericson, Dragi Dimitrevski, Ivana Janeska Stamenkovska, and Erik Pelling

