



## Agriculture

July 2012



Photo: USAID/AVIPA

*In Kabul Province, Said Agha checks on his soon to be harvested crop. His income has increased by 50 percent for the vines he has trellised.*

### AGRICULTURE SNAPSHOT

- Distributed vouchers for improved agricultural inputs to more than 985,000 farmers
- Established more than 446 veterinary field units
- Administered more than 26 million vaccinations to livestock
- Trained more than 633,000 men and women in improved farm and business skills in FY 2010
- Established a \$100 million Agricultural Development Fund to provide loans to Afghan farmers and on-lending organizations

Data as of July 2012

### BACKGROUND

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood and subsistence for 80 percent of the population that lives in rural areas, and a crucial sector for national food security and economic growth.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

U.S. Government (USG) agricultural assistance in Afghanistan focuses on creating agriculture jobs and increasing both incomes and Afghans' confidence in their government. USAID programs improve productivity, regenerate agribusiness, strengthen key value chains, rehabilitate watersheds and irrigation infrastructure, and strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) to deliver services effectively.

Collaboration among USAID, the Afghan government, and other USG agencies and donors has helped curb opium cultivation. Twenty provinces currently are poppy-free. USAID and its partners promote the production of both high-value licit crops and staple crops that are keys to both income generation and food security. USAID addresses constraints along the entire value chain, from production to processing to marketing and sales. USAID also works to strengthen systems critical to long-term development, such as credit, research, extension, and agriculture education. Improving farm-to-market roads and marketplace infrastructure are also key priorities.

### RESTORING AFGHAN AGRICULTURE'S HISTORICAL STRENGTHS

Afghanistan has an excellent reputation for its almonds, pomegranates, pistachios, grapes, and apricots. With USAID assistance, high-value fruit and nut production has increased significantly since 2002, despite the ongoing conflict.

In FY 2010, USAID trained more than 633,000 farmers in improving crop yields, financial management, and business skills. USAID also supports the efforts of Afghan traders to expand trade opportunities into new export markets. In FY 2010, fresh grapes were transported overland to Delhi using refrigerated containers, while pomegranates and raisins were exported to Canada, Dubai, Germany, Holland, India, and Tajikistan. More than \$14 million in export sales were made in FY 2010 as a direct result of USG agricultural assistance.

As many Afghans raise livestock as well as crops, USAID has trained para-veterinarians. In turn, they have trained more than 850 veterinary field staff nationwide, administered 48 million vaccinations, and dispensed other medicines to bolster livestock health. Additionally, 446 veterinary field units, private businesses that provide preventive animal health and treatment services to rural communities, have been established during the past two years yielding \$12.1 million in sales.

### EXTENDING ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

Afghan farmers need loans to buy quality seeds, fertilizer, and equipment. In July 2010, USAID established a \$100 million Agricultural Development Fund (ADF), which began lending in September. The ADF, which is co-



## Agriculture (continued)



Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

*A woman places peppers out to dry (top). USAID established the first Women's Farm Service Center, a boost for women's participation in the agricultural economy.*



Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

*Kabul Women's Farm Service Center support staff at the new showroom.*

managed by MAIL and USAID, has approved \$16 million in loans to date. Financial and non-financial institutions receiving ADF funds on-lend those funds as credit to farmers so they can purchase agricultural inputs. These on-lending institutions have disbursed \$6 million and provided loans to approximately 5,400 farmers.

As part of its stabilization effort, USAID continues to fund a voucher system that enables qualified farmers to purchase seed, fertilizer, and other supplies locally at discounted rates.

Ten USAID-supported farm service centers are operating in Afghanistan. These centers provide access to high quality seeds, fertilizer, and other inputs, and serve as centers for access to market and technical information. The centers have generated sales and services worth more than \$32 million.

Since June 2010, 70 Afghan-owned and operated "AgDepot" farm stores were established, increasing the number of USG-supported AgDepots to 370. These farm stores have played a critical role in increasing farmer access to production inputs, modern technology, and extension services.

### **BOOSTING INCOME FOR WOMEN**

USAID-developed activities targeting women include dairy processing and poultry production, nurseries, greenhouses, and business-training programs. To help women farmers gain access to quality agricultural inputs and machinery, USAID supported the first women's farm service center in FY 2010, which serves some 10,000 women working in the agriculture sector in the provinces around Kabul. Before the end of FY 2011, two more women's farm service centers will be established in Parwan and Balkh.

### **PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT**

Environmental degradation is an important cause of declining productivity. Improving watersheds and preserving Afghanistan's environment are critical to increasing water resources for agriculture and achieving and maintaining peace. USAID supports tree planting, improved water management, reduced soil erosion, increased water retention, and enhanced habitat conservation, all of which will make farms and rangelands more productive and reduce conflict over scarce resources.

### **INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

USAID fosters links among Afghan universities and ministries, agriculture and veterinary schools, U.S. land grant universities, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). USAID has also provided assistance to strengthen university-level agriculture education in Afghanistan. Partnering with USDA, USAID assists in building MAIL's capacity to help farmers by providing agricultural research and extension services, and helping farmers and businesses to sell their output, both locally and abroad.

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