

A Dream and a New Dairy Farm in Armenia With an update from Kosovo

“He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.” Genesis 50:20 NLT

Note from Jeff – *Joseph understood that God placed him where he was for a reason. As I write this newsletter I am in Armenia. We just signed the papers to purchase the 17-acre dairy farm that we have been praying about. I started this trip not knowing whether we would be successful or not. Thank you for your prayers and support for this project. I look forward to you being a blessing to many people here in Armenia through Mercy Projects.*

13 Years Ago in Armenia

13 years ago we had our first camp for teenagers on a small 2 acre private farm. We used their buildings, pitched a few tents, and it rained five out of seven days. We even had a cow milking contest. Sitting on a rickety, three-legged stool, I fell back in the mud and completely failed to get any milk out of the cow. The kids struggled too, but they were more agile and avoided the mud. My team lost and the kids forgave me.

During the camp we ran an extension cord to a rusted storage shed. Zaven, our longtime Armenian staff volunteer from Finland, taught English in the shed as the kids huddled around a folding table to stay dry. A cow however, would wander by almost everyday and interrupt the afternoon class. Actually, I am not sure if anyone learned English that year but we did have a lot of fun. Nobody got electrocuted. The cows surrendered their milk to the experts, and we Americans have fond memories of the mud. For some reason, everyone dreamed and asked if we would come back. A dream was fulfilled and an annual tradition began.

The Sustainability of a Dairy Farm

This region was destroyed in the 1988 earthquake and financially has never quite recovered. The closure of factories and high unemployment forces most men to look for work in Russia. It is the poorest region in Armenia.

We just finalized the purchase of the farm, and I had never dreamed that we would do a project like this. However, I love the idea how the farm can provide both jobs and profits, which shall support future camps.



Final signatures at the official notary office.



The farm will be a business that supports our ministry efforts and provides jobs.



We hope to teach farming to local kids.

Name Your Own Cow and Help Start the Farm

The real work now begins, but we are excited to bring hope, jobs, and God's love to people's lives. Our team on the ground is researching the best type of cows for this climate and location. The cost of one cow is on average about \$1500 each. The original plan approved by the government is a farm with 42 cows.



42 cows @ \$1500 each = \$63,000. Would you like to buy a cow? We would like to name the cows after the sponsors who buy them! An additional \$37,000 in startup costs is needed for equipment, fencing, construction, feed, etc. We anticipate about \$100,000 will be needed these next few months.

We will keep you posted. Thank you for praying for this project. To support the dairy farm, just write "Armenia" on the enclosed return card or the memo line of your check.

A Brief Kosovo Update

This trip began for me in Kosovo where pastor Urim and I visited several families.

In one family, the father Adnan has brain cancer. He receives regular chemotherapy, paid for by the free healthcare system. He cannot walk and stays in bed most of the time. Adnan is married to Zaharie and they have two young boys. I asked if they have ever received a letter from their sponsor.



Letter on top of the couch.

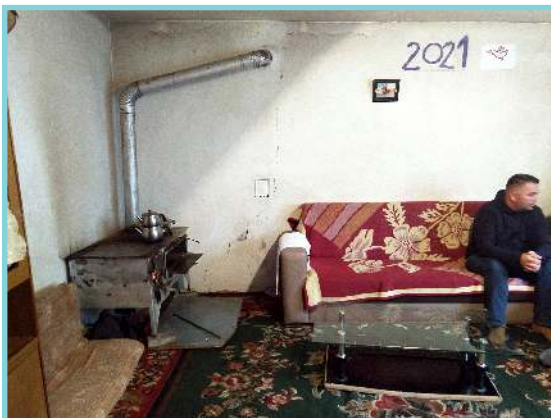
"Oh yes," said Zaharie, "it is behind you."

I looked behind me and there on the top of the couch was a nice letter from their sponsor, encouraging Zaharie to be strong. While the husband slept, we enjoyed Turkish coffee and prayed for the family.

The letters you send as a sponsor are so important. And the \$65 worth of groceries they receive each month is literally keeping them alive.

The Zabela Family

This family lives and sleeps in one room. Their 15-year-old daughter, Marigona, has a skin disease on her feet. It is very painful for her to walk. This infection, they said, has been there since she was a baby. They think that she suffered frostbite as a six-month-old baby. We hope to get a better medical opinion to see how we can help.



The stove heats the room as Urim listens to the story about Marigona's skin disease.

We prayed with the family and promised to help with a doctor visit. Again, they were so very thankful for the monthly sponsorship of \$65 worth of groceries. Urim also teaches English to a few of their children.

Your prayers and support are so important in the lives of these families in Kosovo and Armenia. Thank you for being there for them.