

Article #8

AGRICULTURE BUSINESSES IN THE PEJA REGION ARE OPEN TO COLLABORATE WITH PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES:

Industry-University Collaboration in Kosovo Supported by USAID's Funded Activity Titled 'Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education'

[AUGUST, 20, 2023]

For more photos on this article go to this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Yq9nQNgrVNWkaxIEiRezs4Nuu-SlsaMQ>

The last two decades have brought remarkable growth to Kosovo's agricultural sector, driven by innovation and the introduction of novel products and practices.

To sustain this momentum and bolster the industry's competitiveness on a global scale, businesses must embrace advanced knowledge and expertise in critical fields like food technology, and agroenvironment and agroecology. Recognizing this need, the USAID-funded activity, Private Sector Partnership to Strengthen Higher Education, aims to forge strong connections between agriculture and ICT private sectors and three public universities in Kosovo. This is a USAID-funded activity implemented by the University of Iowa in partnership with Iowa State University and Kosova Education Center (KEC).

Since its launch in April 2023, the activity is engaging agriculture businesses, with the support of members from the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and the Kosova Education Center. Curtis Youngs, the activity's lead technical advisor for agriculture from ISU, led the team during meetings to explore partnerships with existing agribusinesses in Kosovo.

Notably, businesses like **Vitoria Farm**, **Boost Berries**, **Birra Peja Brewery**, **Taka Poultry Farm**, and **Vita** (dairy processing company) have shown interest in collaborating with the activity and universities alike because these partnerships will provide mutual benefits for the universities and the businesses in Kosovo.

By collaborating closely with motivated students and knowledgeable researchers and professors from public universities, businesses can gain access to the latest developments in agriculture science and technology. Concurrently, universities get the chance to learn about business market trends and to share their research findings, contributing to enhanced infrastructure, an improved labor market, and a thriving agribusiness climate.

Private sector representatives from several of the businesses expressed their gratitude and excitement for the prospect of partnering with the activity in the years ahead.

"At Vita, we are dedicated to delivering dairy excellence that meets international standards and exceeds our customers' expectations. Our focus on the latest food technology ensures that our professional capacities stay at the forefront of the industry. Collaborating with leading food technicians and laboratory experts, we constantly aim to cultivate skilled and well-equipped teams. We take pride in nurturing strong ties with universities, offering enriching internships to talented students, fostering enduring professional connections. Working alongside this activity's experts, we look forward to enhancing and innovating our vital collaborations with universities."

Rita Domniku Gjokolli, Quality Manager at Vita

"I would greatly benefit from gaining knowledge on efficient management of reproductive health practices for my herd. Having skilled students present on my farm would provide invaluable assistance in effectively managing milk production. Furthermore, the expertise of professors, delivered through field visits or applied research, would be highly informative and instrumental in guiding my efforts to cultivate healthy cows that produce quality milk." - **Tabë Krasniqi, CEO of Vitoria Farm**

The support of USAID's Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education activity and Kosovo's agriculture businesses marks a significant milestone in the region's progress in training of future agriculturist at the public universities. As this activity facilitates more collaborations between academia and industry, it opens new avenues for growth, innovation, and economic prosperity in the ever-evolving field of agriculture.