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World Milk Day Celebrations in Afghanistan



H.E. Hamdullah Hamdard, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock while delivering speech in World Milk Day 2017 celebration event

For the second time the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in close coordination with the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), Ministry of Education (MoE) and the recently established Afghanistan National Dairy Association (ANDPA) celebrated the World Milk Day on Wednesday, 24 May 2017 ahead of the Holy Ramadan observance.

Internationally, FAO has promoted 1st June as the World Milk Day to recognize the importance of milk as a global food. This was initiated in June 2001 and has since become an annual event in many countries. In 2016, more than 40 countries around the world celebrated the World Milk Day and the number of participating countries is growing every year. This event is observed to raise awareness of the people on the significance of the milk and dairy consumption.

In Afghanistan, this year's celebrations were extended to two new Provinces of Kunduz and Kandahar in addition to Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar, and Balkh Provinces. In Kabul city, the celebrations were held at Rabia -e- Balkhi Girls High school. Milk, yoghurt and dairy promotional materials were distributed to students during the event in Kabul and other cities and displayed a short video explaining dairy activities. H.E. Samim Shinwari, Deputy Minister of Education,



Mr. Tomio Shichiri, FAO Representative in Afghanistan delivering speech in World Milk Day 2017 celebration event
H.E. Hamdullah Hamdard, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock and Mr. Tomio Shichiri, FAO Representative in Afghanistan also attended the event.



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Success Story

“Artificial Insemination of cows with improved bull semen – An efficient tool for increasing dairy farmers’ livestock asset values”



Livestock is important asset for dairy farmers and critical in supporting their livelihoods. Turab, resident of village- Dehsabz District of Kabul Province has benefited immensely from the artificial insemination services provided through the FAO/Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock's and Dairy Industry Development in Kabul, Logar and Parwan Provinces project.

He joined Etifaq Cooperative in Dehsabz District in 2014. In addition to training in animal health and husbandry, cattle stable improvement, silage making and fodder production, Mr. Turab was taught the basics of animal breeding and heat recognition by the project staff.

In 2014, he had one local breed cow. Now he has three cows after his cow gave birth to two crossbreed calves. The first calf has since matured and is currently pregnant together with mother. Both are eight months pregnant. In the coming weeks, Turab will be the proud owner of five cows.

Mr. Turab is well aware of his newly found wealth. “I can easily sell my pregnant crossbreed cow for Afs 90 000. A non – pregnant crossbreed calf has a market value of Afs 60 000 compared to a local breed calf that is valued at Afs 30 000” he said. He is also conscious of the fact that crossbreed cows produce more milk. “The improved breed yields more milk than the local breed – that is why it needs special care and attention,” says Turab. He is one of several happy farmers in Logar, Parwan and Kabul Provinces. The project works with artificial insemination technicians in all the target districts providing the service to both selected and non – selected farmers. The technicians are able to achieve an average conception rate of around 66 percent because of the training provided to farmers and the timely response when farmers call the artificial insemination technicians to provide the service.



Smallholder Dairy Farmers Set to Benefit from Milk Collection and Livestock Services Delivery Infrastructure Established in Desabz, Chahar Asiab and Qarabagh Districts of Kabul Province



The FAO / MAIL Community – based Livestock and Agriculture Programme (CLAP) dairy component has established two Milk Chilling and Livestock Services Centres (MCLSC) in Dehsabz and Chahar Asiab districts of Kabul Province. Construction of an additional MCLSC is being finalized in Qarabagh district in the same province. Milk collection points are also being established at village level. The 3 rural districts have high levels of poverty.

The centers will be used for milk collection / chilling before delivery to the dairy processing plant that the Dairy Industry Development Project plans to establish in Kabul city under the auspices of the proposed Central Dairy Union (CDU). Through the MCLSCs, smallholder dairy farmers will have access to services such as extension trainings in animal husbandry and health, and artificial insemination for their cows. Livestock concentrate feed will also be sold to farmers through the centers.

The project will soon procure milk chilling equipment for the MCLSCs. This will facilitate collection of the afternoon / second milking from farmers increasing their daily milk sales and incomes.

Ahead of the establishment of the CDU dairy plant farmers are keen to sell their surplus milk as daily milk production per cow has increased through integrated services and support provided through the dairy project. Farmers have started delivering milk to the MCLSCs. In Chahar Asiab district, farmers are delivering 1,200 liters of milk per day; this figure continues to rise. In Dehsabz district, at least 500 liters of milk are delivered to the MCLSC by farmers on a daily basis.

The dairy farmers currently sell their milk to Kabul Dairy Union





and 3 Kabul city based private dairy processors. Linkages between the farmers and the dairy processors were facilitated by FAO. The farmers are paid Afs 31 / liter of milk delivered to the MCLSCs. This translates to at least Afs 52,000 going to farmers on a daily basis. "Farmers are excited about the establishment of the MCLSC as this will facilitate access to many services by the farmers and possibility to sell their milk and earn some money" said Mr. Janat Gul, Chairman of Itefaq Cooperative in Dehsabz district.

Lessons Learnt

A key lesson learnt is that the establishment of milk collection infrastructure is very important for motivating dairy farmers in the poorest rural areas to increase quality milk production and increase their incomes. Farmers are able to practically access markets and immediately see the benefits of milk production as payments are made at least weekly. They are also more encouraged to participate in the dairy project related capacity development activities. The milk collection infrastructure itself encourages independent milk procurement as the purchasers have more confidence in the quality of milk.

Vulnerable rural widow benefiting from dairy farming



Poverty in Afghanistan is widespread throughout rural and urban areas. The government estimates that 42 per cent of the country's total population lives below the national poverty line. Another 20 per cent of the people live just above that line. Women headed households are particularly at high risk of falling into poverty.

The Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and FAO are currently implementing an IFAD funded dairy industry development project in Logar, Parwan and Kabul Provinces. Mrs Afghan Gul is a female beneficiary of the project based in Sadaat Khan village of Logar Province. She has two sons and 3 daughters. Life

became very difficult for her after she lost her husband due to the ongoing conflict. She borrowed some money from her brother and bought a milking cow.



"The dairy project supported my dairy business. I was able to build a house and support my children to go to school. Me and other farmers are now able to better access animal health services for our cows when they are sick" said Mrs Afghan. "I am now selling 17 liters of milk at the milk collecting center at on 29 Afs per litre. I earn almost 14790 Afs monthly" Mrs Afghan is planning to buy another cow in the near future and is very thankful to FAO the dairy project for its support.

Increased Incomes for vulnerable families



One of the main challenges that Afghan farmers face upon internal displacement is the lack of livelihood opportunities. The families and individuals who are extremely vulnerable, such as widows and female heads of households, face further difficulties. This is because in general they do not have proper skills nor can they participate daily in labor intensive income generating work and engage in work outside their own community. Their basic subsistence needs can only be met through home/community based activities or from income related to livestock and farming.

Shah Gul, a dairy project female beneficiary lives in Deh Yahya village of Dehsabz district of Kabul. Originally she is from Mir Bacha Koot district and migrated to Deh Sabz because of conflict in which she lost her young son. Shah Gul is the only supporter to her family because her husband is old.

She is grateful for the support of the MAIL/FAO dairy project. "Milk production has become a key source of income for me" she said. She has one cow and on a daily basis sells milk to the village milk collection centre. She also participates in the project's women group's trainings in animal husbandry in the village on a regular basis. She also processes some of the milk at her home for sell in local markets. Milk production earns her 15,750 AFN monthly. Through the dairy project she receives animal health care, artificial insemination and animal husbandry services for increased milk production.