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

Quarterly Report

September 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006

Submitted By:
University of California at Davis

In Collaboration With:
Texas A&M University System

A USAID-funded Project
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December 31, 2006
Summary
Three major activities have been addressed during this quarter. One activity has been accomplished and two others have been initiated and are progressing according to schedule. The Peace Project has been initiated in Afghanistan primarily through the establishment of an office in Kabul with Mercy Corps. Discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Kabul University, and Mercy Corps have also occurred to initiate involvement and training opportunities with these organizations. We have also made contact and plans to collaborate with other USAID funded projects such as ASP with Kevin McNamara, the Wildlife Conservation Society and AgroMet. In the United States, the PEACE Project has focused on establishing the information technology required to acquire the data and disseminate the forage forecasting information.

Major Implementation Activities Initiated

A. Establish in-country administrative support of the PEACE program

Mercy Corps was chosen as the in-country collaborator for the PEACE project for two major reasons. First, Mercy Corps had previously worked with the UC Davis / Texas A&M team in Mongolia to set up a Livestock Early warning system. Due to the success of the Mongolia collaboration, Mercy Corps was on the top of the list for potential collaborators in Afghanistan. Second, Mercy Corps has had a long-standing program in Afghanistan. We felt that this would assist the PEACE Project in a more rapid and effective start to our project.

We have now completed an agreement with Mercy Corps that provides us with logistical support. In addition, we have already begun to discuss programmatic collaborations between the PEACE Project and Mercy Corps. One of the first collaborations may be a conflict resolution workshop scheduled for early April.

C. Infusion of the NIRS Nutritional Management System.

Progress has also been made with the Ministry of Agriculture particularly regarding the Nutritional Profiling portion of our project. We have been talking to the MOA’s Head Veterinarian, Dr Osmani, about training opportunities and the development of a Near Infrared Nutrition Lab for their extension work. We have asked Dr, Osmani for help in identifying some of his people to receive the NIRS training and to provide a venue for feeding trials scheduled to start in January. Kabul University’s Faculties of Agriculture and Veterinary Science have also been involved in discussions regarding the practical training of students to use this nutritional profiling technology.

D. Forage Monitoring and Nutritional Information Delivery and Outreach.

Implementation of the forage monitoring activity requires input from both in-country and state-side teams. Activities in the U.S. constitute the duplication of the LEWS software, analytical, and early warning delivery system as currently operating in East Africa with Afghanistan data. This activity has been initiated and partially implemented on the LEWS grid computing system at Texas A&M.
Other Achievements

Contact has been initiated with Agrometeorological, a USAID funded project. They work with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Transport and the Meteorological Authority to produce a monthly climate bulletin for Afghanistan. The bulletins address crop, rainfall and snow pack conditions. We are interested in historical and current climate conditions across Afghanistan and we have been assured that we will be able to have access to any information they possess.

The PEACE Project also acquired some equipment though a transfer from another USAID funded project. The Water and Sanitation project had some office equipment and machinery that we thought could be used by our Project. With help from Randy Chester, at USAID, we were able to transfer 2 diesel generators and some good office equipment. In January, we may also be able to transfer 3 Toyota Hilux’s from the USAID warehouse to our project. These transfers may help the PEACE Project increase efforts through cost savings.

The permanent PEACE Project positions that will be filled by Afghan nationals have been posted on the Acbar job website here in Afghanistan. We anticipate leaving the application period open for one month and set the start date for February 1st.