

DUTCH COMMITTEE FOR AFGHANISTAN

Q U A R T E R L Y N E W S L E T T E R

July, 2023

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 45 Para-Vets Graduated from DCA Charikar and Herat VTSCs
- DCA Conducted 5 Farmers Field Days in Five Regions
- DCA Supported 27,600 Herders
- DCA Established 45 VFUs and Provided Technical and Logistical Support
- 190 Farmers Trained on Improved Agricultural Practices
- 55 Feed Banks Established in Remote Rural Areas
- DCA Conducted 22 Awareness Sessions for 11,901 Farmers on Animal Welfare
- 793,520 Animals Vaccinated and Dewormed Across 24 Provinces
- DCA Established and Supported 546 Stop-Shops
- DCA Established 30 Milk Collection Centers and 5 Milk Processing Centers
- Success Story

VISION

Food security and food safety in Afghanistan are supported through good collaboration between private and public livestock services such that livestock owners/keepers have access to veterinary care and livestock extension services and they can increase their income by applying improved animal production and product processing practices.

MISSION

To reduce poverty and increase food security for the people of Afghanistan through improved animal health, welfare, production & value chain measures which sustains.



Veterinary Paraprofessionals/Para-Vets graduated from DCA Veterinary Training and Support Centers (VTSCs), Herat

New Veterinary Paraprofessional/Para-Vets Graduation Ceremonies

DCA-LP conducted and organized two impressive ceremonies for 45 newly graduated Veterinary Paraprofessionals/Para-Vets from DCA Veterinary Training and Support Centers (VTSCs) in Kabul and Herat. These new VPPs will be providing veterinary services to the local herders and pastoralists in remote rural areas of Afghanistan for more than 540,000 animals annually. Many stakeholders, including government officials such as the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, Livestock (MAIL), General Director of Animal Health and Production, MAIL-Livestock Director, MAIL-Policy and Planning Director, Ministry of Economy NGOs Director, Provincial Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock Directors of ten provinces, Provincial Directors of Economy Directorates of four provinces, and Director of Herat Public Health Department also took part also in the ceremonies. The Deans and professors of the faculties of veterinary sciences at Kabul and Herat Universities attended the ceremony. Representatives of three non-governmental organizations (DAI, DACCAR, and AVA), farmers, and pastoralists were also present.



The Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) is the initiator and founder of the Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) model, which is a sustainable, self-reliant, and successful approach throughout Afghanistan. Over 1,400 private VFUs are active and run by Veterinary Paraprofessionals who deliver quality animal health and livestock services on a fee per service basis.

Famers Field Days

In five regions of Afghanistan Kabul, Takhar, Balkh, Kandahar, and Herat Provinces, the DCA hosted five Farmers Field Days. 578 people, including farmers, herders, government representatives, traditional leaders, DCA staff, processing companies, and stop-shop owners from the 21 DAI-ACEBA targeted provinces, travelled hundreds of kilometres to attend the Farmers Field Days. Such events are arranged to emphasize and focus on the significance of sorting, grading, washing, dyeing, and processing wool and cashmere. Additionally, awareness-raising campaigns are essential for enhancing the wool supply chain and marketing.

A herder from Bamyan, Mr. Sayed Hassan Mosawi, one of the participants, said, "In the past, no one asked about wool and cashmere, we are so happy that the DAI-ACEBA project came and explained to us the value of wool and cashmere products; therefor, now we are able to distinguish between different types of wool and cashmere and their relevant values." Mr. Mosawi also added that the project has supported the herders in animal health and access to livestock feed, resulting in better productivity and quality of wool and cashmere.



DCA Support 27,600 Most- at Risk Herders

DCA supports those herders who live in the secluded areas of Afghanistan on animal health and welfare through its extensive livelihood projects in 28 provinces. DCA supported 27,600 herders through education, extension, and provision of vouchers for animal feed and veterinary services in 21 provinces. The pastoralists are linked with the nearby stop-shops, Veterinary Field Units (VFUs), and Milk Collection Centers (MCCs) to have proper access for selling their wool, cashmere, yogurt, milk, butter, and other livestock products. The above chain is linked and strengthened for the purpose of sustainability.



Support for Veterinary Field Units

DCA aims to support and improve the livelihood of local and pastoralists' herders through the provision of animal health, veterinary and livestock services based on their need throughout the 28 provinces. Therefore, DCA has provided technical and logistical support to 425 VFUs across the country.

Furthermore, DCA regularly facilitates and provides refresher trainings and technical advice to improve their knowledge, skills, and capacity for the delivery of high-quality veterinary services in the field.

In addition, DCA has recently established 45 Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) in Kabul, Khost, Baghlan, Parwan, Logar, Paktia, Maidan Wardak, Kunar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Laghman, and Herat Provinces.



Training on Improved Agricultural Practices

DCA facilitated and conducted capacity-building trainings to livestock owners and farmers on various good agricultural practices such as crop management, efficient use of water, irrigation, harvesting, post-harvest management, sorting, grading, packing, marketing of agricultural commodities, diseases control, control of parasites, facilitation for the exchange of ideas, distribution of required toolkits, and emphasis on the importance of the cultivation of licit crops.

In addition, 190 farmers were trained and received 25 Kg of maize seed, 25 Kg of DAP, and 50 Kg of urea fertilizer.

30 Feed Banks Established

DCA established 30 feed banks based on the dire needs of the poor rural communities living in the remote countryside to help them have access to animal feed and prevent feed shortages, particularly during the harsh winter seasons. The DCA technical field team directly supervised and monitored the construction of these feed banks. Additionally, grind-mixer mills and AC power generators are given to them. Further, they will get the basic raw materials needed for a first-round business start-up. While the owner of the 4x8-meter feed bank was responsible for providing the land and paying the labor costs, DCA contributed \$ 1,500 in cash for purchases of raw materials for running and sustainability of the feed banks.



Training on Animal Welfare

DCA is implementing "The Donkey Sanctuary (TDS)" project, which is raising awareness about animal welfare among herders through extension workers, religious leaders, and volunteer teachers. The awareness messages cover topics such as the provision of proper space, feed, water, hygiene and environment for livestock, especially for equines. Using best practices to save their lives and their power for livelihood activities, keeping their welfare and rest in mind. In these sessions, 595 male extension groups with 11,901 active members were established and provided with trainings and input in the targeted provinces.



Vaccination and Deworming Campaigns

DCA commenced immunization and deworming campaigns in the isolated communities to prevent economic losses for the poor rural herders and pastoralists. While deworming prevents parasitic infestation and weight loss, vaccination prevents animals from viral and bacterial diseases and outbreaks. In total, 525,883 vaccine doses and 267,637 doses of dewormers were given to the animals during these campaigns, supported 20,267 pastoralists and local herding households over the past three months.



DCA Establish and Support 546 Stop-Shops

Sales Points and Stop-shops serve as the primary point of contact for all the relevant stakeholders who are involved in the chain of animal products like cashmere, wool, and milk including sales points owners, stop-shop keepers, herders, pastoralists, middlemen, and businessmen. 75 sales points were established by DCA throughout the target provinces. These sales locations would link the relevant stakeholders to improve and strengthen the whole chain and facilitate the proper market for animal main and by-products.



DCA Establish 30 Milk Collection Centers (MCCs)

DCA established and equipped 30 milk collection centers (MCCs) throughout the targeted provinces to support the local herders and pastoralists in terms of milk collection, milk simple processing and selling dairy products at a reasonable price to maintain and improve their livelihood.

Each milk collection center is expected to collect 200–250 liters of milk per day. These MCCs are linked with the herders for the collection of milk and linked with the dairy markets and Milk Processing Centers (MPCs) for marketing their milk and strengthening the linkages of the whole value chain.



Success Story—Milk Collection Center

Baber Khan (2016¹) estimated the total milk production in Afghanistan to be 1.496 million MT (about 1,000 litres /cow annually) produced by 1.26 million cows in 2013. Over 40% of the dairy products come out from Kuchies (pastoralists). The dairy sector is at an early stage of development after facing a major crisis during the war.

In response to two decades of war, and escalation of the prices of imported products due to the Ukraine-Russia war, IFAD funded DCA to implement the Crisis Response Initiatives (CRI) Project. The project comprises of 3 components of—provision of inputs and basic assets for production; facilitated access to markets, financing support to assets, and facilities strengthened. The Senior Management of DCA visited the provinces of Balkh, Samangan and Baghlan at the beginning of June 2023 to see the progress of the project. The team witnessed the strong trust built with the communities, members of the extension groups, Veterinary Field Units (VFUs), Stop-Shop Keepers, Milk Collection Centers (MCCs), and customary leaders along the way.

The visit gave more attention to the performance of the MCCs. Three MCCs were visited in Charbolak District of Balkh, Hazrat Sultan District of Samangan and Baghlan Centre District of Baghlan Provinces. The team spoke to Mrs. Seya Moia one of the beneficiaries of the MCC in Gawsawara village of Baghlan Province. She is the breadwinner for a family of 9 members including a blind husband, 5 daughters and 2 sons. Mrs. Seya was very quick to expand her MCC right after DCA's

¹ Baber Khan, M. (2016) Dairy Value Chain analysis of Central Province of Afghanistan

intervention. “I established the MCC three weeks ago after selection and training in the last 7 months and the amount of milk I collect has increased from 300kg to 400kg. “I didn’t have refrigerator before this project and most of the fresh milk perishes and is thrown out,” Mrs. Seya recalls.

Poor market linkages, lack of livestock feed, and animal diseases are the main bottlenecks for the dairy production in Baghlan Province (Naeimi and Almas, 2021²). Mrs. Seya’s MCC is linked to the supply chain (herders and pastoralists) and signed contracts are made with businesses in the cities offering value addition to create the market linkages. “We have signed contracts with customers in the city of Baghlan to deliver processed dairy and receive fresh milk from 30-40 herder families in rural areas of Gawsawara village and beyond”, says Mrs. Seya Moi. In addition to the MCCs, DCA is implementing livestock feed banks using the feed cooperatives, and animal health services using the VFUs to address the challenges explained by Naeimi and Almas (2021).

The project is designed in response to the rising prices of imported products such as flour, rice, oil, fuel etc due to the Ukraine-Russia war. The MCC members confirmed this at the discussion. Responding to the price increase, Mrs. Seya added, “the price of our products didn’t change whereas the cost of imported items is more than double.” Since recently, the government reduced the import and sales tax of these products to zero to reduce the price to at least twice the price before the war.



² Naeimi, M. and Almas, M.M. (2021) A Prospective Overview of Animal Husbandry, Milk Production, Consumption and its Marketing in Baghlan Province; Afghanistan, IJISRT, Vol. 6, Issue 7.

Table 1: Price changes of flour before and after the war

Product	Charbolak		Hazrat Sultan		Baghlan Centre	
	Before the war (Afs)	After the war (Afs)	Before the war (Afs)	After the war (Afs)	Before the war (Afs)	After the war (Afs)
Flour	1,200	2,700	1,400	2,500	1,250	2,700

Through the Crisis Response Initiatives (CRI) project funded by IFAD, DCA supports 30 MCCs in the regional hubs of Baghlan, Balkh, Kabul, Nangarhar and Herat Regions. The milk collection centers (MCCs) and herders who deliver fresh milk to the MCCs benefit through improved food and nutrition security, a better income, and job creation despite the local and foreign war crisis, continuing drought and market failures. Furthermore, engagement of women is an important empowerment strategy regardless of the unexpected decree by the DfA.

“I will establish a big dairy processing plant in the coming 5 years, Inshallah (God willing)”, says Mrs. Seya confirming her empowerment.

Job Opportunities

DCA has recruited more than 300 technical and supportive project staff from different provinces for the successful implementation of the projects.

DUTCH COMMITTEE FOR AFGHANISTAN

District #3, Road #5 Syloo, House # 16 and 18 near Karwan University, Kabul, Afghanistan,

Official Email: info.afg@dca-af.org

Website: <https://dca-livestock.org/>

Opening Hours: Sunday – Thursday, 8.00 AM - 4.00 P