



In this Issue

- Latest News
- Kharif Season around the Corner
- Spotlight Story
- Empowered Women Contributing to Household Income
- Sindh in Need of Agricultural Assistance
- Hyderabad Hosts South Sindh Cluster
- Picture of the Month

Upcoming Events

- **Wednesday, 9 Feb.:**
National Cluster meeting, Islamabad
- **Wednesday, 9 Feb.:**
Gender Working Group, Islamabad
- **Wednesday, 9 Feb.:**
Provincial Cluster meeting, Multan
- **Wednesday, 9 Feb.:**
Provincial Cluster meeting, Hyderabad
- **Thursday, 10 Feb.:**
Provincial Cluster meeting, Peshawar
- **Monday, 14 Feb.:**
Provincial Cluster meeting, Sukkur
- **Thursday, 24 Feb.:**
Provincial Cluster meeting, Peshawar

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LATEST NEWS

Agriculture Cluster Establishes Gender Working Group

At the national-level Cluster meeting on 4 January 2011, gender was identified as a priority cross-cutting issue for the agriculture and livelihoods sector. *For more information about the Agriculture Cluster's Gender Working Group, please email <acgenderwg@gmail.com>.*

Agriculture Rapid Needs Assessment (ARNA) Starting in Sindh

The ARNA will start in Sindh to identify early recovery interventions, such as watercourses for rehabilitation. The Assessment will be conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its implementing partners. *Contact Banaras Khan <Banaras.Khan@fao.org> if interested in participating.*

Punjab and South Sindh Created their Provincial Review Committees

Both Agriculture Clusters in Multan and Hyderabad have established their Provincial Review Committees. The committees aim to review proposals by the Cluster members and nominate them for funding, such as for the Emergency Relief Fund.

Livelihoods Assessment Led by the Agriculture Cluster

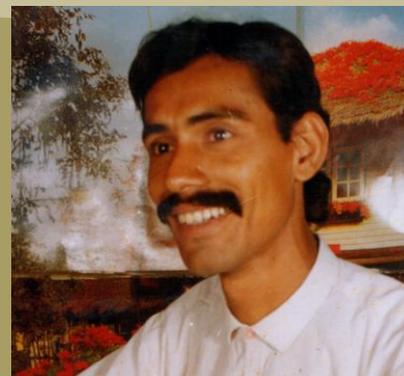
Starting March, the Agriculture Cluster will conduct a livelihoods survey in partnership with other clusters and stakeholders that will provide vital information on agriculture-based livelihoods in flood affected areas and inform programming for early recovery.

KHARIF SEASON AROUND THE CORNER

The priority for the 2011 Kharif (spring) planting season is providing support to agricultural livelihoods. As part of the strategy, key activities include: provision of crop inputs; protection and restoration of livestock assets; rehabilitation of arable land and agricultural infrastructure, including irrigation/watercourses, flood protection structures, and roads/paths to markets; and general support to livelihoods. For instance, the provision of vegetable seed packets will improve the dietary intake of households and increase their bartering capacity. The livelihoods assessment will be conducted in February and March and will identify specific priorities for the early recovery of agricultural livelihoods.

Spotlight Story

Malik Mumtaz is the President of Indus Development Organization (IDO), a local non-governmental organization based in Taunsa, district of Dera Ghazi Khan. He travels more than 200 km – about a four-hour drive from Taunsa to Multan – to attend the Agriculture Cluster meetings. Although his father was a teacher, his family's source of income is from their 72 acres of land. Mr Mumtaz became the President of IDO in 1999.



One of the main contributions of the organization was the hiring of three boats during the floods, which assisted the community with the rescue operations. They also provided 400 households in refugee camps with food. Their main partners are the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Government of Pakistan.

EMPOWERED WOMEN CONTRIBUTING TO HOUSEHOLD INCOME

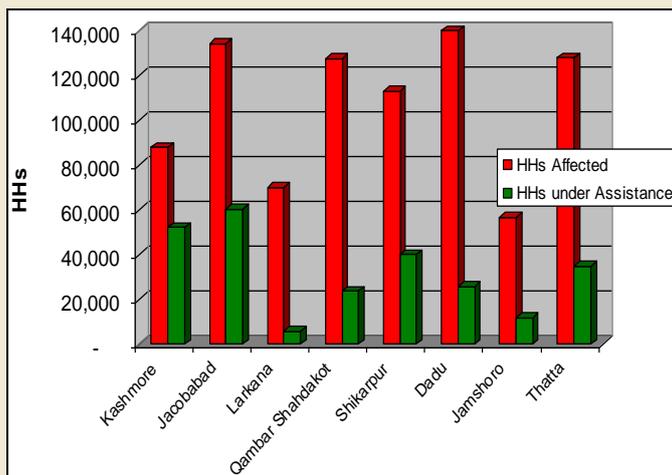
The role of women in Pakistan's rural agriculture sector, livestock in particular, is essential to household income. There is a general lack of acknowledgement and recognition of their contribution to the socio-economic development of rural Pakistan. Women are involved in livestock production activities: they provide labour and management, but do not have access to income-generating activities or decision-making power. Agribusiness Support Fund (ASF) has developed a project in flood-affected areas of Punjab that is assisting rural women in animal husbandry activities, and helping their empowerment process. Several Women Farmers Enterprise Groups (WFEGs) were formed from vulnerable households in the flood-affected areas of Punjab. ASF identified households earning less than Rs 6 000 per month (USD 70) and focused on widows and orphans. The selected group was trained to elect a chairperson and secretary to manage the grants, which were in the form of small ruminants, poultry and kitchen gardening tools. The WFEGs are being monitored continuously to develop their agribusiness activity. ASF believes that less privileged community members require the contribution of women to keep households from destitution.



ASF meeting with community members in Muzaffargarh District, Punjab.

For more info about the project in Punjab please contact Col (R) Tariq Ahmad <Tariq.Ahmad@asf.org.pk>.

SINDH IN NEED OF AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE



Households (HHs) affected versus those receiving assistance in nine districts of North Sindh.

Agriculture is the backbone of Sindh's economy. The livelihoods of millions of households in the province depend on the cycle of planting and harvesting and on livestock assets. The 2010 floods wiped out the source of livelihoods for many who depend on agriculture for subsistence, and who were already vulnerable and suffering from malnutrition. The bulk of damage materialized in eight districts (see table) where over 850 000 families are in need of assistance. With the limited resources available, only 254 000 families are being assisted with different crop or livestock packages, mainly due to standing water and population displacement. Around 122 000 families received support for the Rabi (winter) planting season, mostly high-quality wheat or sunflower seeds, and fertilizers. Moreover, 158 000 households will soon receive either crop packages for the Kharif (spring) planting season, or livestock assistance. About 760 000 households (5.3 million people) in Sindh are not assisted under any plan. If more resources are not committed to agricultural interventions, their return to acceptable food-security levels will be a difficult journey.

HYDERABAD HOSTS SOUTH SINDH CLUSTER

Similar to three other locations – Peshawar, Multan and Sukkur – that host the Agriculture Cluster teams for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and North Sindh, the Hyderabad Cluster represents regions in South Sindh. The Cluster is committed to strengthening the cluster approach and coordination for the flood-affected districts.

Currently the Agriculture Cluster in Hyderabad is facilitating activities for the Kharif planting season and providing relevant technical guidelines, identifying critical gaps/needs in the agriculture sector, and targeting the least supported areas. The latter will be based on the mapping of humanitarian response in the agriculture sector from the Agriculture Cluster Database.

Apart from maintaining regular interaction with members, the coordination is also facilitating the submission of proposals for available funding opportunities for Cluster members.

PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Watercourses damaged by the floods in Village Bubak, District Jamshoro, Sindh.