



Dairy Sector Development in Afghanistan



Afghan consumers prefer mainly yoghurt, fresh milk 'dough' (fermented milk), quark (soft cheese) and other dairy products. Cream is also highly appreciated, particularly in the freezing winter months. Milk and dairy products are mainly consumed in the morning and at lunchtime. Farmers typically have one to three dairy animals producing five to ten liters of milk per day. Milk is consumed by the family, and surplus milk is sold to the cooperatives, milk collection center, dairy plants or private vendors.

Afghanistan is a traditional livestock country and was in the past self-sufficient in livestock products. 85 percent of Afghanistan's population depends on the income derived from agriculture and livestock production. In 1998, FAO started dairy sector development activities with the support of the Government of the United Kingdom and the United Nations Development Programme, followed by the Government of Germany in 2002.

The interest for the development of the dairy sector came from both consumers and producers.

OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project was to improve food security in Afghanistan by raising the productive capacity of the national dairy sector through the development of integrated model dairy schemes, with the following objectives:

- Increase the consumable and saleable products from cattle production
- Develop processing and marketing structures for milk and dairy products
- Develop cooperative organizational structures for the management of the three dairy schemes in Kabul, Mazar, Herat and Kunduz
- Assist in the development of policies and strategies for the dairy sector.

and the production of various dairy products in processing units with a capacity up to ten metric tons per day. The project also focused on establishing cooperative management and ownership structures while promoting private ownership of processing plants by individual entrepreneurs.

All activities were coordinated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock. The key components of the project include: raising the quality of available fodder and promoting the use of concentrates and minerals; improving the knowledge on animal health issues amongst dairy farmers, with an emphasis on improved management and hygiene; facilitating breed improvement through Artificial Insemination; assisting in the formation of milk producer groups and improving access to markets for milk and milk products.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

Commencing in April 2005, this project targeted approximately 3300 village families in the provinces of Kabul, Logar, Wardak, Balkh, Herat and Kunduz in Afghanistan. The project was designed to assist the coordination of different dairy development activities, while at the same time focusing on small farmers

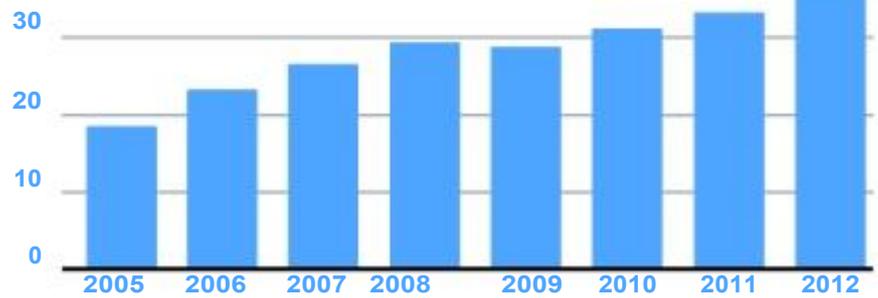
RESULTS

- Annual average of 3 855 metric tons of raw milk collected by the dairy unions.
- USD 4 000 going back to villages on a daily basis as income from milk payments.



Total income return to farmers from milk production

Afghani (Afs) 000



- Annual household income increased from USD 130 to USD 725 through the sale of surplus milk produced by the families (2003-2012).
- Milk production of each cow increased from 1.11 liter to 5.5 liters (only surplus milk), during the last six years.
- Foot and Mouth Disease and tick born, zoonotic and mastitis under control in the project area
- Rural women controls over 84.5 % of the cash earned from milk and have full authority on how this income is spent.
- Increased investment in education by the rural households
- Employment generation at the local level: 272 off-farm jobs created
- Social empowerment through the enhanced participation by women in social development activities
- Improved income from calves, manure, forage and fodder seed

CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges faced by the project included:

- Need for market expansion due to increased milk intake followed by increased plant capacity.
- Competition of dairy imports.
- Environmental changes including drought and cold weather conditions.
- Security

LESSONS LEARNED

This project has successfully demonstrated the possibility of local farmers to effectively respond to the domestic demand for milk and milk products through improved knowledge, appropriate farmer-friendly tools, market linkages and the formation of producer and processor groups. The initiatives taken by the project can also be recommended to other countries whose geographical and socio economic status is similar to those in Afghanistan.

- The participatory approach encouraged community participation that led to the setting up of cooperatives and unions by the communities themselves.
- The establishment of the Milk Collecting Centers was a key facility to encourage beneficiaries to bring milk on daily basis.
- Farmers were motivated to participate in the dairy business and understood the importance of the sector.
- An unexpected benefit was that beneficiaries reported an increased willingness to allow female members of the household to participate in other social and group activities including development programmes.
- 84.5 percent of dairy cash income was given to women, who have decision- making power in how it is spent, following the below prioritization:

- ✓ Education for children
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Medicines
- ✓ Feed for dairy animals
- ✓ Traditional expenses, such as ceremonies, etc.

Up-Scaling

This project's approach for dairy sector development has been included in the 'National Agricultural Master Plan' in Afghanistan which reflects the potential for nationalization of the project model. Based on the successful achievements and outputs of the project, in 2010 the IFAD provided USD 5.65 million to replicate a similar project with FAO, and initiated a three year project in Herat Province entitled Integrated Dairy Development Schemes in Herat. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock is interested to expand the dairy programme to a national level, with an investment of around USD 30 million.

