

# FIRST INTENSIVE APPLE DEMONSTRATION ORCHARDS SETUP IN LERIK DISTRICT

European Union Support to  
Lankaran–Astara Economic  
Region of Azerbaijan



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Launch event, Lahahiran village, Lerik District

We are excited to announce the successful establishment of the first Intensive Apple Demonstration Orchard in the Lankaran–Astara Economic Region in Lerik District. These experimental orchards cover 2.5 hectares in the 6 villages of Lahahiran, Divagac, Hiveri, Gurdasar, Laladulan, and Vistan. This initiative of the "EU Support to Lankaran–Astara Economic Region of Azerbaijan" project, aims to enhance apple cultivation techniques and encourage agricultural prosperity in the district.

The orchards' launch event was held on April 2, 2024, in Lahahiran village and was attended by 100 farmers. The Deputy Head of Lerik District Executive Authority, Lankaran SMB Friend of the Small and Medium Business Development Agency, Director of Lankaran Research Station of the Scientific Institute for Fruit Growing, Director of State Agriculture Development Center were among those present. The event marked a significant milestone in the collaborative efforts to promote sustainable economic development in the district through improving the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable value chains.

Following the opening ceremony, two experts from the Scientific Research Institute for Fruit Growing in Guba, conducted hands-on training sessions for farmers on various aspects of apple planting and cultivation. The training covered topics such as selecting the optimal planting locations, preparing the soil for planting, proper planting techniques for apple saplings (distance between sapling, depth etc.), implementing effective irrigation methods, managing pests and diseases, pruning techniques for apple trees, and post-harvest storage practices etc. The soil tests done were also explained in simple terms to the farmers.



Apple saplings





*Training by expert from Research Institute in Guba*

As part of this initiative, 2010 apple saplings of 5 well known international commercial cultivars were distributed to seven local farmers. The selected varieties Starkrimson, Pink Lady, Golden Delicious, Gala, and Granny Smith, were carefully chosen for their adaptability to the climate in the district and market demand. Prior to planning soil samples were taken from each field and tested. Subsequently, a table containing care and cultivation techniques for each sort, selected based on the results of the soil testing, was developed to share with farmers. Simultaneously, a WhatsApp group was created with farmers and experts to provide information on care techniques and to answer any questions from farmers. Frequent monitoring by the project horticulture expert has also been undertaken along with visits from the experts from the Research Institute. The demo apple orchards will be monitored on a regular basis to observe the growth of the saplings, collect information for analysis and to select the varieties most suitable for further propagation.



*First saplings being planted*



*Soil analysis report being explained to farmers*

Stay tuned for more updates from the "EU Support to Lankaran-Astara Economic Region of Azerbaijan" project.