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

Quarterly Report

April 1, 2008 through June 30, 2008

Submitted By:
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In Collaboration With:
Texas A&M University System

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**Summary**

Activities conducted this quarter included:

- Data collection for the livestock early warning system during field trips to Balkh, Samangan, Kunduz, Takhar, Bamyan, Panjshir and Badakhshan Provinces
- Phygrow parameterization in Texas
- Near infrared equation development in Texas
- Conflict Resolution Workshops
- Facilitation of Kuchi shura meetings in 12 Provinces
- LEWS training for MAIL range staff and University Students
- Additional Capacity Building
- Livestock Production Workshop and Implications

Our fourth quarter of FY2006-7 has left us optimistic. The project is gaining some traction in all three of the major components and has been able to begin collaborations with several others during the last month.

**Major Implementation Activities Initiated this Quarter**

**B. Infusion of the Forage Monitoring System**

Our field season began on March 23rd with a 12 day trip to Balkh and other northern provinces. We have contracted two Kabul University graduates (Faculty of Agriculture) to accompany us this year. As we did last year, we will continue to have 5 Ministry of Agriculture staff conducting the vegetation sampling with us for the duration of the field season. We bring 3 MAIL staff from Kabul and pick up an additional 2 staff from each Province where we plan to work.

This quarter we were able to conduct vegetation sampling in 7 Provinces. We have a large team this year and can effectively break into 2 teams while collecting data. This has helped us to sample a bit faster than last year. The northern grasslands were the first areas that we visited this year. These grasslands are dominated by *Poa bulbosa* and *Carex pachystachis*. The condition of the early spring rangelands were not very good this year and offered very little in the way of forage to female sheep and goats that require good nutrition to produce milk for their newborns. In some areas of the Northern Provinces the rains simply failed and forced many of the Kuchi to search for grazing areas in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Higher elevation rangelands fared slightly better although these too were not extremely productive this year.

Notable survey accomplishments during the past quarter included:

- completed 32 new surveys and monitored 7 previous sites
- collected close to 200 new plant specimens
- soil pits dug for characterization of soils at locations where vegetation is being monitored

We have had some difficulties this year expanding into the areas we wanted to survey for security reasons. We had to cancel trips into Faryab, Jawzjan and Logar, to date, due to very poor security. We are hopeful that we can visit these sites next year.
The initial model runs for the plant growth model have not yet been completed. The security difficulties we are having in getting enough samples are partly responsible. We are hoping that with the 2nd year’s survey data we should be able to start making some predictions by the end of this growing season. In the meantime, the plant growth modeler has been continuing to collect and parameterize the soil, weather, and survey information.

C. Infusion of the NIRS Nutritional Management System

Equation development for Afghanistan’s sheep and goats has been the primary objective for our nutritional profiling component over the last quarter. Preliminary information regarding the equations was provided in last quarter’s report. Results suggest that with some modification existing sheep equations may work well in Afghanistan.

In addition, we have been developing several tutorials and e-training modules for the near infrared scanner and its software. We are attempting to create self-training materials that will allow someone to set up and use the equipment on their own. The materials will then be translated into Dari for use during feeding trials scheduled for the fall. The Division of Animal Health director has designated a person to learn the NIRS technique.

D. Linking the Technology with Herder Alliances

Facilitation of Kuchi shura meetings in 12 Provinces began in May. The purpose of facilitating the meetings is two-fold. First, we are interested in gaining better seasonal information about the Kuchi’s challenges. This will be an agenda item for every shura meeting we facilitate. Secondly, we feel that by strengthening the shura meetings we are in fact strengthening what could be called “herder alliances”. We are interested in developing herder alliances as a means to disseminate our forage quantity and quality information. Each shura gathering provides a way to pass information directly to the herders that need it. We will be attending as many of these herder association meetings as possible.

E. Building Capacity within the MAIL, Dept. of Kuchi, NGOs and the University

Government capacity building remains to be one of the most important focuses for the PEACE Project. Much effort is being placed into the development of training materials to ensure that the nutritional profiling system will be sustainable into the future within the Division of Animal Health and husbandry. Training modules are being specifically developed for the equipment being used in Afghanistan.

Enabling the Division of Natural Resources to produce and interpret the livestock early warning system results requires extended face to face training capacity building. We spend about 4 months in the field and additional time during the remainder of the year working with the same rangeland people within the Ministry. Provincial rangeland-staff also accompany us while we are working in their provinces.

The PEACE Project is also engaged with the Independent Department of Kuchi in an attempt to bring about a peaceful solution to land access issues throughout Afghanistan’s rangelands. We are specifically addressing the need for better peace and negotiation skills among the provincial directors within the department. A long-term training effort has been put in place to deliver mediation, conflict transformation, and peace building training. Although conflicts between Kuchi and settled villages are very complex, this type of training has the potential to change the way Kuchi approach a land access issue. In this way we hope
to build capacity within the Department of Kuchi that will ensure long-term benefits for both the Kuchi and other Afghans. We have already received feedback from Kuchi in Kunduz that have used several of the negotiation techniques they had learned at our workshops. They told us they were able to resolve a problem between two Kuchi herders using these techniques.

Conflict Transformation has been an area that has received a lot of focus during the last quarter. We were able to conduct a series of workshops with both Kuchi and Hazara beginning in mid-March through April. These workshops were requested by the Independent Dept. of Kuchi to help resolve their highest-priority conflict with the Hazara people. The workshops attempted to develop an atmosphere of resolution between the Kuchi and Hazara people. The Advisor to the President on Tribal Affairs sanctioned the workshops as a means to promote reconciliation between the two groups prior to the start of the growing season. Each group will send 30 leaders to separate workshops to begin the training process. Half of the leaders from each group then attend a third joint workshop with Hazara and Kuchi leaders. Some of the positive outcomes of the workshop were;

- Mutual recognition of rights (grazing, education, health, etc.)
- Action plans: practical suggestions for future collaboration (i.e creating joint local shuras)
- Exchange of contact information between participants

Participants were also evaluated to determine how much of the material they learned and understood. When the baseline survey was compared with the final evaluation there was an increased knowledge of conflict resolution methods, an increased knowledge of the other group’s views, and concrete suggestions for future collaboration. These results provided a bit of optimism for a complicated situation. The next step is to continue with the two groups to conduct follow-up evaluations (June), identify local leaders for future cooperation, and provide support for local joint shura meetings.

**Other Accomplishments**

1. A Livestock Production Workshop was held on May 17-19. The PEACE project contributed in the concept and design of this workshop and it was funded by the GL-CRSP at UC Davis. The workshop should be considered a success in that it provided a forum for everyone that is concerned about the livestock industry in Afghanistan to provide input as to the direction of livestock development. It also provided a context for better collaboration in the future between projects concerned with improving livestock production.