Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation and Capacity Enhancement (PEACE) Project
AFGHANISTAN

Quarterly Report

July 1, 2008 through September 30, 2008

Submitted By:
University of California at Davis

In Collaboration With:
Texas A&M University System

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September 30, 2008
Summary - Activities conducted this quarter

- Annual project review meetings in Texas
- Plant species identification and digitizing of field data
- Field trip to Badakhshan and Bamyan
- Phygrow modeling
- Preparations for feeding trials
- Facilitating Kuchi Shuras
- Pilot Market Study

Major Implementation Activities conducted this Quarter

During the last two weeks in July the annual project review meetings were held in College Station, Texas. This included meetings and presentations with people from UC. Davis, Texas A&M, Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, the Borlaug Institute, and the Blacklands Research Center. The Year-2 annual report and the Year 3 work plan were discussed and personnel allocations were determined. We discussed improved coordination between the Texas and Afghanistan components of the PEACE Project.

The PEACE Project has continued to make progress on all components. While we have experienced some difficulties collecting field information in various Provinces, we were still been able to reach the most important rangelands in the central highlands again this year. The details of the activities conducted this quarter will be discussed in the following sections.

B. Infusion of the Forage Monitoring System

In early July we were able to conduct field work in Badakhshan. This year was particularly interesting because we were able to visit the entire extent of the Shewae Kolone grassland. In addition to conducting 5 surveys in these rangelands we also conducted interviews with Kuchi herders that had arrived from Kunduz Province. This year the Shaewa rangelands were productive but the Kuchi had to move onto them several weeks earlier than normal. Lack of spring rains forced Northern Kuchi herders to abandon spring grazing areas and head for the higher rangelands of Sar-e-pul, Samangon and Badakhshan starting as early as April 21st.

We conducted a second survey trip into Bamyen Province in August. This trip was scheduled to make an attempt at reaching the Northwestern rangelands of Yawkalang. The river is typically too high to cross in June. The team ran into difficulties reaching the areas we were hoping to survey due to very poor road conditions. We were stopped about 25 kilometers from our destination as we found that the road had washed off one of the escarpments. Additional plant material was also collected during this trip, however. Late flowering plants, many from the Cosinia family, were collected for reference material.

It was a difficult year for many of the Kuchi, who found themselves in the position of having to sell off their new-born sheep and goats because they knew would not survive. Kuchi coming from the Eastern Provinces of Laghman and Nangarkhar also experienced problems when moving on to their spring areas. In the absence of
rain they arrived on the Shomali Plains hoping for forage. Unfortunately they did not find good forage here this year but instead had to leave the Plains about 4 weeks earlier than normal.

The government has been slow this year in their commitment to be part of the implementation of monitoring system. While we are still attempting to collect enough information to run our forage prediction models, the Ministry of Agriculture is not devoting as much attention as is required to fully understand the system. We are hoping to remedy that situation this winter as we conduct some LEWS Workshops.

The digitizing of field data sheets has also been a main priority this quarter. We have identified and validated species names for an additional 180 plants. We have a total of 52 survey sites that will be modeled by the end of December. This will allow us to predict forage condition on these sites for the coming growing period. Considering the current state of security within Afghanistan we have decided to remain focused on the central highland rangelands for our forage prediction modeling. Our effort will be focused in 12 Provinces:

1. Kabul  
2. Parwan  
3. Ghor  
4. Bamiyan  
5. Baghlan  
6. Panjshir  
7. Sar-e-Pul  
8. Balkh  
9. Samangan  
10. Samangan  
11. Takhar  
12. Badakhshan

C. Infusion of the NIRS Nutritional Management System.

During the past quarter there has been a great amount of effort placed on the development of training materials for the Nutritional Profiling system. Videos, electronic training modules and digital presentations have been produced with the idea that we will hold 3 workshops this fall to train Ministry of Agriculture, University and certain NGO’s. Along with the Ministry of Agriculture’s, animal health staff, 24 University students have been selected to take part in the feeding trials. They will all receive extensive training in the nutritional profiling technique. To conduct some of this training Stephen Prince, from the Grazing Animal Nutrition Laboratory at Texas A&M University, will be in Kabul for 2 weeks.

The Near Infrared Laboratory is equipped and ready to operate. We will conduct 2 feeding trials this fall in order to improve our correlation equation for small ruminants in Afghanistan. We have already purchased the goats for the first trial, which is scheduled to start on October 2nd. Over the last 2 months we have purchased the necessary forage to conduct the feeding trials. We will feed with a native grass mix, alfalfa, and wheat straw.

The first trial will run until the end of October and the sheep feeding trial will take place during the month of November. The second feeding trial will be conducted at Kabul University. The A4 project has built a new facility at the University and we will coordinate with professors to train additional students during these trials.
**D. Linking the Technology with Herder Alliances**

During the last quarter we have continued to place a large amount of effort towards the facilitation and development of herder alliances. These alliances take the form of organized shuras where Kuchi leaders meet once a month in their respective Provinces. These shuras are held by the provincial directors of the Independent Department of Kuchi. Our facilitation of these Kuchi shuras has produced some important information that is being used to develop a conflict resolution strategy for Kuchi herders as well as to develop an information nexus for our rangeland information.

One of the most interesting revelations related to development of a conflict resolution strategy for the Kuchi has been the discovery of who represents who. The Independent Department of Kuchi is the legitimate government body that is mandated to represent the Kuchi, nation-wide. It does this through its provincial directors. The provincial directors work with provincial and district governors to address issues that are discussed during monthly shuras. These issues, in turn, are discussed in Kabul within the Department of Kuchi. In this way, the viewpoints of local Kuchi leaders are represented from the district level to the national level.

There is another body of Kuchi however called the Kabul Shura or Kuchi Council and this body has about 200-300 members that supposedly represent the Kuchi as well. This body does not have any executive power, however. This body is a group of Kuchi that are separate from the government’s Kuchi Department and does not represent Kuchi families nation-wide. Instead they represent a small and powerful segment of Afghanistan’s Kuchi population. As such this body tends to diffuse the potential strength of the Independent Department of Kuchi through its high profile status of some of its leaders. It is important to note that although the Department of Kuchi and the Kuchi Council are separate they do not always act independently.

The issue here is one of mandate and representation for the Kuchi people. Currently there is not a single spokesman for the Kuchi. Consequently, multiple positions taken by various Kuchi leaders has harmed the chances of negotiating meaningful solutions to land access issues as well as many other issues. As a result, unresolved access issues recur each year costing human lives and further weakening the livestock sector.

There needs to be support aimed at assisting the Independent Department of Kuchi to fulfill their mandate for the Kuchi people. Capacity within this fledgling department must be strengthened so they can deliver a unified message and negotiate with unified interests. Toward this end, the Afghanistan PEACE Project has been facilitating monthly shuras in 12 provinces (soon to be 14). With a small amount of financial assistance, Kuchi issues are being discussed and decisions are being made locally. In addition to solving local issues, the shuras are also collecting data from clan leaders for the PEACE Project. To date, nearly 600 surveys have been filled out and delivered to our office. Of course, some Provinces have not been able to successfully carry out shuras over the 3-month trial period. Two Provinces will be dropped from those we currently support. One province is being dropped because they could not hold meetings (i.e., security related), and the other simply did not set an agenda to discuss issues related to the local Kuchi. Next quarter we will be providing support for 4 additional provinces.
E. Building Capacity within the MAIL, NGOs and the University

As is the case with building the capacity within the Independent Department of Kuchi, building capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture has also been a huge challenge. While we continue to place a large amount of effort towards training within the Departments of Animal Husbandry and Natural Resource Management, acquiring the necessary commitment has been difficult. With respect to this commitment, however, we have benefited greatly from the signed memorandums of understanding that exist with each Department. From time to time we pull these documents out from their file folders to remind the Ministry-staff that they have promised to provide us with people to train.

Apathy within the government staff is not new and is directly related to their salaries in most cases. The challenge is to figure out how to engage the staff within these departments. Government-staff that have accompanied us during field work have responded quite positively and have developed interest in rangeland management work. Convincing their supervisors to let them accompany us is not as successful. We have even insisted that the supervisors accompany us on our field trips but these invitations are met with excuses. Breaking through this barrier will continue to be a challenge.

In addition to lectures and workshops, we have been working on this increasing job interest through the development training modules for the technologies we are hoping to institutionalize. Our most recent effort has been that of video training modules translated into both Dari and Pashto. The videos have been produced in Texas for the most part and we are in the process of having them voiced over in either Pashto or Dari. We are hoping that learning more about the technologies in this type of format will increase the level of interest among government staff. One huge benefit of video training is that the participants can go over the lessons and material time and time again. This makes for a great way to learn the techniques and at the same time have a reference source for the information in the future.
**Other Achievements this Quarter**

A pilot study was conducted to test a sampling method for acquiring market information about sheep, goats and cattle. Markets in 6 Afghan cities were visited for 3 days each during the months of July and August 2008 and traders were asked about the source of the animals they were selling. We are planning on following up in this survey with a more complete survey that will also collect this information 4 times throughout the year so we can measure the seasonal fluctuations in the animal market. Not all traders within every market could be sampled due to the large numbers of traders. We will develop a method to reduce the potential for bias in these situations where we cannot survey all traders by developing a trader-selection procedure. The results of the pilot showed that a clear majority of small ruminant animals originated from the Kuchi people (see results below). An interesting result was found in the Kabul market with respect to cows. While Kuchi do own cows, this figure deserves more attention and may be related to the large number of settled Kuchi near Kabul.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Traders Surveyed</th>
<th>Total Sheep:</th>
<th>Kuchi Sheep:</th>
<th>Non-Kuchi Sheep:</th>
<th>% Kuchi Sheep:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabul*</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4873</td>
<td>4682</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazar</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1552</td>
<td>1449</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lash Kargah</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1042</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2484</td>
<td>2422</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunduz</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2222</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takhar</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2109</td>
<td>1218</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Total Goats:</th>
<th>Kuchi Goats:</th>
<th>Non-Kuchi Goats:</th>
<th>% Kuchi Goats:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazar</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1552</td>
<td>1381</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lash Kargah</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1004</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunduz</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takhar</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2273</td>
<td>1275</td>
<td>998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Total Cows:</th>
<th>Kuchi Cows:</th>
<th>Non-Kuchi Cows:</th>
<th>% Kuchi Cows:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazar</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lash Kargah</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandahar</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunduz</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takhar</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 3 main markets were visited in Kabul