



GENEX awarded \$7.7 million grant for international development work

SHAWANO, Wisconsin — Farmer cooperatives in South Africa and Peru will improve their profitability, productivity, resilience and competitiveness in the marketplace as the result of a new five-year, \$7.7 million grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This project coordinated by GENEX, a cattle genetics cooperative headquartered in Shawano, Wisconsin, will build on work completed in the previous eight years through similar grant-funded activities.

GENEX is the program partner for this USAID Cooperative Development Program (CDP), which focuses on building the capacity of cooperative businesses for self-reliance, local ownership and sustainability. As a cooperative itself, GENEX sees the value in living out the cooperative principle of cooperation among cooperatives.

“The CDP is an opportunity for our cooperative to share its business values while using its products and services to improve farms of all shapes and sizes, worldwide,” explains Matt Gartman, a dairy farmer from Sheboygan, Wisconsin, who participated in GENEX’s previous CDP activities in South Africa by presenting on cooperative governance.

Building on past success

Since 2010, GENEX has worked in South Africa to help build agricultural cooperative businesses. The goal has been to elevate these developing businesses as suppliers to local and regional processors, sellers of value-added products, and buyers of inputs from local and regional firms. The strategy included a business-driven approach to helping farmers run strong commercial-scale businesses.

As an example, during the first phase of the project GENEX staff with expertise in beef cattle genetics and reproduction traveled to South Africa to provide consultation and training to a cooperative desiring to offer artificial insemination services to members. The GENEX representatives worked with local partners to provide training and conduct the first inseminations. Opportunities like this - within the grant-funded venture - create new markets for GENEX products while also benefitting smallholder farmers.

In the previous round of funding, GENEX CDP activities in South Africa have helped 13 cooperatives achieve substantial growth. In eight years, the cooperatives experienced a 713% growth in sales, 510% growth in profit and near-total growth in patronage dividends.

The next step

With the new five-year, \$7.7 million grant, GENEX intends to further support South African and Peruvian dairy and beef producers and their cooperatives. Together with in-country partners, GENEX will provide business-planning guidance, technical assistance from industry mentors, better access to affordable financing, and finally, training and networking to develop sound cooperative governance. The overall goal is to improve the producers’ and cooperatives’ profitability, productivity, resilience and competitiveness in the marketplace.

After his experience in South Africa, Gartman reflects on the results he witnessed and hopes for the project’s future. “It’s clear to see the CDP has and will provide farmers with an opportunity to grow their livelihoods while also bringing value-added U.S. goods to an expanding market. It’s all about cooperatives helping cooperatives succeed in the global agriculture industry.”

About GENEX

GENEX is the trusted provider of world-class animal genetics, progressive reproductive solutions, value-added products and innovative services. As a cooperative business, GENEX serves members and customers - dairy and beef cattle producers - across the globe. For more information, please visit www.genex.coop.

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(Left) Seven Stars Cooperative in the Eastern Cape of South Africa is one dairy cooperative that has benefited from the Cooperative Development Project (CDP) coordinated by GENEX. Shown is their outdoor group calf rearing area. (Right) Seven Stars Cooperative utilizes most of its milk to produce several varieties of cheese. Future plans include developing a school to teach the art and science of cheese making.



(Above) During the first phase of the GENEX CDP project, staff trained Ikhephu Cooperative in beef cattle genetics and artificial insemination. Today, Ikhephu Cooperative is also realizing the benefits of their newly constructed feedlot. Group uniformity and feed efficiency have enabled the cooperative to access new markets for their finished cattle.