CONFERENCE "FOOD SAFETY – RISKS AND CHALENGES" TOOK PLACE

On Wednesday, March 17, 2010, in the Continental Hotel, Belgrade, the conference **"Food Safety – risks and challenges"** took place**.** The event was organized by the Association of Agricultural Journalists AGROPRESS in cooperation with the USAID Agribusiness Project and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Serbia.

Welcoming the participants of the gathering **Goran Djakovic**, President of the Board of Directors of AGROPRESS, said: "The media all over the world put a lot of interest in the issue of environmental causes and health safety, in connection with Food Safety that first needs to be modified in order to increase quality of life of every living creature. The media play an important roll promoting and keeping the population informed about advantages and disadvantages of some food quality solutions." Putting forth information from different countries around the world, Djakovic stressed: "Keeping an eye on the producers, distributors and consumers, the media are usually those who bring out issues of the dark side of the food industry to the public".

Minister of Agriculture **Sasa Dragin** emphasized the importance of the new Law on Food Safety which is to be respected so that the Serbian citizens would be sure that the food they bring to the table would not harm their health.

Last year there was 170.000 inspectorial checks and 6.000 denounciations, said Dragin and concluded: “Serbia is getting closer to the country in which there is no use in cheating in the food quality”.

Sasa Dragin, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management

Deputy Head of the USAID Mission in Serbia **Marilynn A. Schmidt** reminded the present: “Deputy Head of the USAID Mission in Serbia: “Having the necessary legislation is just the beginning. It is of the utmost importance that good laws are implemented and enforced in practice! In addition to the government, other participants in the food production process also have a responsibility and play an important role. Food producers, processors and traders need to ensure that food safety is guaranteed throughout the process - from the field to the market”.

Marilynn A. Schmidt, Deputy Head of the USAID Mission in Serbia

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands **Ronald van Dartel** started the speech: “As honorable member of Agropress and as active consumer of your tasty food and drinks, I am happy to address you on the occasion of this Conference”. Stressing that food products make an important part of the Serbian exportation, the Ambassador encouraged producers to start adjusting the production procedure to the European standards.

Ronald van Dartel, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Serbia

Head of European Integration and Economic Section at the Delegation of the European Union **Alberto Cammarata** presented the procedure of the food quality check in the EU member states and the new law which will be implemented this year, and which will bring changes to the food control standards in Europe.

Alberto Cammarata, Head of European Integration and Economic Section at the Delegation of the European Union

Dusan Pajkic, Director of General Inspectorate

Milos Bugarin, President of the Chember of Commerce of Serbia

Mirjana Rosul, General Manager, ALTAMED

Andriy Yarmak, Consultant for the Russian, Belarusian and Ukranian Market

Representatives of the US Embassy

Representatives of the USAID

Slavica Veskovic - Moracanin, Institute for the Meat Hygiene and Technology