World food day 2016

Every year, FAO in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock (MAIL) observe World Food Day (WFD) in October.

This year also, FAO and MAIL jointly celebrated the 36th WFD at Pamir Conference Hall at MAIL on 16th October 2016. H.E. Ali Ahmad Osmani, Minister of Energy and Water (MEW), H.E. Mir Amanuddin Haidari, Deputy Minister for MAIL; Ms. Angelline Rudakubana, Deputy Country Director of WFP Deputy Country Director; Tomio Shichiri, FAO Representative in Afghanistan have grace the event with their presence; and over 200 guests from different governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, donor partners, and local stakeholders have attended the occasion.

This year, the theme was “Climate is changing, food and agriculture must too”. A short video clip on “Climate change” by FAO was displayed.

An exhibition of FAO as well as MAIL’s projects added extra colour to the event. The 2016 WFD celebration ended with children of the MAIL kindergarten presenting fruit baskets to welcome the guests. Media featured the reception.

Ag-fair exhibition in Afghanistan

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Afghanistan is paving the way to achieve stage two of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) control

Foot-and-Mouth disease is among the most dangerous trans-boundary animal diseases. The disease is caused by a virus and affects cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, pigs and other wild species. FMD does not affect humans but has a significant economic impact due to negative consequences on the production and productivity of affected animals. One of the most dramatic impacts observed is in dairy cattle where the milk production decline to zero.

The two major international organizations dealing with animal health (namely FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health – OIE) have formulated a global programme to assist countries (and especially endemic prawn countries such as Afghanistan) to progressively control and mitigate the negative impact of the disease. The framework under which the control activities are implemented is Progressive Control Pathway (PCP), which includes five different control stages (from 1 to 5). Progressing through the stages means a country is progressively establishing zoo-sanitary measures to better control FMD.

Afghanistan is currently qualified at stage one of the PCP and efforts are on-going to achieve stage two by 2017. A national control programme has been developed for the implementation of preventive vaccination campaigns against FMD targeting the large ruminant population of the dairy sector.

The FMD vaccination campaigns are implemented twice a year (every six months) in spring and summer. The campaign started in May and ended in August 2016. In total 7,619 smallholders and dairy producers were enrolled in the programme and 38,400 cattle were vaccinated against FMD. Among young cattle (below 12 months of age) around 11,045 animals have received a second dose of vaccine after 30 days.

All these farms enrolled into the preventive vaccination programme and results of the vaccination campaign was presented in the FMD regional roadmap meeting for the SAARC region held in Sri Lanka on 14-16 December 2016.

Women benefiting from dairy project

Mrs. Zarina (45) from Charikar district of Parwan province is one of the project’s beneficiaries. She has two children. Her husband does not work and is old. She owns a small piece of land and five cows. Mrs. Zarina is a member of a village cooperative that is supported by the dairy project. The project reaches female farmers through women trainers.

In 2014, she had three cows, which produced 7 litres of milk/day. In 2015, the dairy project introduced silage and hay making techniques to farmers. Mrs. Zarina adopted this new technology resulting into increased milk production of approximately 15 litres a day. In 2016, she prepared silage for her livestock and she expects her cows’ milk production to increase further during the winter season.

Mrs. Zarina is now able to calculate silage requirements for her cows, and plan for the winter season/lean season. Through artificial insemination activities under the project she now owns five cows and harvests over 22 litres of milk a day which she sells in the local market, though the production/harvest of 22 litres milk from five cows in a day is comparatively low. This has encouraged other women to join the dairy cooperatives to start this valuable business.

“I earn a good income from the sale of milk. I now focus more on animal health, feeding and housing for my livestock. This is important for increased milk production” said Mrs. Zarina. Under the project she was also trained in basic animal health and husbandry skills.

Khatiz dairy union sustaining operations

The overall goal of the FAO Nangarhar Integrated Dairy Scheme project (2010 – 2016) was to improve production and efficiency of milk production and processing and to establish a member-owned network of dairy producers’ cooperative societies to manage the dairy business. Activities focused on three main areas: improving
The project was implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD). The initiative have brought significant changes to the dairy industry in Nangarhar Province. Traditionally, farmers in Afghanistan keep one or two cows, whose milk was consumed by the family members, with any small amounts left over being given to neighbours for free, or being left to spoil. However, today there is a growing consumer demand for local, healthy pasteurized milk.

Through project support, the supply of dairy products increased and has doubled the income of farmers. Furthermore farmers has improved yields and milk quality. Other project interventions contributed in improving animal feed, improved breeds from artificial insemination services, capacity development of farmer through on farm trainings.

Since the project inception (February 2016) the profit of approximately 2.2 million Afg has been made by Khatiz Dairy Union, with an average milk production of 5-9 litres/day/household. Most importantly, farmers are committed to participate in the dairy union. Seventy percent of farmers have crossbreds from the livestock artificial insemination services using improved imported bull semen. Sixty percent of farmers have adopted cultivation of improved fodder crops.

In the long term, the project created a well-functioning facility with the capacity to provide milk and dairy products to Nangarhar and its neighbouring provinces. As a strong private entity, profits from selling of milk goes directly to the member farmers. These profits motivate farmers to continue to cultivate and sell improved varieties of animal feed, to keep the good quality of cows, so as to maximise their yields.

In summary, the main achievements of the project are as follows:

- 18 primary milk producer cooperatives, five secondary district cooperatives and one provincial level dairy union established and registered with MAIL
- 1,764 female milk producers and 1,840 male farmers received various trainings in animal husbandry and other relevant subjects
- 49,803 cows were inseminated and 71 percent got pregnant
- 2,150 demonstration plots of improved fodder crops were established to encourage adoption of production of improved fodder crops
- 16,302 cattle were vaccinated, 6,666 treated and 14,829 dewormed and 95 percent of FMD outbreaks were controlled, tick borne, zoonotic diseases and mastitis were largely brought under control
- 18 village level milk collection centres three building of district livestock services and milk chilling centres and dairy processing plant buildings with a capacity of 10Mt/day were established
- A 12 Mt/day animal feed processing plant was built and equipped
- 618 Mt of concentrated feed were produced by Khatiz Dairy Union and sold to farmers

Food security and nutrition policy analyses training cum study tour, Indonesia

On 7-11 November 2016, a group of ten high level officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock paid a five-days study tour and training on "Food Security and Nutrition Policy Analysis" to Indonesia. The objective of training was; to develop the capacities of technical staff of MAIN on Food Security & Nutrition (FSN) Policy Analysis.

Participants were acquainted/familiarized with range of topics including; Indonesia’s programme for food availability and vulnerability, early warning system for food security and nutrition, method and assessment of food balance sheets, food consumption and diversification, food safety, food distribution policy, and organic food. Based on the fact that Government of Afghanistan has recently drafted Food Security and Nutrition policy and is in the process of establishing a special unit/secretariat to ensure the institutionalization and implementation of this policy. The visit and training was a timely intervention for the MAIL staff to learn from Indonesian experience and execute good practices in Afghanistan.

Visit to family home yard gardening system - maintained by a Woman Farmer Group in Bogor West Java, has contributed to study the importance and use of various botanic medicinal plants, vegetables, fruits and annual crops in Indonesia.
Director General of Programme Coordination and Planning, while sharing his cross country learning experience said, “Indonesia has very good institutional structures, including the Food Security Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and a Food Security Council. “It is good for us to share our experience with Government of Afghanistan and work for the establishment of a department on Food and Nutrition Security. We do hope this study tour provides knowledge and lesson learnt for Afghan officials to develop and implement policies and programmes for food security in order to achieve the SDG’s target in 2030. Director General of Agency for Food Security, Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Indonesia further said that; We realize that there are several differences in terms of culture and geography between Indonesia and Afghanistan, but we believe that the mechanism of coordination, types of activities and methodologies of community empowerment that exist in Indonesia, whichever is appropriate, could be easily replicated in Afghanistan. While talking to the delegation; FAO Representative in Indonesia and Timor-Leste; Mr. Mark Smulders said that Indonesia and Afghanistan both are engaged in South-South Cooperation. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) always plays a facilitation role, having worked with over 20 provider countries and 80 hosts, as well as 15 triangular partners over the years. FAO is always seeking ways to create a strong collaboration among countries, where each country is able to put forward their institutions of excellence in food and agriculture. FAO Project “Strengthening Policy Development and Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) policy analysis training and study tour was organized under the project; “Coordination for Food Security and Nutrition in Afghanistan GCP/AFG/075/GER”.

“Animal health assistance in the Gambieri area” in Nangarhar Province

The overall objective of this joint intervention was, “To provide assistance to the human population settled in Gambieri area by enhancing the level of protection of their livestock against animal diseases threats”.

Manan is one of the Kuchi living in Gambieri Area. He is from Bayesian village where he has a herd of sheep and goats. Manan while sharing his experience said; “It was very important to be a beneficiary of the FAO funded project. Last year my animals were affected by PPR. It was a disaster.

The mortality rate/number was very high, and I lost ten sheep and seven goats. The lost was so big that I was completely shocked that how can I survive this loss. I really did not know what I could do, and was unable to take any decision on time to save my animals. PPR has severely affected not only my animals but also my family. Thus, when my cousin informed me that RI and FAO have recently started a PPR vaccination campaign by provide vaccinations to livestock keepers. I decided to contact the VFU and vaccinate my animals. I learned a lot and got information on livestock keeping/management and about the most important animal diseases. I am so much grateful to RI and FAO for providing such kind of support to us and to vaccinate our animals in the fields. Now I am much more secure and happy. I can support the needs of my family through my livestock and plan for the future. Thanks to RI, FAO and Japan Government.

Farmers grow high value fodder crops Afghanistan

Afghanistan suffers from a shortage of fodder crops that is preventing the country’s farmers from realizing the full potential of their livestock and improving their livelihoods. The solution may lie in the production of alfalfa, which is widely recognized as an important fodder crop for its resilience, yield, and use as high-protein and high-fiber feed for farm animals. Integrated Dairy Scheme is implementing a Fodder Programme in Kabul, Logar and Parwan Provinces to increase production of fodder and to create agribusiness opportunities. Farmers are beginning to reap the benefits. “I have already harvested my fodder field six to eight times this year, and it is still growing, so I hope to have three more harvests from it,” said Mr. Shah, a farmer from the Mohammad Agha district of Logar province. Mr. Shah is part of milk producing cooperatives; which focuses to help more than 800 small- and medium-scale farmers to plant a total of almost 40jerib of fodder crops on their farmland. In close coordination with Afghanistan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Integrated Dairy Scheme project is providing certified fodder seed and training on commercial fodder production, to all the farmers who are participating in the programme.