

## IDEA-NEW – Strengthening of Livestock Production in North-Central of Afghanistan

Donor / contractor	USAID / ACDI-VOCA
Budget	US\$ \$2,296,540
Period	April 2010 – November 2013
Area	Balkh, Samangan, Sari Pol, Jawzjan and Faryab provinces

The two-years IDEA-NEW livestock project started 1st of April 2010 on a budget of almost US\$ 2 million. The project was extended several times and continued through November 2013. With the last extension, the budget was increased to US\$ 2,296 million.

IDEA-NEW (Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North) is an initiative of USAID to eliminate the dependence of Afghan farmers on the opium poppy economy by offering profitable alternatives. One of the alternatives is livestock keeping, which has been an important source of food, produce and income for many Afghan families for centuries. Livestock productivity is, however, very low due to disease, lack of winter feed, poor herd management and inefficient harvesting of products as wool and cashmere.

The IDEA-NEW livestock project focused on four objectives:

1. Improved access of all livestock owners to quality animal health care services
2. Greater livestock productivity
3. Strengthening of the links between public and private veterinary sectors
4. Enhanced economic growth thanks to the development of value chains for livestock products like cashmere and karakul.

DCA-VET established 15 new veterinary field units (VFUs) and trained 15 new paravets. For animal health care in more remote areas around 68 basic veterinary workers were trained. 15 were especially selected to support the owners of Karakul sheep.

Through extension campaigns the VFU staff promotes special herd health programmes (the Herd Health Packages). These programmes teach the farmers how to decrease livestock mortality, enhance fertility and health, and increase yields of animal products like meat, milk, eggs, cashmere and karakul. Over the years, 11,400 farmers received regular extension training, and another 100,000 farmers were reached through short extension meetings.

As winter feed is a main problem for Afghan livestock owners, 25 feed banks were established. At the start of the feed bank 8 tons of feed were provided as well as a necessary equipment. During the first six months, the head and cashier were provided with regular support and the farmers received training on feeding as well.

Another objective of the IDEA-NEW programme was to develop the value chains for cashmere as well as karakul. For developing the cashmere value chain some 5,500

improved cashmere combs were distributed, VFU staff was trained in cashmere harvesting and farmers were linked to the main cashmere trader in the region.

For drafting the karakul value chain a consultant was appointed. According to his recommendation VFU staff and the main owners of karakul sheep were trained on animal husbandry of Cashmere sheep and in the Namibian method of drying the Karakul skins. This processing method yields shiny and flat pelts that can be sold at a higher price than the traditionally dried skins.

The impact of the project was considerable. The graph below shows an impact assessment by means of a base-line and end-line survey in September 2012 respectively October 2013.

