



Lomonosov Moscow State University

Eurasian Center for Food Security

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In December 2020, ECFS offered the opportunity to 10 university teachers from Eurasian countries to learn better ways to deliver food policy case study sessions and to improve distance-learning teaching skills.

Learn more about the train-the-trainer course in this edition of our Newsletter. Keep following ECFS news to not miss the opportunity to take part in the future trainings.

ECFS Deputy Director discusses Russian agri-food exports to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in the second article of the Newsletter. See the Newsletter to learn that the share of the EAEU countries in Russia's agri-food exports will continue to decline.

## The ECFS Teaching Program Helped University Teachers from Armenia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Russia Improve Their Teaching Skills

*By Derrill D. Watson II and James Gentry*

A train-the-trainer workshop was held under the auspices of the Eurasian Center for Food Security (ECFS) at Moscow State University in Moscow, Russia, on December 9–18, 2020. The training was given by **Derrill Watson** and **James Gentry**. Derrill Watson is an associate professor of economics and department head at Tarleton State University and worked with ECFS to create the case studies in 2016 and 2020; James Gentry is a

professor of education and curriculum design at Tarleton State University and is the director of instructional development and course design for the Center for Educational Excellence. Each has multiple years of experience in faculty development. The training was designed to prepare participants to make use of case studies and other active learning methodologies in their university teaching. This is the second time

These instructors have run this training for ECFS.

The training took place in an online format. Each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the participants met with the instructors and World Bank and ECFS representatives via a Zoom connection provided by the World Bank. Each Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, participants were given asynchronous lectures and assignments. [The Armenian National Agrarian University](#) provided the learning platform for the event and were most helpful.

Twelve participants were selected from a pool of 20 candidates by a committee composed of the consultants, ECFS faculty, and World Bank representatives. Candidates were selected on the basis of the relevance of their teaching to food security case studies, their statement of interest in using the case study methodology after the training, the strength of their CV and application letter, and their ability to communicate verbally in English. Brief online interviews were conducted with six potential participants to ensure they possessed sufficient English skills. One potential participant was dropped for lack of skills. Of the eleven candidates selected, one eventually dropped out of the course part way through because of the pressures of other work. The ten remaining participants came from the following countries: Armenia (three), Russia (four), the Kyrgyz Republic (two), and Kazakhstan (one).

Training sessions were based on current research in faculty development best principles and designed after the Professional Development Community and Course Re-Design programs at Tarleton State University's Center for Educational Excellence. The program used BDA+R (Before, During, After, and Reflection) as scaffolding to help participants think critically about their lesson plans and organize the active learning experiences based on the ECFS and Cornell University case studies that were showcased in the training. Trainings consisted of

alternating participatory lectures and practice sessions.

Among the active learning methods showcased in the training were:

- Students role play the various stakeholders in the case studies;
- Role, Audience, Format, Topic (RAFT) technique: students write or act from the viewpoint of a stakeholder in the case study;
- Think-aloud problem-solving in teams;
- Quotation commentaries; and
- The use of technology to better encourage student interactions, including alternative presentation applications (for example, Google slides and Nearpod); gamification (such as [Quizzizz](#), [Kahoot](#), and [Gimkit](#)); and student response applications (for example, [Poll Everywhere](#), [Google forms](#), [Mentimeter](#), [Screencast-o-matic](#), and [Nearpod](#)).

At the conclusion of the training with multimedia video tools, participants presented simulations based on one or more active teaching methodologies so they could demonstrate their mastery of the BDA+R framework and practice applications in a low-stakes setting. Overall, the trainers are satisfied that participants have gained new skills and concepts that they will be able to successfully deploy in their respective classrooms. Two participants were unable to demonstrate mastery due to needed medical care during the course. Should they complete the work later, they will also be awarded a completion certificate.

Feedback from participants has been enthusiastic and positive. Several participants have asked for additional sessions so they can report on how they have applied the training, reinforce the principles learned, and maintain networks. The main concern participants had was a desire to move the training to a face-to-face format.

## The Share of Eurasian Economic Union Countries in Russia's Agri-Food Exports Will Continue to Decline

*By Roman Romashkin*

Participants of the [Fourth Russian Economic Congress](#), held from December 21 to 25, discussed topical theoretical, methodological, scientific, and practical issues of economic development.

**Roman Romashkin**, Deputy Director of the Eurasian Center for Food Security (ECFS), discussed Russian agri-food exports to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), taking into account the dynamics of trade

complementarity, the presence of comparative advantages, and the potential for supplies to the common agri-food market.

The speaker noted that the core of the EAEU is the Russian economy, which accounts for 87 percent of its GDP, 80 percent of its population, and 75 percent of the agricultural products of the participating countries. Russia is an attractive and capacious market for its partners in Eurasian region. With a 30 percent reduction in imports from third countries, EAEU's share of Russian agri-food imports increased from 11 percent in 2014 to 17 percent in 2019. On the other hand, EAEU's share of Russian agri-food exports decreased from 16 percent to 15 percent because of the gap in the growth rates of supplies to the EAEU compared with the growth rates of these supplies to third countries.

Of Russian supplies to the EAEU market, 70 percent are highly processed products. These are mainly outputs of the food processing industry: products made from cereals, flour, starch, or milk; flour confectionery; chocolate; tobacco products; processed fruits and vegetables; sugar and sugar confectionery; and pet food. Outside the EAEU, 70 percent of agri-food exports consist of raw materials, which include grain and fish. Thus, agri-food exports are characterized by a general tendency for Russia to supply more complex products to the markets of less-developed economies.

In the Russian exports to the EAEU, supplies to Kazakhstan and Belarus account for 49 and 37 percent of total exports, respectively. Moreover, supplies to the Belarusian market provided more than half of the growth in Russian exports to the EAEU in 2014–19. Nevertheless, the balance of agri-food trade between Russia and Belarus

remains negative and continues to decline. This situation is largely due to the relatively high level of state support for agriculture in Belarus, which is 2.5–3.0 times higher than the level of support for agricultural production in Russia.

Moreover, more than two-thirds of the supplies of Russian agri-food products to the EAEU countries fall into the category of goods for which comparative advantages have not yet been fully realized. The absence of customs barriers; uniform technical regulations; and phytosanitary, veterinary, and sanitary requirements provide Russian exporters with certain advantages that allow them to gain a foothold in EAEU partners' markets and substitute their imports for imports from the rest of the world. Russia took the advantage of the opportunities that had opened up and is currently close to fully realizing its export potential in the common agri-food market. For the most popular food products, the unrealized potential of Russian supplies to the EAEU is about US\$200 million, or 12 percent of the supply volume in 2019.

The share of the EAEU countries in Russia's agri-food exports will decrease as Russia reaches its export targets. Currently, partners from the EAEU need to work out issues of building long-term trade and economic relations on the basis of the formation of joint value chains for the export of food products to third countries. In the context of the policy of import substitution, stagnation of Russian GDP, and falling incomes of the population, such an approach will ensure the strengthening of integration processes and the progressive development of agro-industrial complexes in the EAEU.

Conference materials are available (in Russian only) on [the conference website](#).

## Event Calendar 2021

Date	City, Country	Event
January 28	ONLINE	<a href="#">Impacts of COVID-19 on Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Central Asia and Caucasus</a>
January 28– June 17	ONLINE	<a href="#">Agricultural and Resource Economics Seminar, organized by Marc F. Bellemare or Jeffrey R. Bloem</a>

Date	City, Country	Event
February 2	ONLINE	<a href="#">IFPRI Webinar: Building Back Better: How Can Public Food and Agricultural Research Institutions Be Strengthened and Rebuilt after the COVID-19 Pandemic?</a>
February 2–5	ONLINE	<a href="#">FAO Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity (GSOBI20)</a>
February 10	ONLINE	<a href="#">IFPRI Webinar: Resetting the Table: Straight Talk about the Food We Grow and Eat</a>
March 1–4	St. Petersburg, Russia	<a href="#">XXIV Dokuchaev’s Readings 2020: Soil Science in a Digital Society</a>
July 19–24	Syktyvkar, Russia	<a href="#">VIII Dokuchaev Congress of the Society of Soil Scientists. and the School of Young Scientists on Soil Morphology and Classification (in Russian only).</a>
August 23–27	Geneva, Switzerland	<a href="#">EUROSOIL 2021</a>
September 13–16	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	<a href="#">FAO Global Symposium on Salt-Affected Soils</a>
December	Tokyo, Japan	<a href="#">Nutrition for Growth Summit</a>