



Special edition: Solar Drying System in Uzbekistan!

Dear customers, traders, consumers and friends of our company,

In collaboration with and help from ADA (Austria Development Agency) we have designed and constructed the world's largest **CO₂ neutral Solar and Biomass dryer system** on the operating site of our 100% subsidiary in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, Silk Road Organic Foods.

The first part, consisting of the solar system, was assembled and constructed in record-breaking-time and was successfully put to use in June of this year. With this new solar drying system and associated doubling of previous drying output in Uzbekistan, we are now in the position to process the sharply increased output of fresh organic fruits and vegetables in recent years which are obtained from our own farms, as well as from the Fairtrade farmer's group Turkiston Gulba as well as from the widespread wild collecting areas. And all this is done with a unique quick and environment-friendly drying! Since Uzbekistan has more than 300 sunny days in a year, a decision was made in favour of significantly higher investment cost for this solar-operated drying system which later runs basically without operating costs. In addition, a solar-operated drying system fits better in the organic notion than a system which is operated with gas and electricity, which is unfortunately still used widely throughout the world.



We have decided to invest into a continuous drying concept in the form of a tunnel dryer, which is comprised of many individual trolleys in order to ensure batch by batch drying and thereby guarantee 100 % traceability of the products dried. In this way even small batches of the Fairtrade small-scale farmers can also be separately dried.

The huge variety of organic dried fruit consisting of **Cherries** (sweet, sour, gold), **Berries** (Mulberries, Sea Buckthorn, Goji Berries, Berberries, Strawberries, Elderberries, Currants, Raspberries, Gooseberries), **Raisins** (brown, green, black), **Melons** (Sugar, Honey and Watermelons), and other **Tree Fruits** (Jujube red Date berries, pomegranate, Kaki, Nashi pears, Quinces, wild Apricots and plums, apples) as well a number of high quality dried vegetables such as Zucchini, Tomatoes, Egg-plants, Carrots, Parsley etc. can now be constantly extended. A further extremely positive effect, more small-scale farmers from the Fairtrade farmer's group can be locally hired and their organic fruits as well as vegetables can be purchased at a fair price by Silk Road Organic Foods and in this way, their income is secured and improved.

With the implementation of the second part of the drying system, consisting of a „Biomass recycling burner system“, in the autumn of this year, we will then be in the position to dry all our organic raw materials even during nights or with bad weather by obtaining energy in form of warm air, independently of the local energy supplying system or weather. The agricultural waste and side products generated during the fruit and nut processing, such as shells of nut and seeds and fruit stones can be utilized for the dryer system is CO₂ neutral Biomass.

We pay great attention on building Know-How for future projects. Small-scale handicraft enterprises in the region around Samarkand, where „Silk Road Organic Foods“ a subsidiary of Marap is situated have taken an active part in setting up the plant. The technological Know-how of this pilot project is further passed on to local installation companies with the hope that more similar energy-saving projects can be realized in the near future and in this way a small but long-term contribution can be made to protect the climate.



You can find more pictures and videos from our drying System on our Facebook pages, on Twitter as well as on YouTube!



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