



# Afghanistan PEACE Project

*Reducing Risk for the Kuchi People*



---

AgriLIFE RESEARCH Texas A&M University and Center for Natural Resource Information Technology  
Texas A&M University 2138 TAMU College Station Texas 77843

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

---

### Annual Report

---

**July 1, 2008 through June 30, 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

June 30, 2009



## Summary

The global food crisis has placed a renewed urgency on food security in countries most vulnerable to hunger. It has increasingly become a chronic issue for Afghanistan due to decades of conflict, political instability, expansion of human populations, fluctuation in oil prices, and changing land use/land tenure policies. Currently, 80% of Afghanistan's population resides in rural areas and of these, 8% are considered to be nomadic/semi-nomadic pastoralists (~6.5% of total population). The agriculture sector employs an estimated 66% of the country's total workforce. Earnings continue to remain low, however, averaging \$500 per year, leaving many with few alternatives other than to engage in the illicit poppy industry.

It is widely recognized that improving livestock production in Afghanistan is important for stabilizing the country's economy:

- Estimates suggest that 1.4 million animals are brought for trade to Afghanistan's six major livestock markets annually. With the exception of cattle, the markets are predominately supplied by livestock originating with the Kuchi nomadic herders (72.2% of sheep and 63.7% of goats).
- The karakul-pelt industry experienced resurgence in 2005, with an estimated 536,000 karakul hides exported from Afghanistan.
- Products from the agriculture and industry sectors, including hides, wool, pelts, mutton and carpets, in addition to cereal, fruit and nut crops, currently account for 75% of Afghanistan's export revenue.

The estimated percentage of livestock owned by Afghanistan's pastoralists, ranges from 50% to 75%. Key to the resilience of the Afghan pastoralists, as they have often proved over time, is their *mobility* and their *capacity to adapt* to changing circumstances. With 70-85% of Afghanistan qualifying as rangeland, this use of the landscape and lifestyle easily makes sense.

Developing sustainable and profitable livestock production practices will require several components acting in unison. These include delivery of animal health services; adoption of effective rangeland policies; research and the development of rangeland management plans; production of supplement feed sources; resolution of conflict and access issues; development of human and social capital; and greater and more effective connection to livestock markets. The Afghanistan Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation and Capacity Enhancement (PEACE) project has provided the foundation on which the proposed activities will be built. Over the past three years, the project has been developing the methodology and technology to allow pastoral communities, government agencies and non-governmental institutions sufficient lead-time to respond to impending crisis and prevent resource degradation. Forage predictions for 8 provinces are now available for viewing on the PEACE website and regularly transmitted to aid agencies within Afghanistan. In addition, data and maps derived from over 1800 questionnaires, designed to identify specific risks for the Kuchi, have been distributed via electronic media to government and non-government institutions, to facilitate their programming and planning efforts. The project has also established a successful conflict resolution program that has gained support of government and stakeholders alike. To date, more than 200 Kuchi leaders have received training in peace and negotiation theory, and conflict resolution and mediation; and 9 Kuchi leaders are now trained to serve as conflict resolution trainers for the Kuchi living in rural areas. In collaboration with university and government entities, the project has established a herbarium with over 700 specimens; documented and preserved important ethnobotanical information; digitized over 50 years of historical climate data from more than 20 climate stations in Afghanistan; and trained more than 100 Afghan scientist and leaders.

The PEACE project continues to make gains towards the completion of our project work plan. The livestock early warning system (LEWS) has been adopted by the Department of Natural Resource Management within the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). In the most recent draft of the program document they have included the LEWS as a major component of their monitoring and surveillance scheme. The PEACE Project will also contribute to the database on rangeland resources and nomadic pastoral production systems. In

addition, the MAIL will establish a regulatory framework for natural resource management and conflict resolution. We have been stressing the need to integrate conflict resolution with natural resource management for the last 2.5 years and are pleased that it has become incorporated into the department's policy. The Department of Animal Health is also establishing the nutritional profiling laboratory. There are plans to develop a complete Nutrition Lab so that the complimentary components of wet chemistry and near infrared scanning is available in Afghanistan.

Here are some of the highlights of the past year.

- The past year has provided more training for government staff and university graduates. Expertise development has continued in support of the Livestock Early Warning System and the Nutritional Profiling systems that are being adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock. Training efforts have focused on plant species identification, plant collection, vegetation survey methods, monitoring methods, animal diet nutrition, and near-infrared scanning of diet samples. To date we have provided 2740 person-days of training for the early warning system and 1365 person-days of training for the nutritional profiling system.

In addition to building capacity in a technical way the PEACE Project also works hand in hand with the Ministry of Agriculture staff. This is particularly useful when we meet rural community leaders because the MAIL staff is seen by the communities assisting Afghans with their needs. We have had many occasions when the rural representatives begin to complain about the lack of interest and concern from the government in general. When they learn that our MAIL colleagues are working together with us they are reassured that someone in the government is interested in their issues.

- We are continuing to conduct surveys and monitor rangelands to develop the *Livestock Early Warning System*. In early July 2008 we were able to conduct field work in Badakhshan. Last year was particularly interesting because we were able to visit the entire extent of the Shewae Kolone grassland. In addition to conducting 5 surveys in these rangelands we also conducted interviews with Kuchi herders that had arrived from Kunduz Province. Shewae rangelands were productive but the Kuchi had to move onto them several weeks earlier than normal. This year, 2009, we will not be able to reach Shewae Kolone until well into July due to the heavy snow and numerous roads that have been washed out near Baharak. This difference from one year to the next shows the tremendous variation in climate within Afghanistan and underscores the difficulties in reliably surveying rangelands here. To date we have conducted 70 vegetation surveys in 15 provinces. Information about forage productivity in these rangelands can be found on our website <http://afghanpeace.org/>.
- Last fall *Electronic Learning Modules* were developed to assist in training for the Nutritional equipment we are leaving with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock. The training modules are distributed on DVD's that allow training to be conducted without an internet connection. The modules contain training videos with audio in English, Dari, or Pashto. The training modules are located at <http://cnrit.tamu.edu/elearning/unit1.html>.
- *The Nutritional Profiling Program* -The technology being utilized by the PEACE project in its Nutritional Profiling Program is termed *Near Infrared Spectrometer (NIRS)* technology. This technology allows us to determine the relationship between animal performance and the state of rangelands in Afghanistan. Specifically, with this technology we can analyze fecal samples from free-ranging livestock and determine dietary crude protein and digestible organic matter content of forage ingested within the past 12 hours. This is just one application of NIRS technology. Other applications include the analysis of moisture, protein, oil/fat, fiber and starch contents of agriculture products; use by the feed industry to evaluate feed-mix formulation, analysis of final mixes, and testing of efficiency;

grading of cashmere wool; and use in the flour mill industry to determine protein and ash content, and water absorption. In October 2008, we conducted two trainings in the application of NIRS technology to a diverse group of attendees. The first training was designed exclusively for professionals working in various agencies in Kabul, both in the private and government sector. This training involved 19 participants. The second training was given to 12 students involved in the PEACE diet:fecal pair feeding trials and from the Animal Science program at the Kabul University.

- The Afghanistan PEACE Project organized a two-day *Development Workshop* for Kuchi leaders and representatives of development organizations. The impetus for this workshop was the lack of information and contacts from both sides. Kuchi leaders frequently stress the development needs of their communities and request assistance. Development organizations often do not have a clear picture of the Kuchi seasonal movements or have contacts with Kuchi leaders. Therefore, the objective of the workshop was to bring together representatives from both groups with the purpose of providing a forum for exchange of information and opportunities for networking and collaboration on future projects in variety of development spheres. The workshop turned out to be a success. After the workshop, WFP, contacted the Kuchi leaders from Faryab, Jawzjan, Balkh, and Kunduz and distributed emergency food to them this past winter. During our recent trip to Faryab and Jawzjan the Kuchi leaders told us that it was the first time that they received this type of assistance from WFP. We are very pleased that WFP made the effort this year to directly contact the Kuchi leadership in these provinces so the valuable food aid could reach Kuchi communities. Other organizations the developed relationships with the Kuchi Directors as a result of the workshop were ASAP and the U.S. Military.
- A detailed *Livestock Market Assessment* was initiated to determine the Kuchi contribution to the Afghanistan economy and projected impact of the project on local, regional and national economies. We subcontracted Altai Consulting to implement our work plan. The livestock market assessment is a four-part data collection effort with that hopes to capture market variability throughout the year. The first two surveys have been conducted for Fall 2008 and Winter 2009. A total of 1168 sellers, buyers and butchers have provided information.

Preliminary estimates suggest that 325,700 sheep, 87,200 goats, and 22,500 heads of cattle are brought for trade to Afghanistan's 6 major livestock markets during the period October - December (fall). When extrapolated to an annual figure, the data suggest that 1,392,800 sheep and goats are brought for trade to Afghanistan's 6 major livestock markets, annually.

These major livestock markets are predominately supplied by livestock originating with the Kuchi (except for cattle): 72.2% of sheep, 63.7% of goat, and 5.4% of cattle was reported originating from Kuchi herders or sellers.

Significantly, the intuitive perception of *all* stakeholders, in the 6 major markets where we conducted surveys, corroborated that the Kuchi were the primary suppliers to the livestock markets: sellers were of the opinion that 81.0% of sheep, 75.1% of goats, and 4.0% of cattle were owned by Kuchi people; buyers, that 83.5% of sheep, 65.3% of goats, and 3.0% of cattle were owned by Kuchi; and butchers, that 74.6% of sheep, 51.9% of goats, and 1.0% of cattle were owned by Kuchi.

- In December a preliminary *Risk Management Assessment* was conducted for Kuchi herders. A focal group (FG) assessment consisting of Kuchi leaders from six provinces confirmed an overwhelming threat to livestock production due to insecurity, conflicts, and land conversion. In addition, drought, water quality issues for livestock and humans, loss of access to summer pasture, and livestock die-offs due to extreme winter weather were considered serious limitations to livestock production. There were other threats mentioned by the FG members such as animal disease epidemics and winter feed that also

affect the livelihood of the Kuchi people, but were considered less important. Everyone in the FG ranked insecurity, land conversion and drought as the most important threats. There were slight differences among the FG members regarding the ranking of the other threats in the list. These different perceptions have important implications for risk planning interventions for Kuchi who reside in different provinces. The PEACE Project will initiate a Community Based Risk Management (CBRM) pilot project that focuses on portfolio diversification, conflict management, and social and human capital development. Well trained Collective Action Groups (CAG) will serve as a vehicle to deliver the above. Herder organizations the CAGs, for the targeted community will be formed and strengthened. Locations for the pilot projects will be in Balkh, Jawjan and Kunduz and are scheduled to begin in July 2009.

- The PEACE Project continued to *Expand Capacity for Kuchi Leaders*. Kuchi leaders from 3 Provinces, Balkh, Kunduz, and Paktia have been undergoing development as peace-building trainers. Last fall these 9 leaders went through a month-long training course to learn how to raise awareness about peace, to solve conflicts and to establish multi-ethnic peace shuras. They have reached another milestone in their development this summer as they conducted their first solo workshops to raise awareness for Kuchi leaders at the district level in each of the Provinces. They reached an additional 51 Kuchi leaders during the workshops. The hope is that with continued follow-up and training these 9 leaders will develop into expert trainers and expand the ability for the Kuchi to resolve conflicts. These long-term training efforts are not only proving promising now but have the potential to initiate widespread awareness among the Kuchi to settle access conflicts peacefully. The biggest winners from this effort to solve conflicts will be the Afghan people, the environment and the economy. To date we have provided 2949 person-days of training in conflict resolution and peace building efforts for Kuchi leaders.
- *Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Program between Kuchi and Hazara* The PEACE Project facilitated an effort to bring Kuchi and Hazara representatives together in March of 2008. This effort was an attempt to initiate a dialog between the Kuchi and Hazara that were in a dispute over grazing lands in Wardak and Bamyan Provinces. We worked with the Independent Department of Kuchi and the President Karzai's Commissioner on Tribal Affairs, Wahidullah Sabawoon. The series of three workshops initiated dialog that previously did not exist. This year, starting in March, we were asked to conduct a similar series of workshops by Wahidullah Sabawoon and this year we attempted to start directly addressing the issue in Behsud. These workshops were implemented by the Sanayee Development Organization and sponsored with funds coming from the GL-CRSP at UC Davis. The joint workshop was very successful and what emerged was a plea to the government to defuse the political pressures that continue to provoke this conflict. Both Kuchi and Hazara representatives agreed that with a concentrated effort the conflict can be resolved on the ground. Political leaders from both sides, however, are using the situation to drive their political agendas by inciting the conflict between the two groups. After the workshops the Kuchi and Hazara representatives self-selected five people each group to continue to build support within their communities to end this violence. These 10 representatives will act as Peace Ambassadors over the next 3 months.

## Afghanistan PEACE Project Accomplishments and Targets

### Standard Indicators and Targets FY2009

Numbers reported by USAID fiscal year and not by PEACE Project fiscal year

Indicator	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Target	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Actual	Variance	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter Target	Fiscal Year Target	Fiscal Year Actual	LOP Target	LOP Actual	FY10 Target	Disaggregated	Provincial Breakdown
<b>5.1 Agriculture Enabling Environment</b>											
Number of policy reforms/regulations/administrative procedures drafted and presented for public/stakeholder consultation as a result of USG assistance	2	1	-1	1	3	2	6	3	2		NA
<b>5.2 Agricultural Sector Productivity</b>											
Number of hectares under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance	945,500	945,500	+0	945,500	945,500	945,500	1,000,000	945,500	1,000,000		Balkh 85,000 Kunduz 286,000 Takhar 1000 Badakhshan 63,000 Samangan 61,000 Baghlan 45,000 Bamyan 337,000 Parwan 4,000 Panjshir 58,000 Kabul 5,500
<b>8.1 - Natural Resources And Biodiversity</b>											
Number of people receiving USG supported training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation (male/female)	60	74/3 (M/F)	+17	50	150/5	254/3	310/16	431/5	150/5		Balkh 18 Kunduz 21 Takhar 1 Badakhshan 1 Samangan 1 Sarppul 1 Baghlan 1 Kabul 10 Hirat 5 Paktia 18
Number of USG-supported initiatives/ mechanisms designed to reduce the potential for violent conflict over the control, exploitation, trade or protection of natural resources	2	2	+0	2	4	7	10	10	4		NA

Cumulative Result of PEACE Project:

Standard Indicators	This year Result	Cumulative Result	Remarks
Number of hectares under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance	540,000	945,500	
Number of people receiving USG supported training in natural resources management and/ or biodiversity conservation	254/3	431//5	