

## **The 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AGROPRESS**

**By Bojan Kostandinovic**

The Association of Agricultural Journalists AGROPRESS has celebrated five years from its establishment. On that occasion, the Garden Center in Zemun gathered more than 150 journalists, representatives of the diplomatic corps, partner organizations, and educational institutions, managers of companies and friends of AGROPRESS.

Bearing in mind that the event is organized on the day of Serbian Patriarch Pavle's burial, the evening started with a minute of silence to honor the late Patriarch.

Addressing the gathering President of the Board of AGROPRESS - Goran Djakovic recalled the activities during the past five years and stressed that the involvement of AGROPRESS members in promoting agricultural journalism in Serbia gave excellent results, because today there is no television which among its contents does not have a show with agriculture as major topic, and agriculture is often on the first page of the newspapers. He advocated again for greater agricultural budget, which would be at the level of the 2008. Djakovic recalled that AGROPRESS initiated the project "Women Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness" in collaboration with USAID and thanked the Ministry of Agriculture for the constructive cooperation and support of this Ministry over the past five years. Addressing those present, Serbian Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management Dr. Sasa Dragin said that in the past few years journalists gave a significant contribution to the development of agriculture in Serbia and thanked AGROPRESS for the activities implemented through projects of entrepreneurship development and promotion of professionalism in agriculture. He especially thanked the engagement of the AGROPRESS in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, in order to start the debating over a set of the agrarian laws.

On this occasion, H.E. Ron J.P.M. van Dartel, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Serbia became an honorable member of the AGROPRESS. Ambassador van Dartel said for this occasion: "Currently there has been a shift of available programs for Serbia, to help the country on its path towards the EU. Programs that are now open are intended to support the process of raising the capacity of state administration." The Ambassador briefed the attendees with the basic characteristics of agribusiness sector of the Netherlands and recalled bilateral cooperation in various fields.

On the occasion the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Association gave recognitions and thanks. Jasmina Nikitovic-Stojcic, the editor of the show "Znanje Imanje" won the gold medal and AGROPRESS badge for the involvement in the project "Women Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness", Branislav Gulan from the Serbian Chamber of Commerce received a silver medal and badge as the most active member on the new web site of the Association, and Katarina Andjelkovic, host of the TV show "Domacin" on the Fox-TV, was awarded as the most active young journalist.

Gathered guests were greeted by Marilyn Schmidt, Deputy Director of USAID Mission in Serbia, honorable member of the AGROPRESS since last year. She stressed a very successful collaboration between USAID and AGROPRESS: "The USAID Agribusiness Project and AGROPRESS have

implemented a number of very important and successful projects and activities over the last twelve months. The first phase of the Women Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness Project has been completed and the National Agribusiness Conference that was held in September marked the beginning of a series of events dedicated to helping Serbian agribusinesses - which we aim to organize in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and AGROPRESS in the coming months”.

General sponsor of the event was the company RES TRADE from Novi Sad. Acknowledgments for support of the work of the Association were given in addition to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, and the USAID Agribusiness Project, JTI, Bovan Consulting, Garden Center and apiary Kovacevic.

*AGROPRESS - Association of Agricultural Journalists is a non-governmental organization and its main objectives are reviving and improving the life of the village, education of journalists and farmers. For this purpose we have prepared and organized more than 60 professional tours in the country and abroad. From 2006, AGROPRESS is a member of the International Federation of Journalists IFAJ. In cooperation with the USAID Mission in Serbia and the Ministry of Agriculture we recently organized the National Conference “Agribusiness Serbia 2010 - International Integration and Perspectives”.*