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USAID FAMILY FARMING PROGRAM

TAJIKISTAN

ANNUAL REPORT: October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011

NOVEMBER 10, 2011

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	1
PROJECT OBJECTIVE.....	2
TECHNICAL COMPONENTS.....	2
AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.....	2
WATER MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS	5
NUTRITION ENHANCEMENT AND HOUSEHOLD ECONOMICS (FORMERLY LIVELIHOODS)	6
POLICY REFORM	7
GRANTS AND SUBCONTRACTS	8
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE.....	9
PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES	9
MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) ACTIVITIES.....	10
ADMINISTRATION	10

ACRONYMS

BMP	Branding and Marking Plan
COP	Chief of Party
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
EMMP	Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan
EOI	Expression of Interest
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAS	Field Accounting System
FFP	USAID Family Farming Program
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (formerly GTZ)
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
KbTUT	Khujand branch of the Technological University of Tajikistan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PME	Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation Team
PMEP	Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
REACT	Rapid Emergency and Coordination Team
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TAFF	Tajik Agricultural Finance Framework project
TAMIS	Technical Assistance Management Information System
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal (for satellite internet service)
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WUASP	Water Users' Association Support Program

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The twin objectives of the USAID Family Farming Program are to improve the food security of Tajikistan, and continue USAID-funded activities to create new, and strengthen existing, Water User Associations (WUAs).

The USAID Family Farming Program (FFP) delivers integrated technical assistance to selected food insecure communities in Tajikistan that addresses: Agriculture and Livestock Development; Water Management; Nutrition and Livelihoods; and Policy Reform. The FFP includes a \$7 million grant fund that will be leveraged to work with local and international entities to support activities that increase food security in the targeted regions of the Program.

During the year, USAID declared Tajikistan a “Feed the Future” (FtF) country. This global hunger and food security initiative is being designed to encompass and address Tajikistan’s chronic struggle with food shortages. FFP has been designated as FtF’s implementation vehicle within the country. In late 2011, USAID/W will provide a design team to provide a Feed the Future focus for Tajikistan. FFP will modify its focus and implementation activities accordingly.

TECHNICAL COMPONENTS

AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The FFP continues to improve food security in Tajikistan by increasing the volume of agricultural production, raising the income of food insecure households to make food more accessible, and improving the standard of household nutrition. During the first year, efforts continued on working with household (subsistence) farms and small commercial (individual and family deskman) farms, resulting in a number of notable achievements included below.

During the year research into existing agro-input providers was conducted by the Grants and Subcontracts Team to assess what is currently available regarding farms stores and dealers in the program’s Zone districts and the potential for establishing new farm stores. The study was conducted first in the northern Sughd region (including Khujand, Spitamen, Istaravshan and Zafarobod), while the second phase was completed in the southwestern Khatlon region (Qabodiyon, Shahritus and Qurghonteppa). The assessment involved conducting interviews with farm stores, veterinarian stores, agricultural equipment providers, and bazaar traders. Overall, over 20 entities provided information on their business model (ownership), products and services, market environment (target market, potential demand), management and personnel, regulations and environmental issues, and financial information.

In an effort to provide models for farmers to replicate, 175 field crop demonstration plots, 90 in Kulob and 85 in Qabodiyon were created during the year. The purpose of establishing demonstration plots is to introduce small deskman and household farmers with new varieties of crops and update farmers with the most efficient and improved agricultural practices for increasing production volumes. As a result of improving practices and increasing yields, household farms increase their income and the overall nutrition of their families. For commercial farms, farm profitability increases, creating an opportunity to attract investment and generate continued growth. Unfortunately, access to high quality agricultural inputs are limited due to insufficient suppliers. Farmers can only improve their productivity if they have access to high quality inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, small farm equipment, and appropriate knowledge and skills to apply the right inputs at the optimum time.

Demonstration plots introduced local farmers in households and deskman farms new superior varieties of maize, beans, fodder beet, and water melon seeds from foreign seed companies. Participants greatly benefited from these demonstrations and ultimately shared their experience with other neighboring

farmers to expand the reach of the program and improve food security. During the year, FFP staff in Qabodiyon and Kulob also established demonstration plots in maize for corn as a second crop, potatoes as a second crop, beans, turnips, radishes, and carrots.

Maize for corn

After creating a maize demonstration plot as a second crop, a total of 13 kg of local variety seeds such as “TNIIZ-100” and “Askar” were distributed to eight households located in three villages of S.Khudoyqulov and N.Khusrav jamoats in the Qabodiyon zone. In addition, six maize and beans (intercropped) demonstration plots were created in eight households of Dahana and Ziraki jamoats in the Kulob zone. A total of 12 kg of “TNIIZ-100” and “Askar” maize seeds were distributed to these households. A majority of the activities during the vegetation period of the demonstration plots were completed by women. The benefit of planting local varieties of maize is that household farmers themselves can produce seeds for next season, allowing them to become independent and expand seed production for their own consumption and potentially to sell to other local farmers, while the corn and residue of maize is also useful as it provides feed for livestock.

Potatoes

Planting potatoes as a second crop has not yet been practiced in Kulob and Qabodiyon. FFP introduced potatoes using seedling methods. Potatoes harvested as a second crop in the fall are better for storage in the winter and can provide premium prices during the off season. In an effort to establish 12 potato demonstration plots in 12 households located in three villages of S.Khudoyqulov and N.Khusrav jamoats in the Qabodiyon zone, FFP distributed 1,000 kg of “Picasso” and “Santé” seeds brought from Gonchi District in the Sughd Region, as well as 170 kg of nitrogen. Also, 14 demonstration plots of second crop potatoes were established in three villages of Dahana and Ziraki in the Kulob zone. This effort culminated in the delivery of 500 kg of “Picasso” and “Santé” potato seeds and 90 kg of nitrogen.

Beans

In an effort to improve the overall quality of phaseolous bean demonstration plots, FFP imported white “Lopatka” bean seed from Kyrgyzstan. This variety is excellent for preparing porridge, soup, and other traditional Tajik meals. The purpose of introducing these new beans is to engage household farmers in producing seeds for themselves during the next planting. In fact, most of the local bean varieties are adversely impacted by virus and fungal diseases that usually makes seed production impossible. A total of 12 demonstration plots of second crop phaseolous beans were established in 12 households located in S.Khudoyqulov and N.Khusrav jamoats in Qabodiyon, with 50 kg of “Lopatka” seeds distributed to beneficiaries. FFP also created 19 demonstration plots of phaseolous beans for 19 households of Dahana and Ziraki jamoats in the Kulob zone, with 50 kg of “Lopatka” distributed.

Summer Radishes, Turnips, and Carrots

FFP established 22 demonstration plots of summer radishes, turnips, and carrots as a second crop in I.Niyozov, N.Khusrav and Yangi-Yul jamoats of Qabodiyon. Seeds and 25 kg of nitrogen were given to 22 households respectively. FFP has used a local variety of summer radishes, while carrots and turnip seeds were imported from the United States. Sixteen demonstration plots of summer radishes, turnips, and carrot were also established in Dahana and Ziraki jamoats of Kulob zone with seeds and 25 kg of nitrogen provided to 16 households.

Also during the year, crop control activities resulted in eight back sprayers and personal protection clothes being distributed in Qabodiyon and six sets in Kulob. Agriculture organizers and field agents provided explicit instructions on safely applying and maintaining pesticides.

FFP developed, printed, and distributed the following agro technology brochures and leaflets to assist in training: Potato, maize corn, phaseolous beans, potatoes using seedlings, and garlic and o In addition the Program conducted a marketing survey to assess the level of Khatlon household’s access to inputs and market based decision making at the village level.

New FFP Targeted Villages

During the year, the following new villages were identified as FFP target villages:

Jirqal'a, Gulizor, and Tayor Villages in the Kulob zone and Beshtemur and Chorboogh Villages in Qabodiyon zone. The list of villages participating in program activities includes the following:

District	Jamoat	Village	# of households	Population
Qabodiyon	Nosiri Khisrav	Arabkhona	964	7,045
		Qiyot	387	2,950
	Khudoikulov	Mikoyan	208	1,531
	Yangi-yul	Beshtemur	375	2,655
	I. Niyzov	Chorboogh	1,145	7,830
Kulob	Dahana	Gulteppa	100	874
		Toqakappa	221	1,666
		Gulzor	74	696
		Taniyol	109	881
	Ziraki	M. Gaffor	285	2,159
		Jerqal'a	323	2,803
		Ziraki	328	3,059
TOTAL			4,519	34,149

LIVESTOCK

Field visits to Zarafshon Valley, GBAO, Qabodiyon, and Kulob were conducted with FFP STTA Gary Mullins. A number of meetings occurred with the local authorities, and as a result of additional discussions with households it became evident that the area under fodder cultivation is continually decreasing every year, and lack of reclamation of pasture land has led to the deterioration of provision of fodder, especially for dairy cows. The lack of unified management systems to maintain natural resources and pasture areas has degraded the land. Over the last five to six years the annual average growth of livestock has increased by 3.3%, while the area for fodder crops has decreased, creating a significant problem affecting Tajik farmers' ability to ensure the health of their livestock in the future. In the majority of cases witnessed by FFP, households' livestock is below documented weight and height recommendations. Therefore, low productivity and reproductive quality is unsatisfactory. It was found that farmers are unable to grow a sufficient quantity of fodder to adequately sustain one dairy cow on their own land. In order to improve the situation, FFP developed modules for increasing the knowledge and skills of household members in organizing demonstration plots on the following topics:

1. Demonstrations for breeding 20 to 50 hens using cages (hen house);
2. Breeding rabbits for production of dietary meat- breeding of two females and one sire;
3. Breeding, feeding, caring for, and maintaining dairy goats.

In addition, FFP conducted a survey analyzing the provision of livestock products production in pilot districts. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), production of meat ranges between 15% - 38%; milk 16% - 46%; and eggs 2% - 17%. As seen in the table below, production on individual holdings as a percentage of recommended dietary consumption falls well below adequate levels throughout Khatlon, Sughd, and GBAO oblasts.

Individual Household Produced Meat and Dairy Consumption as a Percentage of Recommended Levels

Name of Districts	Meat	Milk	Egg
Qabodiyon	37	46	6
Kulob	15	24	2
Rushon	31	16	17

Ishkoshim	27	27	5
Panjakent	26	26	5
Ayni	25	21	5

The main problem is provisioning the districts with milk, the major factor in improving the nutrition status of children and the elderly. Therefore FFP will focus efforts on the following:

- Increasing the productivity of dairy cows by improving access to fodder, especially high-protein and succulent feeds;
- Conducting trainings on improving the knowledge, skills, and management system of livestock production and health protection.

It was also observed that a majority of households do not complete annual preventive vaccinations. The veterinary services are established in districts; however they are not available for everyone. Overall, the major issues of livestock in the districts include:

- Low planted area, limited varieties, and lack of seed production adapted to the local environment for fodder, compounded by few fodder markets that are usually inaccessible
- Low availability of forage during the winter and irrational use of summer pastures with limited access
- Frequent inbreeding of animals and low fertility with high mortality of young stock
- Low productivity of meat and milk
- Poor veterinary services and lack of innovative technologies in animal husbandry

One of the main sources of income of households is livestock, mainly selling livestock and milk in the summer. Livestock markets are accessible and highly developed in rural areas of Kulob and Qabodiyon; though in GBAO livestock markets do not seem to exist at all, even in Khorogh. Also, fodder is not available in the markets in rural areas of GBAO; rather they are usually sold to intermediaries from Kyrgyzstan, Rasht Valley, and for the livestock markets around Dushanbe.

WATER MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

During the year, FFP continued to increase the quality and capacity of water user associations (WUAs), culminating in hiring four WUA Association Organizers (AOs) who began working immediately. The new AOs were introduced to Chairmen from U. Nazarov, I. Niyozov, N. Khusrav, and Yangiyul Jamoats, as well as land committee specialists from the Jamoats and Qabodiyon District. The WUA team learned about technical aspects of Qabla and Kattaarik irrigation systems and successes in officially delineating the border between the new WUA and WUA “Chirik” along Kattaarik canal.

The WUA organizing process utilizing the integrated process continued during the year. A major aspect of this process was organizing various meetings with individuals and groups in participating villages within the two proposed zones. The following provides a breakdown of beneficiaries involved in program activities:

Meetings and Trainings

Integration Meetings	#	Male	Female	Total
Individual	33	258	56	314
Group	39	989	107	1,096
Gov. Official	21	63	8	71
<u>By-Law Committee</u>	12	97	7	104
Totals	105	1,407	178	1,585

Training Type	#	Male	Female	Total
Informal	2	3	2	26
TOT for AOs	5	20	0	20
<u>Cross Visits</u>	2	39	3	42
Totals	9	62	5	88

“Developing WUAs using the CO Method” (2)

“Organizational Leadership Development” (1)

“Communications; Problem-Solving and Decision Making Processes” (2)

Water management activities also included an assessment and preparation of a map of new WUA areas in Qabodiyon, and an assessment of potential WUA areas in Dahana and Ziraki Jamoats in Kulob District. FFP also participated in meetings in Chorbog Jamoat regarding the area- approximately 450 ha- and 26 farmers proposed to be added to Obi Hayot WUA. In addition, a survey was conducted of drains in an area of severe water logging (about 180 ha) in Qabodiyon that included GIS locations of demonstration plots in Qabodiyon and Kulob.

Efforts were recently focused on developing training materials for AOs in order to provide membership with additional information and technical assistance. FFP also prepared an environmental compliance check list to ensure that implementation was not having a negative impact on the environment. In addition, FFP conducted a survey of irrigation canal/main outlets ‘Dahana’ in a potential WUA zone in Kulob, visited the water department in Vose District to obtain data on irrigation canals, visited “Jamoat Dahana” in Kulob to obtain data on the arable land and total existing deskman farms, met with Qabodiyon representatives to determine system rehabilitation needs and begin estimating work, and finally provided training to technical staff and met with 21 management staff in German Agro-Action Panjakent regarding organizing Federations.

FFP is also seeking to cooperate with the World Bank in the design, planning, and ultimate implementation of its GAFSPE project. This could potentially extend WUA activities to Yavan, Dzami A, Kumsangir, Dzhilikul, and Bokhtar rayons.

NUTRITION ENHANCEMENT AND HOUSEHOLD ECONOMICS (FORMERLY LIVELIHOODS)

The nutrition enhancement and household economics component began activities in early September 2011 aimed at improving program cooperation, sharing experiences with other organizations, gathering outreach materials on nutrition and food security, and meeting with representatives from Save the Children, WHO, Mercy Corps, World Food Program (WFP), Republican Center for Healthy Lifestyles from the Ministry of Health, and Sanitary Epidemiological stations. Orientation seminars for the eight FFP staff- four from Quobodiyon and four in Kulob- focused on program objectives and building capacity. Efforts are currently focused in eight jamoats in Kulob and Qabodiyon. Each jamoat has its own unique profile which contains information about population, number of schools, jobs available, and

medical facilities. In total, 13 initiative groups- each consisting of five members- were established in targeted jamoats with each group consisting of one or two community leaders, and linking field agents and beneficiaries. All the groups are registered in their respective jamoats and have legal status so they have the ability to secure funding and establish small businesses that will increase capacity and self-esteem and create jobs in rural areas.

Field agents and agricultural experts regularly discuss improving crop yields and enhancing nutrition with farmers. In an effort to continue this activity, FFP nutrition staff visited 175 demonstration plots and provided several suggestions on improving production and processing agricultural crops. Field agents also provided two demonstration trainings on preserving food and will publish a recipe book for beneficiaries.

A contract was signed with the national television channel to broadcast a short film on FFP activities. In the future, trainings will be recorded on CDs and broadcast in districts through local channels. Finally, in an effort to increase the knowledge of staff on gender issues, FFP signed a subcontract with the Social Assistance Training Center to organize and conduct “Gender Engagement” training.

In May 2011, the World Bank Rural Vulnerability Study 2011 was conducted, and FFP was able to add a filter category that led the survey toward household and presidential plots – locations that would have otherwise been bypassed in favor of interviews only on deskman and kolkhoz farms. Data from the first round (by geographical region) revealed some surprising trends at the household level in reference to the role of the household plot for food consumption and production.

FFP also pursued negotiations with the WFP to underwrite the final two rounds of the 2011 Food Security Monitoring Survey (FSMS) and follow-on Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) seminar. The intention is to exercise some quality control over the general survey implementation process, data management and analysis, and presentation. This will go towards addressing the concerns of USAID and other institutions regarding the credibility and integrity of the survey process and data interpretation.

POLICY REFORM

During the first year, FFP focused on developing a policy-related relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), as well as working with FAO and the World Bank on policy-related issues. An additional area with policy implications for FFP was the decision made by USAID to identify Tajikistan as a “Feed the Future” Country. The assistance to the MOA consisted of four months of professional support focused on crop diversification to promote agricultural growth. The Ministry effort resulted in creating a list of priority crops and identifying strategies in encouraging Tajikistan’s farmers to commit to growing them.

Identification and selection of priority crops proved to be relatively easy.¹ The challenges in this effort surfaced first concerning the policy focus on self sufficiency versus self reliance. Both Nabijon Maqsudov, Senior representative and Head of Administration, MOA, and Mizrob Dekhanov, Senior Consultant, strongly advocated for self sufficiency. DAI consultants Jonathan Greenham and Max Goldensohn, along with COP William Levine strongly advocated for self reliance. This difference will continue to be an issue until it is resolved at the national level.

Promoting the use of priority crops will require a number of policy interventions that were identified. Chief among these are:

¹ These included: rice, onions, apricot, maize, potatoes, tomato, cucumber, cabbage, peanuts, and alfalfa.

- Trade policies such as improved access to finance, disposable property rights, and credit purchases;
- Pricing policies, including tax credits, and export promotion, tariff and non-tariff regulations;
- Sales policies, including land and infrastructure transfers, facilitating the growth of national and export markets;
- Communication policies including promoting the sale of Tajik produce through media events, exhibitions, and fairs.

ACCESS TO FINANCE

During the year, FFP completed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for microfinance training activities that will result in a subcontract for a local organization to enhance the capacity of existing microfinance organizations (MFOs) and farmers. By improving small holder farmer's financial literacy and teaching them to treat the farm as an enterprise, record keeping and documentation will improve along with decision making based on economic realities. Perhaps most importantly, farmers will have the necessary documentation to consider borrowing from a microfinance organization (MFO) or potentially starting a small business with additional training and support to prepare a business plan. The selected vendor will provide training to 2,500 farmers in FFP zones on financial management and basic bookkeeping; training for 100 MFO staff in financial analysis, credit management, international accounting standards (IFRS), and internal auditing; purchase and install financial software for 10 pilot MFOs and provide them with follow up technical assistance and support for one year; and complete a report on micro-leasing, credit unions, insurance, and additional financial services that could be offered

to farmers that address FFP's goals of increasing access to financial services for agriculture and agribusiness targeting vulnerable populations.

FFP also held a number of meetings with MFOs and other organizations to provide business development services including a meeting with the Chairman of the WUA Farm "Russia." The association has been planning to open agro-shops on farms and asked FFP for assistance in preparing a business plan. FFP provided business planning support and technical assistance to the organization.

FFP met with the Executive Director of DHS Bovari and Hamkori, Ms. Nuriniso Rustamova. This organization was established in 2005 with support from GIZ and in partnership with First Microfinance Bank of Tajikistan. It is the only active domestic Apex Institution that assists other MFOs on finding financing from domestic and international sources, as well as providing training and capacity building for MFO staff. Ms. Rustamova provided excellent insight into the most common problems among MFOs and explained the three current projects they are implementing with ICCO, DFID, and the Committee of Youth, Sport and Tourism. As a result of this meeting, FFP was able to design the RFP for MFO and farmer training noted above, and has designed some interventions for future work with Bovari and Hamkori.

In a continued effort to address the constraints of accessing microfinance from both the supply (MFO) and demand (farmer) side, FFP met with the Executive Director of Association of Microfinance Organizations in Tajikistan (AMFOT), Mr. Farhad Akbarov. The mission of AMFOT is focused on developing the microfinance sector in Tajikistan, improving access to financial services for the poor population, and contributing to the growth of small and medium MFOs. As a result of this meeting, FFP learned about AMFOT's "Center for Training and Developing Microfinance in Tajikistan", which provides staff trainings for MFOs to develop new products and provides training directly for farmers. FFP anticipates working extremely closely with AMFOT in providing capacity building for MFOs and improving farmer's knowledge about credit and other financial services. Mr. Akbarov also shared the latest developments on the draft law on establishing credit unions- and requested FFP join the working group- as well as partnering to address the development of crop insurance and alternatives for equipment leasing.

During the this year, FFP also completed the basic materials for a farm management and bookkeeping manual that will be taught to FFP field staff who, in turn, will train farmers on basic financial literacy, daily records and bookkeeping, and requirements to borrow from financial institutions.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

FFP filled the vacant position of Environmental Officer in early October 2011. Activities focused on conducting demonstration plots in households of target districts. Since visiting households is crucial to provide recommendations and providing advice for farmers, FFP staff visited potato, beans, maize, carrot, turnip, radish, onion, and garlic plots and provided environmental mitigation techniques. A safe and judicious use of pesticide form was used as a model and distributed to farmers at a seminar held by agriculture extension specialists. FFP also promoted establishing compost pits in some target households and made additional suggestions for organic fertilizing.

During the beginning of September Nina Kavetskaya, USAID's MEO from Almaty visited FFP's office in Dushanbe where she arranged a presentation on environmental compliance issues.

PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES

The following main public outreach activities were completed during the year:

- The FFP website design was completed; all necessary information for www.ffp.tj is being revised and will be added shortly;

- Outreach materials both in Tajik and English for the FFP Quarterly Newsletter were collected and the Newsletter will be printed in early November;
- A journalist of the State Committee of Television and Radio, Mrs. Surayo Shujoat, was subcontracted to prepare a food preservation training program to be broadcast on national TV and radio. A DVD copy of the program will be broadcast on district TV channels.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) ACTIVITIES

- This year, USAID FFP recruited two full-time M&E staff, the M&E Data Manager and a Survey Coordinator;
- The database development and data analysis for FFP's Market Survey was carried out and results of the analysis are helping develop a strategy on expanding market information systems;
- The FFP baseline data questionnaire was created in conjunction with USAID's Feed the Future Strategy.

ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

A team led by the COP and DCOP undertook an extensive visit to GBAO during the year, including Vanj, Rushon, Khorog, and Ishkashim regions. The visit was facilitated by the Aga Khan Foundation and its MSDSP team. Several areas of potential cooperation were identified. Typical of Dehkan farms in the Oblast, the team discovered that many were smaller than most presidential land allotments. Also, access to inputs, marketing assistance, and water availability were most often cited by targeted farmers as major constraints, while livestock was identified as an activity in need of additional assistance. On the basis of this visit, the team is proposing to establish an office in Khorog during the second year, and launch project activities in the Spring of 2012