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## Agricultural and Rural Vocational Educational Project

# **Vocational Educational System for “Farmer - Entrepreneur” profession of Yssykkol and Chui oblasts**

(Final version)

Approved by the Steering Council of AVEP in

« » \_\_\_\_\_ 2006

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**Abbreviations**

AVEP	Agricultural and Rural Vocational Educational Project
RAS	Rural Advisory Service
SC	Steering Committee
VED	Vocational Education Department
VES	Vocational Educational System
VS	Vocational Schools
OCCMC	Oblast Coordination and Methodical Center
RMC	Republican Methodical Center
MoLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Protection

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**Glossary:**

Teacher	a person who teaches theoretical lessons
Master	a specialist conducting school practice
Coach	a responsible person who conducts project work and practice on a farm
Applicant	who wants to study at VS
Apprentice	a student on a farm practice
Graduate	a student who has farmer-entrepreneur level

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1. Prerequisites of creating Agricultural Vocational Educational Project

With the development of small private farms in Kyrgyzstan over the last years, there is a need for a broad skilled farmers' profession. It is widely known that the old Soviet system is not suitable for nowadays requirements. Therefore a new system for vocational education is needed and has to be developed and implemented now in order to satisfy the needs and requirements of the future.

Since 2001, Helvetas Kyrgyzstan is implementing the Agricultural and Rural Vocational Education Project in Naryn oblast through introducing together with its partner schools an experimental curricula for farmer profession. In 2004, the project has expanded to Batken oblast and implemented together with Karavan vocational school an experimental curriculum for the southern region.

In 2006, based on the experience of working in Naryn and Batken oblasts, the Project expanded to Yssykkol and Chui oblasts in order to develop and maintain innovations and vocational education system on sustainable basis. The selected project partner schools are Kemin, Bokonbaevo, Karakol and Anan'ev vocational schools.

The overall goal of the Agricultural Vocational Educational Project is to:

Contribute to rural development through the promotion of locally owned sustainable financing and delivery mechanisms for educating farmers as rural entrepreneurs, thus raising their social and economic position

## 1.2. The function of the Vocational Educational System

One of the first steps when developing the new course was the elaboration of a Competence Profile. The Competence Profile answers the following questions: what kind of knowledge and skills and what level of education does a future farmer need? After this evaluation was completed, the course details need to be outlined in order to define how the learning goals of the Competence Profiles will be reached. The Vocational Education System (VES) described below gives answers on the structure, duration and financing of the new course.

This VES was developed on the basis of:

- the Competence Profile for Issykkol and Chui
- a balanced relation between practice and theory
- practicability in its implementation
- cost efficiency
- attractiveness to students

## 1.3. What does the VES define?

The VES defines the following course characteristics:

- Class concept
- Rules and conditions for entrance of students (requirements)
- Lesson concept and Course structure
- Teachers/masters/ coaches/ farmers/resource persons
- Examinations
- Theoretical hours and practical hours
- Organizational and financial aspects
- Monitoring

## **1.4. Process of elaborating the VES**

In a joint effort, working groups from every school, the AVEP team and representatives of RMC worked out five options for the VES (April 2006) and suggested them during a final workshop where an agreement could be found.

## **2 The structure of VES**

### **2.1. Class concept**

The Classes shall be run according to the following rules:

- A minimum of one experimental group will be opened in each school involved in the project. Later groups financed by the GvT and the newly set-up training funds will follow the same system;
- Groups will be mixed (girls and boys will study together);
- The number of students in each group must be minimum 12 students.

### **2.2. Entrance conditions for experimental groups**

Students will be accepted to the experimental classes through a competition. All those who want to enter the classes and study must be suitable to the following requirements and criteria:

- Age: 18 – 45;
- Citizen of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Minimum ninth form general education completed;
- Required documents: photo, medical reference, reference from local administration about his/her family, reference from school or document defining knowledge level (diploma, certificate, references);
- Individual interview (will be conducted by a special committee consisting of teachers, local farmers, RAS advisor and other resource people);
- Readiness and interest to work as a farmer in the future.

### **2.3. Lesson concept**

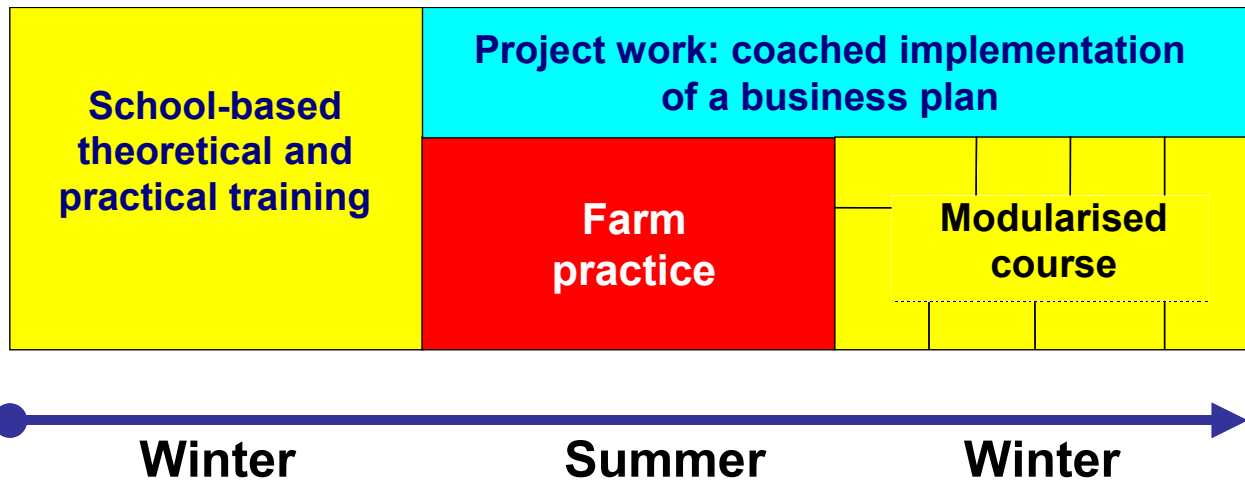
Regarding to the lesson concept the following suggestions are given:

- 5 days of studying per week;
- 6 lessons per day;
- One lesson lasts for 45 minutes;

Lessons will be conducted in the classroom as well as in workshops and in the school and apprenticeship farm fields.

## 2.4. Course structure

The overall course structure looks as follows:



The course structure is defined by the:

- Relation of practice and theory
- Number of semesters
- Number of lessons

		TOTAL	66	1800	21,2%	26%	34,7 %	18,1 %
04.01.	Exam	III (modules)	7	420	48%	50%	0	0
28.12.			1					
01.11.			7					
TO BE AGREED WITH APP. FARMER		II (farm practice)	4	960	0	5	65%	30%
01.03.			32					
04.01.	Exam	I (theory + practice in school)	7	420	43%	50%	0	7%
28.12.			1					
01.11.			7					
		Semester	Weeks	Lessons	Theoretical lessons	Practical lessons	Practice on a farm	Project work

	Theoretical / practical lessons
	Practice on a farm (apprenticeship) + Project work
	Modules + Project work
	Holidays
	Examinations

TL	Theoretical lessons
PL	Practical lessons
PW	Project works

## 2.5. Theoretical lessons

Theoretical lessons will be given during the 1st and 3rd semesters. During theoretical lessons, the skills outlined in the competence profile will be taught.

## 2.6. Practical lessons

Practical skills will be acquired through various ways:

### 2.6.1. Practical lessons at school

This kind of practice will be conducted in the 1st and 3rd semesters. Practice at school will use labs, gardens and workshops of the school. During the 2nd semester specific practical lessons which need to take place during the growing season will take place at the school farm (or selected apprenticeship farms).

### 2.6.2. Project works

All students need to write a business plan, submit it to the coaches for approval and implemented it with their own funds or with the help of a micro-credit. The students will work in small groups of two to three or on their own. Based on interests of every group, different kinds of farm activities can be proposed by the students as their business project (e.g. potato growing, fruit, vegetable or cereal production; livestock, poultry, sheep breeding, cattle breeding etc.). After the completion of the project works students have to give full report of their gained experiences and analyze income calculation. A coach employed by the school will coach them during implementation of the project work. The “Farm management” teacher from the first semester can work as a coach starting from the 2nd semester.

The main goal of the project work is:

The students get familiar with the whole cycle of production, marketing and business, in a specific farm production branch.

The preparatory work will be held in the 1st semester through the general subjects such as farm management, economy, accountancy and marketing. For specific training on writing business plans two hours per week are allocated.

The actual projects will be implemented during the 2nd and 3rd semesters, at least one day per week. During the apprenticeship period, students will meet in the school three times (April / June / September) for two days (equals 12 hours for each meeting or 4% of time of summer semester) for discussing their project works and exchanging experiences as well as checking on record making etc. To these two days another two-three days of practical lessons will be added (see 2.5.1).

In the third semester, lessons for project work will only last until 28.12. This is enough time for all students to finalize their businesses and hand in their reports and pay back their credits. Thus, there will be allocation of 1 hour for 7 weeks (equals 2%).

### 2.6.3. Farm practice (apprenticeship)

The apprenticeship will be conducted during the 2nd semester on a private farm. This farm practice will be conducted on well-developed and advanced farms, chosen on the basis of special criteria. The mechanisms of conducting this practical lesson are the following:

- Each apprentice will conduct his practice on only one farm;
- The apprentice has to participate in all work helping on the farm as a farm laborer;
- The farmer will provide the apprentice with food and lodging and pay a modest salary;
- The apprentice will be monitored by a coach from school;
- The apprentice will keep a diary about his practice and give a full report about his work;

- Once every two weeks experience exchange days will be organized between students. During these experience exchange days all students will visit farms of each other, in order to exchange experiences and learn certain activities on a farm together. This allows the students to gain additional skills not offered at their own apprenticeship farm.

#### **2.6.4. Lessons for additional specialty**

Each school can give an additional specialty to students. For example: “mechanization expert”, “accountant”, “veterinary operator” etc. These hours shall be facultative and take place in the afternoon of the 1st or 3rd semester.

### **2.7. Modules**

The modules are one of the main parts of the system and intend to make the education more flexible and addressed to clients. The decision on what type of modules will be offered is currently pending:

1. Subject-based: Students choose preferred subjects and take lessons on them. Lessons are arranged around subjects (i.e. chicken production from the egg to the killing of the birds).
2. Competence-based: Students learn a specific competence, which is universal for different situation (e.g. veterinary skills are applicable for cattle, horses and sheep alike).

### **2.8. Financial aspects**

Each school develops own financial scheme, where all costs related to quality education shall be presented. This financial scheme has then to be agreed with the Local Training Fund KOJO for each new course that is opened.

#### **2.8.1. Salary of teachers and masters**

- How much is one hour of teaching (includes social fund and other taxes);
- How much masters will get for an hour of teaching (includes social fund and other taxes).

#### **2.8.2. Salary of coach**

(2-3 semesters) - (includes social fund and other taxes).

#### **2.8.3. Cost per student per theoretical lesson at school**

1 som / student

#### **2.8.4. Cost per student per practical lesson at school**

5 som / student

#### **2.8.5. Costs of practical project works**

No costs (given that credits will be paid back to the credit agency).

#### **2.8.6. Costs during practice on a farm**

Nothing will be paid to the farmer during practice on a farm; the student will get a salary from the farmer. For the experience exchange activities on farms that are held once every two weeks the farmer provides food and transportation to his student.

### **2.8.7. Accommodation / food costs of students**

The schools decide themselves whether they provide food to students and if they do, finance it out of the training fund. Students from outside or other regions will stay at host homes if they wish, which will be chosen by using criteria, but they will need to pay their lodging;

## **3. Holidays**

There will be the following holidays:

Winter holidays: 28.12. – 04.01. (one week)

Summer holidays: 1 month (according to agreement between apprentice and farmer)

## **4. Examinations**

In one and half year of study all the students will be assessed twice:

### **4.1. Semester theoretical tests**

After the first semester in each subject. The purpose is to evaluate theoretical level of knowledge of students (teachers of each school will be responsible for that).

### **4.2. Semester practical and theoretical final graduation assessment**

After completing the three semesters and successfully passing the final assessments, a certificate as “**Farm entrepreneur**” indicating skills and knowledge learnt as well as modules attended, will be awarded.

## **5. Trainers (teachers and masters)**

The suggested VES will need Teachers and Masters of the following fields:

- Economy;
- Management;
- Accountancy;
- Marketing;
- Law;
- Sheep and goat breeding;
- Cattle breeding;
- Equine;
- Cereals;
- Potato growing;
- Fodder production;
- Machinery;
- Vegetables and gardening;
- Product processing;
- Milk processing;
- Vegetables and fruit processing;
- Coaches;
- Specific farms and farmers will be chosen for the hosting apprentices;
- Other resource people will be involved.