Affghanistan PEACE Project
Reducing Risk for the Kuchi People

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

Quarterly Report

October 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009

Submitted By:
University of California at Davis

In Collaboration With:
Texas A&M University System

A USAID-funded Project
Cooperative Agreement No. 306-A-00-06-00521-00

December 31, 2009
Introduction

The PEACE project continued to deliver on its information technologies to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL). Conflict resolution and building the capacity of the Independent Department of Kuchi (IDK) has also played a major role in this quarter’s schedule.

Summary - Activities conducted this quarter

- Classified rangeland map for Afghanistan moves closer to completion
- Restoration of the National Herbarium Collection, located at Kabul University, began this quarter and so far 13,000 specimens have been cleaned, tagged, and catalogued into an electronic database, and re-shelved
- Afghan-led training program for Nutritional Profiling of rangelands was delivered to 26 MAIL staff over 6 weeks
- Kuchi Shuras in 13 Provinces reporting to PEACE and the Independent Dept. of Kuchi
- 31 Provincial Kuchi Directors attended a report writing workshop in Kabul to improve their ability to articulate district level issues for the Kuchi People
- Conflict Resolution workshops delivered to Kuchi and Village leaders by Kuchi trainers in Paktia
- 4th Livestock Market Assessment completed in 6 major livestock markets; synthesis report also completed
- Livestock Market Information System was launched this quarter with data being collected from livestock markets in Mazar, Kabul and Jalalabad
- Peace Ambassadors continue their work in Wardak Province

Major Implementation Activities conducted this Quarter

A. Infusion of the Forage Monitoring System

Rangeland Classification Map

Afghanistan has proved to be a very difficult environment to conduct extensive rangeland surveys due to land mines, security issues, steep terrain and lack of a well distributed road network. For these reasons our typical statistical method of predicting forage between survey points could not be used and instead we have developed a different method for this purpose. The new method will use discrete rangeland areas that have the same vegetation type and predict forage condition within these areas. The result of this new method will be tested this spring when we hope to accurately predict forage condition in rangelands found in 15 Provinces of Afghanistan.

In addition to developing a method to predict forage condition we have also developed a tool to determine the amount of Afghanistan’s rangelands that have been converted to rain-fed agriculture. This information will be used to produce a better rangeland classification map that will more accurately display the extent of rangelands in Afghanistan and help the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) to prioritize by Province and rangeland which areas should be considered for rehabilitation and more intensive management.
Restoration of herbarium at Kabul University

It was believed that Afghanistan lost much of its natural heritage during the reign of the Taliban when many of the government’s records and collections were destroyed. Recently, however, a herbarium with almost 25,000 specimens was discovered in the Faculty of Science, Department of Biology at Kabul University. The survival of this herbarium was due to the dedication of one professor who slowly and secretly transferred the entire collection to his home to prevent its destruction by the Taliban. After the fall of the Taliban, the collection was returned to the University and put in storage due to the lack of funding to restore it.

When the collection was discovered in March 2009 by the PEACE Project, it was in extremely poor condition due to its exposure to weather and dust and its having been moved several times to protect it. Upon closer examination, however, it was determined that most specimens were still in good condition and could be restored with little difficulty. It was also determined that given the number and variety of specimens in the collection, it would serve as the best baseline information available for Afghanistan in the world, once digitized.

Texas A&M University / UC Davis – PEACE Project in collaboration with Ecodit, Purdue University – A4 Project, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and USAID are now working to restore this collection; they are also working to make it available on-line as part of a virtual herbarium managed by the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh. The value of making this collection available on-line is considerable. For the first time projects in Afghanistan will be able to undertake environmental impact assessments which to date have not been possible due to the lack of data. Afghanistan’s ability to improve its CITES listing will also be facilitated. In addition, the identification and planning of protected and reserve areas will be vastly improved due to the ability to identify sites with unique, rare or endemic species assemblages. Projects with the goal of planning mitigation and rehabilitation measures will also benefit due to the availability of data specific to the areas they are working in.

Also of significance is that for the first time in several decades, Kabul University faculty and students will be able to use the herbarium for training, teaching and research purposes. The University will also be able to facilitate international research efforts for those with interest in the flora of Afghanistan.

B. Infusion of the NIRS Nutritional Management System

Our Afghan technical officer has completed a nutritional profiling training for MAIL staff at the MAIL Central Diagnostic labs. The training took place over a 6-week period and covered both sampling and scanning. Others involved in the training included the MAIL veterinarian that has been assigned to direct the near-infrared nutrition lab and an intern from Kabul University. PEACE collaborated with ASMED in providing the internship to the Kabul University student. The internship focused on nutritional profiling using e-learning tools and NIRS equipment. In total, the intern helped with the training of 26 MAIL staff: 12 from the Central Veterinary Institute and 14 from the Livestock Production Division. The training focused on the application of e-learning tools and scanning of fecal samples with NIR technology.
C. Outreach and Linking the Technology with Herder Alliances

Facilitating Kuchi Shuras

The aim of the Provincial Shuras is two-fold. First, to increase dialogue between Afghans and their government and secondly to help to develop the herder alliances by which conflict resolution, and rangeland management information can be disseminated. If Kuchi representatives can effectively pass messages from rural residents to decision-makers, then supporting them to attend meetings is well worth the cost. Several Provincial Kuchi Directors have told us that if they can prove to their people that they can help them, the people will be happy to support leaders to come to the monthly shuras. The PEACE project is facilitating this process.

The PEACE Project has continued to support 13 Kuchi Shuras this quarter. Here is a sample of some of the work that these shuras are accomplishing.

Jawzjan’s Provincial Director reported that during their last Shura the Kuchi decided to diversify in an effort to solve their problems related to raising livestock. They have decided to work with the government to improve security and help in reconstructing the country. They are also asking for short-term courses to build their capacity so that they can become businessmen or compete for government positions.

Also in Jawzjan it was reported that the IDK’s provincial staff is selected by the people. All the Kuchi clans are supporting the representatives of Kuchi. They claim that most of the conflicts involving Kuchi are solved by their office. They offered an example of a problem that occurred in Alizai’s clan. This clan has gone to the Provincial Governor’s office many times to try to find resolution for this issue. Unfortunately, no solution was found. When the issue was finally brought to the Provincial Kuchi Shura, a solution was easily found. Due to the trust that the Kuchi people now have for the Shura members the people are beginning to support their efforts.

In Laghman it was reported that Mangal Shinwari Kuchi and Himatullah Pashaii had a conflict over grazing land. Hujatullah was injured by Mangal and the problem began to escalate. The Laghman Kuchi Director selected some elders to take Mangal to Hujatullah’s house. Mangal apologized to Hujatullah for injuring him and in the end decided to divide the grazing land so they both could use it.

In these brief examples it is evident that the IDK’s Provincial Directors have the potential to greatly influence the Kuchi people. As the Ministry of Agriculture prepares to address land conflict issues in Afghanistan we feel that supporting the Independent Department of Kuchi’s Provincial Directors is critical. Resolution of land-access issues and many other issues are possible but only if the Kuchi people have representation that they trust to make negotiations on their behalf.

D. Building Capacity within the IDK

Expanded Capacity for Kuchi Leaders

During the past quarter and under the direction of the Independent Department of Kuchi, we also invited the 31 Provincial directors to Kabul to attend a 2-day report writing workshop. The purpose of this workshop was to improve the report writing capacity of these government workers. During the workshop the Kuchi Directors participated in practical exercises consisting of mock shuras where
they were asked to record and report the proceedings. One of the demands from the Kuchi Provincial leaders was to receive more of this type of training so that they can improve the way they do their job.

In Paktya Province, Kuchi trainers conducted two more workshops to bring a range of stakeholders together to discuss peace building efforts among their communities. The workshops took place during the 2nd and 3rd weeks of November. The trainers succeeded in bringing together district Kuchi leaders, herders, shura members and disabled residents. The first workshop focused on ways to stop conflicts once they begin. The second workshop focused on negotiation techniques and useful activities that can prevent conflicts. As a result 64 more Afghan leaders have been exposed to the benefits of peace and given the basic skills to solve conflicts.

E. Conduct Economic Assessment of Livestock Markets and the Livestock Market Information System

Livestock Market Assessment

The data presented here is the synthesis of four surveys which in combination are intended to elucidate who are the major suppliers of livestock to Afghanistan’s markets, and who are primarily responsible for setting market prices (See Afghanistan Livestock Assessment December 2008 for methodology and results from 1st Survey Period, as well as the results from the April 2009 2nd Survey Period and August 2009 3rd Survey Period; http://cnrit.tamu.edu/peace/markets.html). The surveys were also designed to collect information on the volume and types of livestock sold throughout the year. The four surveys were conducted by Altai Consulting on behalf of the Afghanistan PEACE Project, on a quarterly basis, with four reporting periods.

Eleven markets were surveyed in some of the main Afghan trading centers including Herat (Ganj Bazaar Herat and Ganj Shash), Kabul (Nakhas Company, Chaman Babrak, Darwazai Lahori), Kandahar (Ganj Bazaar Kandahar), Kunduz (Mal Bazaar Kunduz), Mazar-e-Sharif (Mal Bazaar Mazar), and Jalalabad (Angoor Bagh, Shaiwa, Chaparhar). The primary objectives of the surveys were to:

- Determine the proportion of the livestock market that is supplied by the different livestock producers
- Determine the approximate volume of livestock sales
- Determine the approximate market value of different categories and breeds of livestock and who is responsible for setting market prices
- Determine the role of Kuchi traders in all sectors of the livestock markets in Afghanistan

Surveys were conducted over three-week periods separated by an average of 3 months: they respectively began in October-November 2008, February 2009, June 2009, and September-October 2009 (near the Eid celebration—an event that is likely to have a significant impact on the sales of livestock—sheep—in Afghanistan). Each time, the survey team consisted of one international Project Manager who was responsible for coordinating the project, a team of two national consultants and ten interviewers who led the field interviews. All components were monitored by the Project Manager either directly or remotely, depending on the security situation. The national consultants directly monitored their respective teams on a daily basis, while also carrying out the assessments on their own.
A total of 2,445 sellers and 652 buyers were interviewed overall during the four surveys. This report presents mostly the sellers’ responses, except for the assessment of market prices where it was mandatory to corroborate sellers’ figures with buyers’ figures.

For cities with more than one livestock market, additional interviews were conducted in the other markets when needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Quarter</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Quarter</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Quarter</th>
<th>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Sellers</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Buyers</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Total number of respondents

Summary Results

- Kuchi herders play an important role in the supply of sheep and goats to Afghanistan’s markets. In all surveys, the majority (75%) of sellers claimed they had bought their small stock from the Kuchi or, they were Kuchi sellers themselves.
- The importance of Kuchi sellers/buyers and traders in the cattle market was minor (5%) in comparison with their contribution to the small stock market.
- The volume of sheep brought for sale always outnumbered the volume of all other livestock in the six markets surveyed.
- There were more livestock available in the markets in the fall than during winter.
- Sales expectations for sheep and goats were lowest during the winter period.
- Averaging sales for all 4 survey periods indicated that 1,176,400 sheep, 405,600 goats and 259,500 heads of cattle are brought for trade to Afghanistan’s 6 major markets, annually.
- There were differences in the relative abundance of the different types and categories of livestock depending on season:
  a) Pregnant ewes and pregnant goat numbers were highest in February.
  b) Lamb and kid numbers were highest during June.
  c) Pregnant cow numbers were highest in June.
  d) Calve numbers were highest in February.
- Sheep and goat prices were lowest in the summer and highest in the winter and fall.
- The majority of the livestock bought in the major markets were purchased individuals and traders (49%), followed by butchers (48%), and slaughterhouses (3%).
- The majority of individuals and traders reported reselling their stock after purchase (>51%).
- The majority of sellers rely on other sellers for price information (>80%).
Livestock Market Information System

Marketing remains one of the greatest challenges in the development of the livestock industry in Afghanistan. In spite of the emergence of organized market intelligence, particularly in relation to prices at terminal markets, the lack of and need for current price information in many rural areas remains a critical concern of producers, traders and policy makers. The Livestock Information Network and Knowledge System (LINKS) - Global Livestock Collaborative Research Support Program (GLCRSP) has responded to this need by developing a Livestock Marketing Information System (LMIS) for communicating and reporting real-time livestock prices, trends and patterns. The LMIS is based on the integration of IT and SMS communication technology. In parts of Asia and Africa the development, testing, implementation and expansion of the LMIS has been made possible through collaboration among different stakeholders and governments interested in livestock marketing information.

It is expected that the provision of such information in Afghanistan will have a positive effect on market transactions in terms of improving sales and identifying markets offering better prices, as has been the case elsewhere. For the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), market information can be used as a strategic tool to better: 1) understand how the markets are operating in the country; 2) predict the potential for a livestock crisis (due to drought, diseases, etc.); 3) mitigate the short and long term impact of a crisis on the market; 4) play a coordinating and managing role between supply and demand over the short and long-term. LMIS can also help livestock suppliers, traders and butchers identify the best locale and timing of a trade.

The training started with a review of how the technology works, the theories behind it, and concepts required to understand its use and applications. The utility of the technology with specific emphasis on how it will improve access to information, support more equitable competition and facilitate reliable strategic planning (sustainable match between supply and demand) were then discussed. A hands-on practice then followed in how to enter and extract market data using cell phones and the LMIS server. Throughout the training, attendees were given numerous examples of the potential added value of this technology in Afghanistan for both the public and private sectors. Specific uses discussed included strategic forecasting and planning, risk mitigation and prevention, improved income generation and general public information. All participants showed a strong interest in the opportunities offered by the LMIS technology; and quickly understood the “why”, “what”, and “how” of the LMIS.
The LMIS technology is difficult to absorb in one training particularly if we consider the diversity of the target audience: statisticians, provincial coordinators, data collectors). Subsequently, the PEACE project has put together a complete step-by-step training approach tailored to the specific needs of each counterpart:

- MAIL Statistics Department will receive additional training as well as complementary documentation in data entry, data extraction, report and graphic generation, and statistical analyses
- MAIL Provincial Coordinators will receive on-site training in interview techniques, data collection and transmission

The most dynamic phase of the training, the practical exercise, was the most interactive one with all attendees fully engaging with the trainers. The resulting feedback allowed the team to adjust the Afghanistan LMIS program to the specific reality of its anticipated users. Some of the feedback included information that most traders are prone to overestimate the first price they give during an interview; this has the potential to market price distortions. In addition, interviewees may be less than honest if they know that the interviewers are MAIL civil servants. It was suggested that given these two issues, monitoring would be crucial to evaluate the accuracy and quality of the data collected.

Near the end of the training, the provincial coordinators expressed great interest in supporting this effort but at the same time, they expressed concern about having to pay the travel expenses associated with collecting data for the LMIS program. For instance in Jalalabad, all three major markets are located 15-30 kilometers from the city center. This would amount to significant weekly travel expenses. During the pilot phase the PEACE project will be covering all expenses related to institutionalizing this program with the MAIL. The issue of sustainability beyond this effort will need to tackled by the MAIL if they expect to succeed in implementing this LMIS across Afghanistan.

F. Other Achievements

Hazara and Kuchi Peace Ambassadors Continue to Work for Peace

This quarter the Peace Ambassadors continued to solve problems and discuss peace with their people. The following are excerpts from presentations given by two different ambassadors during the last meeting. The point I am trying to make with these excerpts is that with very little support we can greatly facilitate Afghans to solve their own conflicts and problems. We have not interfered with how they are working to solve problems we are simply enabling them to do so by providing them with some skills and facilitating their travel and ability to work for peace.

Excerpts

........my second meeting about peace was for Surkh Abad’s people. This meeting lasted for one week with good results. Meanwhile, in Kajab, some conflicts had occurred. Since this was Sultani’s (another Hazara peace ambassador) area, I send him. Kajab is a very difficult area to reach. Sometimes you can go by vehicle, but often you can only get there by horse or donkey. Sultani was
ableto reach this area and I really do not want to brag, but the truth is that if he had not reached there this year, the conflict would have been very serious. Fortunately, Sultani was able to assist in resolving the issue.

Together we went to Bandshoi. There is an area named Togha-e Moshi where some Kuchi families are living. Fazl-e Karabalaee, and some other Kuchi families had conflict between them. The Peace Ambassadors along with some Kuchi elders came together to try to solve this problem. The people who had the conflict said: “We will bring all our documents to the meeting and we will accept what the Hazara Peace Ambassadors and Kuchi elders decide.”

There was also a conflict between Haji Tarakai and Haji Malowi over shared land that their fathers purchased long ago. With our help and the Kuchi representatives, the land was divided again and the conflict was solved.

In Behsood, there is no bigger conflict than the one between the inheritors of Haji Kako’s lands and some powerful Hazara people. The conflict is big and so is the land. During the Taliban’s rule we formed a group of representatives to solve this conflict. Mirzai, Besood’s district governor (now a peace ambassador), Fasahi (the area’s elder), Molawi (Mula from the Ministry of Interior), and I were able to gather all the documents from the Kako’s relatives and in the end we made a decision and signed an agreement. The people that were trying to claim the land agreed to return it to the relatives of Haji Kako. When the Taliban were thrown out of power, again the Hazara people tried to claim the lands. So, we visited them again, this time as Peace Ambassadors, and asked them why they were trying to claim these lands again since this problem was solved once before. They answered that they had paid money for the lease of the land and it was very expensive so now it should be theirs. We returned to Kabul and tried to meet with Haji Kako’s relative Kakozai. After 3 tries I was able to meet him. I explained the situation to him and we are sure that the conflict can be solved. We need to bring together all of Kako’s relatives and the elders from the Hazara group. We are planning to bring everyone to the Sabawoon’s Commission next month to solve this issue.