

INTERNATIONAL FAIR FOR AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY – EQUIPMENT – SUPPLIES

The success of the 21st AGROTICA 2006 International Fair for Agricultural Machinery – Equipment – Supplies, organized by HELEXPO at Thessaloniki International Exhibition Centre from February 1 to 5, was characterized by an increased number of visitors as compared to the previous event in 2004 – despite heavy snowfall – by hundreds of business meetings held, either through ExpoPartenariat or privately, as well as numerous commercial and entrepreneurial agreements.

There were 83,181 visitors during this year's event, as compared to 81,715 in 2004, while there was an 81% increase in the number of trade visitors, who numbered 5,694 as compared to 3,141. Greek trade visitors came from the whole of Greece; there was a 60% increase in the number of foreign trade visitors, as compared to 2004; they came from 26 countries, namely: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia & Montenegro, Singapore, Spain, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

The 21st AGROTICA was the largest ever and the most successful in the history of the event, comprising, once again, along with its satellite events, an important forum for our agricultural economy, new technical know-how, entrepreneurial initiatives and innovative actions, thus contributing towards the development of an action plan for upgrading quality, developing entrepreneurship and conquering competitiveness of Greek rural regions and the agricultural economy at a national, European and international level.

The 21st AGROTICA was inaugurated by the Minister of Rural Development and Food, Mr. Evangelos Bassiakos, at the packed hall of "I. Vellidis" Congress Centre. Mr. Bassiakos referred to his Ministry's work and made mention of important percentile increases of 33.5% in subsidies and increased funding of 34% by the Greek Agricultural Insurance Organisation (ELGA). The Minister described the development of agricultural produce exports in the ten months from January to October, which presented a 24% increase, as satisfactory, while stressing that the Ministry's priorities include strengthening agricultural income, improving competitiveness in the agricultural sector and helping farmers remain in rural areas.