



PRESS RELEASE

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New Market Provides a Hub for Produce in Laghman Province

MEHTARLAM, LAGHMAN | JULY 17, 2011 — The Laghman Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Market, built with support from USAID, opened today in Mehtarlam, the provincial capital of Laghman. The new market brings together 72 wholesalers and dozens of farmers, transporters, and laborers for doing business. The market serves as a hub for a variety of fruit, vegetables, and staple crops grown throughout the districts of Laghman that will help boost agricultural sales from across the province.

“The old market was a total mess with no boundary walls and storage facility. During rains, mud covered the market floor making the business impossible those days. Crowds hardly allowed trucks to unload produce,” said Faiz Mohammad, a wholesaler in the new market. “With the new market, things have changed. We’re now able to showcase and store produce in stalls and use the market floor for loading and unloading. With the boundary walls, we no longer have to worry about the safety of our products overnight.”

The market features 72 stalls and a large open space in the middle, 15 toilet facilities, a water supply system composed of a well, a water pump and a water reservoir with the capacity of 25,000 liters, and a waste disposal facility. Attached to the market is a meeting hall that holds 200 people and a separate room for the Laghman Wholesalers’ Association office. A cold storage facility, also built with funding from the U.S. Government, is located a few minutes walk from the market. The facility helps farmers and traders store their perishables during the busy market periods.

Previously, wholesalers operated on the roadside in downtown Mehtarlam causing congestion. Fruit and vegetables were exposed to damage from sunlight and changing weather conditions such as rains and winds. In addition to environmental threats and crowd, the market lacked space for piling products.

Governor of Laghman Province H.E. Mohammad Iqbal Azizi, U.S. Government officials, the mayor of Mehtarlam, other Afghan government authorities, members of the Laghman Wholesalers Association, and representatives from USAID’s Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives - North, East, and West project attended the opening.

USAID strives to strengthen the agricultural sector in the region, improve conditions, and enable farmers to increase sales and store their surplus products until there is a higher demand for them in the market.

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