



Ten Years of Innovative Solutions

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Giving Farmers More Opportunities in Afghanistan

“As part of the United States' continued support to Afghanistan, we were also pleased to announce three new United States activities, including \$60 million in an agricultural voucher program to stimulate cereal production and to increase the 2009 harvests.”

—Henrietta Fore, USAID Administrator,
 June 18, 2008

More than 20 percent of Afghans, 6.6 million people, do not have enough to eat every day. Instability, low household income, and declining agricultural productivity are all contributing factors, particularly in rural areas. Afghan farmers cannot access vitally needed agriculture inputs such as seeds and fertilizer on their own, creating a cycle of serious food insecurity which will continue to worsen the affect poverty and nutrition. IRD, with funding from USAID/OFDA, intends to enable 150,000 Afghan families to increase their access to food and income.



Afghanistan's farmland has historically grown enough grain to support the country's population.

The \$33.2 million Afghan Vouchers for Increased Productive Agriculture (AVIPA) program, done in partnership with CARE, Co-ordination of Afghan Assistance (CHA), Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR), and Land O'Lakes, and some additional support from DFID, aims to increase basic wheat crop production in Afghanistan so that more of the countries' food requirements can be met locally and farmers can support their families. During the one-year program, which was developed in close collaboration with the Afghan ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, IRD provides farmers affected by drought with vouchers to access agricultural inputs. As an alternative to direct food distribution, the voucher system underlines the importance of farmer-to-supplier/supplier-to-farmer relationships. The system not only supports agriculture input access for crop production, but more intimately engages the supply market and farmer demand. IRD will work with private agriculture depots in Balkh, Badghis, Farah, Faryab, Ghor, Herat, Jawzjan, Samangan, and Sari Pul provinces where farmers can redeem vouchers for seed, fertilizer, and other agricultural inputs. Only the most vulnerable farmers will be eligible, including unemployed heads of household, widows, farmers lacking extended family support, sharecroppers, and farmers who are not recipients of other development assistance programs.

An additional \$27 million modification to the original program will expand these services to 100,000 more farmers in Bamyán, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, and Badakhshan provinces.

IRD is working closely with Land O'Lakes on quality control, including fertilizer testing and geographic allocation of appropriate varieties, and monitoring and evaluation. A sustainable network of local suppliers is in place to meet farmers' needs and local NGO partners will gain the experience to move forward once international involvement is complete.

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