

Empowering Veterinary Services in Kyrgyzstan

Success Stories from the
Access to Markets Project

The IFAD supported **Access to Markets Project (ATMP)** aims to increase incomes and stimulate economic growth in Kyrgyzstan's pastoralist communities. Its development objective is to enhance access and integration of smallholder livestock farmers into profitable markets for their products, ensuring improved and equitable returns. ATMP works across value chains, providing holistic and coordinated support to the various actors involved in production while empowering local youth and women to access these markets. Key players in the milk, meat, honey, and wool value chains are supported in establishing productive partnerships with producers and other value chain participants. Smallholder livestock producers—the project's primary beneficiaries—are actively represented in each selected value chain.

Accessing markets, particularly for smallholders, remains a challenge in Kyrgyzstan. However, creating strong linkages between smallholders, cooperatives, and small and medium enterprises has proven to be a successful strategy for enhancing and securing incomes for rural households. This process is facilitated through the integrated efforts of Pasture Users' Unions (PUUs), Kyrgyzstan's Community Development and Investment Agency (ARIS), and the Agricultural Projects Implementation Unit (APIU)—IFAD's main partner in Kyrgyzstan—building on the positive experiences of the Livestock and Market Development Programmes I and II.

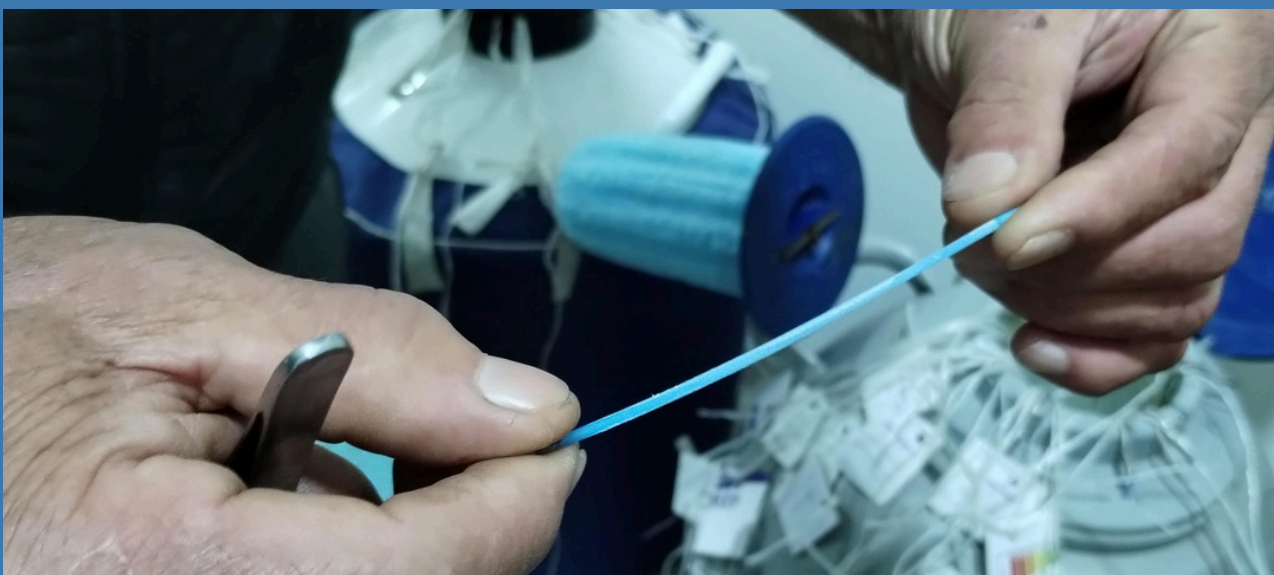




ELITA State Entity: Advancing Veterinary Services and Rural Livelihoods in Kyrgyzstan

Located in the picturesque highlands of Alamudun District, Chui Region, the ELITA State Entity serves as a Republican Breeding Station specializing in artificial insemination for farm animals. This facility is at the forefront of advancing agricultural productivity and supporting rural livelihoods. This liquid nitrogen conservation and breeding facility, funded by IFAD, is a symbol of progress and innovation in the country's northernmost regions.

With a \$435,000 grant from the Access to Markets Project (ATMP), two nitrogen plants now serve communities from Sarban in the Chui Region to Bash-Bulak in the Osh Region. Supported by both IFAD and the Kyrgyz Government, these facilities are proving to be invaluable resources for local communities, veterinarians, and farmer groups.



The ELITA State Entity in northern Kyrgyzstan has generated five new jobs to date and has plans for further expansion. It aims to become a knowledge hub for artificial insemination, offering essential training for veterinarians and rural residents while extending direct veterinary support to nearby communities. Much of the project's success is owed to IFAD's Access to Markets Project, which has provided critical funding for the building's renovation, transportation and modern equipment.

As ELITA continues to innovate, it promises not only advancements in artificial insemination but also enhanced job creation and community support throughout this stunning region of Kyrgyzstan.





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“The Access to Markets project provided the ELITA State Entity with a new 1,600-litre tank truck for transporting nitrogen. This vehicle has already made several trips to the Naryn and Issyk-Kul regions, significantly saving resources: the previous equipment could transport only 1,000 litres.” — Irena Baitanaeva, APIU Communication Officer

The use of nitrogen for preserving and transporting organic material has transformed artificial insemination in remote rural areas, enabling smallholder farmers to access affordable insemination services and participate in the meat and dairy markets. Initially, veterinarians imported nitrogen from neighbouring countries like Uzbekistan, but local production has drastically reduced costs, benefiting even impoverished farmers. Before this shift, premium specimens from Russia's Ural Region cost between 250 and 350 Soms; prices have since stabilised at 230 to 250 Soms, making transportation to rural areas more affordable and efficient.

Insemination efforts focus on high-quality breeds sourced from Russia’s Ural Centre, including Simmental, Montbéliard, Aberdeen Angus, and Holstein, with some inclusion of the local Alatoo breed, which is less popular due to lower milk and meat yield. The ELITA State Entity, widely publicised across rural areas, now operates economically self-sufficiently and boasts a high success rate, with farmers returning season after season. As young calves mature, they are promptly inseminated to continue the cycle.

The ELITA State Entity exemplifies successful collaboration between IFAD and the Kyrgyz Government. This partnership empowers local communities to participate in the meat and dairy value chains—from smallholders in the most remote areas upwards.

“The high quality of the organic matter and the selected breeds are crucial for a long-living activity.”

ELITA: New Horizons for its development

In the heart of Kyrgyzstan, the ELITA breeding station plays a pivotal role in supporting smallholder farmers who struggle to afford artificial insemination services for their livestock. This essential facility enables farmers to diversify their offerings and access more profitable markets, significantly improving their livelihoods. Managed by the Department of Pastures and Livestock Breeding of the Ministry of Water Resources, Agriculture and Processing Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic, the ELITA station holds immense potential. Its pastures support 700 sheep producing valuable Merino wool. Future plans include the renovation of sheds and the expansion of livestock operations, further strengthening the station's capacity to serve the local community.

To fully realize its potential, ELITA has been addressing a legacy debt that dates back to the Soviet era. Thanks to the Access to Markets Project (ATMP), the station has achieved greater financial stability, which has enabled it to begin managing this challenge through revenue from biological product sales and other income-generating initiatives. The station's steady income now covers essential expenses, including utilities, taxes, social contributions, and staff salaries, demonstrating a path toward financial sustainability.

This growing stability allows ELITA to look toward the future with optimism. Plans are in place to improve its services by acquiring essential equipment for reaching remote regions. These include protective gowns for technicians, mobile devices, and dewar vessels for the secure storage of biological materials.

With unwavering dedication and resilience, ELITA continues its transformative journey, striving to enhance its offerings and contribute to the well-being of Kyrgyzstan's rural communities.

“We have a heavy heritage from the past, but we are optimistic that with the help of this project and government, we hope to revive the livestock, which in return will revive the economy and improve the well-being of our people.” –
Avtandil Zholdoshev, ELITA Former Director



Smallholders Benefiting from the ELITA State Entity

Leila Chapanidze embodies the modern Central Asian Turkic nomadic spirit, and as both an entrepreneur and village icon, she has crafted a life uniquely her own. Born in Uzbekistan to Turkish parents who fled Georgia during World War II, Leila eventually married Ansar and established her roots in Kyrgyzstan.

Leila has built a thriving business producing soft cheese and supplying milk from her 16 cows to neighbours in Tash-Dobo Village. While she manages the dairy operations with expertise, her husband, a Kyrgyz native, supports their venture by cultivating barley, wheat, and corn as livestock feed. Together, they also rent out equipment and tractors to fellow villagers, benefiting the community and generating additional income.

With over two decades in the livestock industry, Leila has honed her expertise in breeding various cattle breeds, including Simmental, Alatool, and Swiss. In 2021, recognizing that Swiss cows could significantly enhance milk production for her cheese business, she consulted with her village veterinarian and opted for artificial insemination. She sourced the organic material from ELITA.

Leila proudly stands among the first livestock owners to benefit from these services following the plant's inauguration in August 2022. Kyrgyzstan now has two such plants, with one serving the northern region and another in the Osh Region supporting farmers in the south, both funded by IFAD to help modernise local farming practices.

As a seasoned livestock owner with over 24 years of experience, Leila understands the unique traits of different cattle breeds and the techniques needed to manage them. Starting in 1999, she raised Simmental, Alatool, and Swiss breeds but chose to focus on Swiss cows in 2021 to increase milk production for her cheese business. By turning to the trusted community veterinarian and opting for artificial insemination, she was able to leverage the resources provided by ELITA to elevate her operations.

As one of the first beneficiaries of the plant's services, Leila's experience serves as a model for livestock owners in northern Kyrgyzstan. The second plant, funded by IFAD, is strategically located in the Osh Region to support smallholders in the southern areas.

“Swiss cows have strong feet and adapt well to the rocky mountains.”

Through her initiative, Leila demonstrates the potential of smallholders to advance within the dairy and meat industries, underscoring the vital role of ELITA in fostering rural growth and economic empowerment across Kyrgyzstan.







A Lifeline for Rural Communities: The Story of Veterinarian Kubat Balapanov and the ELITA State Entity

Kubat Balapanov is the only veterinarian in the remote village of Tash-Dobo, located in the northernmost region of Kyrgyzstan. With vast distances to cover and no other trained veterinarians nearby, his expertise is invaluable to rural communities who rely on him for essential animal health services.

With a deep background in artificial insemination, Balapanov initially trained at ELITA in the Chui Region before its closure in 2015 due to supply and storage challenges. Limited nitrogen production in Kyrgyzstan made it difficult to sustain the plant, as importing nitrogen from neighbouring countries proved costly and logistically complex.

Undeterred, Kubat continued his vital work, travelling across the region to serve as many as 200-300 cows annually. The scarcity of veterinarians in rural Kyrgyzstan has only amplified the importance of his role, offering smallholders a chance to improve their livestock and, consequently, their livelihoods.

Thanks to funding from IFAD, the ELITA plant reopened in August 2021. With nitrogen now readily available within the country, artificial insemination services have become both sustainable and affordable, enabling even the most vulnerable smallholders to access this critical resource. Kubat's expertise now has an even wider reach, helping communities that were previously underserved.

“We know that with artificial insemination, cows grow big and strong!”





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