

Afghanistan-Pakistan Activities
Quarterly Report XIII
(October-November-December 2005)
Sustainable Development of Drylands Project
IALC-UIUC

Introduction:

As had been indicated in the previous quarterly report, our annual visit to Afghanistan and Pakistan will be the central feature of this reporting period. A trip report giving details on activities in which the Myers-Qayyum-Santas threesome was involved during this TDY is attached.

Details on Activities this Period:

1. Our trip report, with details the October 28 through November 17 travel, includes some information that is beyond the scope of the IALC Sustainable Development of Drylands Project. Five days were spent at Balkh University in Mazar-e-Sharif to work on the ALO-funded project that is being implemented by the SIUC/UIUC/NWFPAU consortium. Costs and expenses incurred during that period were charged against the Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) Project. Readers may or may not be interested in these activities and our efforts to establish a presence in Afghanistan's higher education community.
2. No short courses were held during this period and no research-related training programs were carried out. The ten enrolled M.Sc. candidates continue to make excellent progress. Because this group is funded by the RAMP project, periodic reports are sent to them from our field office. Dr. Qayyum's latest progress report is attached. It should be noted that an assortment of supplemental enrichment activities have been arranged for this group, so they will return to their university professor roles as well qualified as possible. These candidates are expected to have all degree requirements completed before December 31, 2006.
3. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Training (APT) Group, continues its pattern of meeting twice each year, and convened again on December 14. The agenda which guided our discussions during the meeting is attached. This group's knowledge of the South Central Asia region and their understanding of agricultural development methodology make them a valuable resource to our component.
4. Progress was made in using Islamabad buy-in funds to establish an Office of International Programs and Services at the NWFPAU. That administrative unit is now formally a part of the NWFPAU structure and the Vice-Chancellor has appointed a Director. The Director is Prof. Dr. Anwar Fazal Chishti. He completed the doctorate in Agricultural Economics at UIUC as a TIPAN project participant. Prof. Chishti is a seasoned administrator, having served previously as Director of the NWFPAU Institute of Business and Management Sciences.

Activities Planned for the Following Quarter (January-February-March 2006):

1. Although we entered FY06 without funds to offer any technical short courses, we were given permission to re-program carryover funds from the Islamabad buy-in, making it possible to offer at least two courses this year. We have completed 19 of these technical short courses and will begin to place less emphasis on this training approach, so more attention can be given to degree training. It would be a mistake however, to abruptly terminate these short course offerings.

We have already identified important needs that will be met by these two courses. They will deal with the topics of Animal Husbandry and Extension Methodology. Participants will be selected from provinces in the western region of Afghanistan, because those provinces were under-represented in the total of 361 individuals who have participated in the previous 19 short courses. Most participants in these courses to “Train the Trainers” will be from the Extension Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food (MAAHF). This is consistent with the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding that formally links the MAAHF with UIUC, SIUC and the NWFPAU. These courses will be held at the NWFPAU, to allow participants maximum interaction with professors in the three departments that make up the Faculty of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences, and with scientists in the Research System. Our objective is to train a group of 40 individuals who will perform more effectively in the role of Livestock Production Extension Specialists. These re-programmed Islamabad buy-in funds will be taken from unspent allocations for Institutional Linkages and Research Exchanges. Course dates have not been set, but this quarter will be used for planning, publicizing and recruiting.

2. The series of four “Information Pieces” developed thus far have been useful in explaining our activities, educating cooperators and generating support. During this quarter, number five in that series will be prepared. This piece will be on the topic of research exchanges and contributions our training programs have made to human capacity development at selected research installations.
3. We will continue and intensify our efforts to engage the services of Richard Boyum, the Department of State’s Regional English Language Officer, as we operationalize an English Language Improvement Center at the NWFPAU. Islamabad buy-in funds will be used to purchase instructional materials for that Center. Mohd. Ibrahim Khattak, Director of the Center and Chairman of the English Department, should benefit considerably from the advice and guidance that Mr. Boyum can provide. His plans for a December 2005 visit to Peshawar did not materialize, so we are now in the process of re-scheduling.
4. This quarter will include the annual briefing of USAID’s ANE Bureau and the IALC’s Technical Advisory Committee. These briefings will take place in Washington and are scheduled for February 28 and March 1.