



МІЖНАРОДНИЙ ФЕРМЕРСЬКИЙ ДІАЛОГ

Farm Expo – Kiev – 12th of February 2013

A first but significant step!



The many contacts made over the years by the team of International Farmers' Dialogue (FDI) with Ukrainian farmers led to a promising meeting in the frame of the Farm Expo in Kiev, on the 12th of February 2013. Claude Bourdin, French FDI coordinator, and Mykhaylyna Skoryk, the Ukrainian coordinator, met with 4 farmers (3 of them being Chairman of their local Farmers' Association in Poltava, Mirgorod and Krynychky) and 2 friends of F4F (Foundations for Freedom, the Ukrainian branch of Initiatives of Change) who happened to have some links with the political arena (Volodia Krutko, regional MP and farm machinery businessman and Oleksander Kopyl, independent political consultant working for the Minister of Social Affairs).



V Krutko and C Bourdin with Ukrainian farmers and M Skoryk, the organizer

The aim of the meeting was first to give the farmers a chance to express their thoughts, difficulties and hopes to our political friends as they often feel not listened to, not taken seriously and with great difficulties. This exchange happened and the farmers were very grateful for the time and ideas shared by Volodia and Oleksander. Many questions were discussed: the need for good farming policies, the challenge for farmers to think together about their hopes for agriculture and to voice them, the feeling of farmers not being free enough, the quality of the farmers' leaders, the question of alcohol and unemployment...

The farmers exchanged their contacts in order to see together how to continue the search.

They also expressed a strong desire to receive other European farmers on their farms in Ukraine, and especially young farmers. This is where Farmers' Dialogue International is ready to help. Volodia mentioned the possibility of discovering how the French agriculture got started in the 1950s, including cooperatives, farm organisations... There are big differences in Ukraine compared to the EU countries and the farmers feel strong disadvantaged. All participants thought that there is a great need to articulate good ideas for agriculture and make them know to the policy-makers. A next meeting will take place in the spring to think how to move forward on these ideas, so that the Ukrainian farmers can benefit from the dynamics stimulated by the Farmers' Dialogue organisation.

Everything is not dependant on the policy-makers. Farmers can take initiative where they are. The phrase "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness" is valid also in terms of Agriculture, in a situation of difficulties for the farmers (prices, environment, climate change), but also of increasing needs of food for the population.



Three of the Farmers with Volodia and Sasha and the organizing team