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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

Agribusiness Trade Facilitation Program

OVERVIEW

Afghanistan has emerged as a competitive source of high-value fruits, vegetables, and other agriculture products for international markets. Buyers from countries such as Tajikistan, Pakistan, India, Turkmenistan, and the United Arab Emirates regularly visit Afghanistan in search of the country's agriculture products, citing their good quality, unique varieties, and competitive prices. Companies from farther afield, in the Middle East, Europe, and North America, now also are seeking to bring Afghan agriculture products into their highly competitive markets.

USAID's Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP), through its Agribusiness Trade Facilitation unit, supports Afghan agribusinesses to meet the demands of buyers in both local and international markets. To achieve that goal, the unit helps Afghan business clients understand market demands; establish lucrative market contacts; and identify ways to improve product sourcing, handling, packaging, and transport. The underlying principle is to support individual Afghan businesses in their efforts to respond to the demands of their buyers.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- **Market identification and access:** Match Afghan companies with domestic and international buyers, document supply requirements along the market chain, and identify production and marketing constraints that prohibit clients from meeting buyers' demands
- **Harvest and post-harvest handling:** Improve the quality and packaging of Afghan produce so it is ready for sale and export
- **Improve carton design and sourcing of improved cartons:** Ensure Afghan produce reaches its export destination with minimal product loss
- **Customs and shipping facilitation:** Provide training in completing export documentation and negotiate with airlines and transport companies for favorable rates

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Helped pave the way to increase Afghanistan's horticultural exports to more than \$16 million in sales of pomegranates, apricots, grapes, melons, apples and other agricultural products
- Linked Afghan exporters with international buyers through commercial missions to different countries and through AgFairs that attracted participants from as far away as the United States and the United Kingdom
- Provided Afghan farmers the opportunity to introduce their apples – some of the crispiest, sweetest, and largest in the region – to the biggest market in Central Asia by expanding the apple market to India for the first time after approval of a key document detailing how Afghan apples meet international standards
- Provided exporters with technical assistance in sorting, grading, and packaging the fruit according to international standards and assisted in completing export and customs documentation
- Organized Afghanistan's participation in major trade events in India, Dubai, and United Arab Emirates