

INDEPENDENCE RECLAIMED

A \$2.7-million, three-year agricultural project is one of several Canadian initiatives underway in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as part of the Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe's technical assistance programs to the Baltic region.

The International Livestock Management School, based in Kemptville, Ontario, is training 100 Baltic dairy farmers and veterinarians in everything from the latest technologies in artificial insemination to disease prevention and nutrition. By 1994, 1 200 trainees will have upgraded their skills in milk production, with the aim of becoming more competitive in the marketplace.

Canadian Assistance at the Forefront

On August 26, 1991, Canada became the first Group of Seven (G-7) country to recognize the independence of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Moving quickly to provide concrete support for the economic and democratic transition, International Trade Minister Michael Wilson announced a combination of technical assistance and a \$10-million line of credit for each of the newly independent countries during a tour of the region less than one week later.

Ontario Hydro's New Business Ventures Division has already responded with a series of projects to train senior Baltic power utility officials in corporate policy development strategies, rate setting and labour relations management.

Some Canadian companies are focusing their efforts on a single Baltic nation. The Toronto-based Desktop Publishing Training Centre Inc. is working with the Latvian Ministry of Education to develop computer literacy programs for that country's teachers.

Executive Director Bob Logan says that he is excited about helping to contribute to the development of a new nation.

Others, like Vancouver's Arbokem Inc., the first Canadian firm to take advantage of the Task Force's Renaissance Eastern Europe program in the region, is establishing an environmentally sound mini flax pulp mill in Latvia. The REE program encourages Canadian companies to pursue trade and investment opportunities by sharing certain business development costs.

The Canadian Bankers Association, in co-operation with the Canadian Executive Service Organization, will send teams of Canadian financial experts to Lithuania over the next two years to help the new "Vilnius Banka" establish Canadian-style consumer banking throughout the country.

The Task Force, in co-operation with the Government of Ontario, is also supporting democratic development in Lithuania with the placement of a Canadian adviser in the Office of the Prime Minister. Similarly, Estonia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is drawing upon the expertise of five Canadians in policy planning and implementation.

A Strong Presence

With Canadian offices now open in each of the three Baltic republics, Canada has established a strong presence in the region and will be better able to support special initiatives such as the \$1-million Canadian airlift of much-needed medical supplies to the Baltics in March 1992. Canada's contribution was co-ordinated by the Canadian Red Cross as part of an international emergency campaign. ■

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