

## DCA-VET Farmers' Field Day in Badakhshan

The DCA-VET team travelled 700 kms from Kabul to Faizabad to attend the Farmers' Field Day organized by farmers of Badakhshan themselves in collaboration with our field project of the IFAD funded Rural Microfinance and Livestock Support Program (RMLSP).

The event was attended by over 170 participants (28 women) among whom were government officials, VFU staff, NGO and UN stakeholders, donors and mainly farmers. The event comprised of official speeches and exhibitions. The official speeches were given by representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) in Kabul and the Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) in Badakhshan. Additionally, VFU personnel, DCA staff and farmers have shared their experiences with the audience.

*Fig 1. Opening and briefing of the Farmers' Field Day in a conference hall (men-left and women-right)*



At the opening of the event, Eng. Mohammad Alim Alimi, Director of DAIL, highlighted the importance of livestock in Badakhshan and acknowledged the contribution of DCA-VET to the sector. Eng. Alimi said: "Over 90% of the population in Badakhshan depend on livestock and the province is endowed with a large population of livestock; however, productivity is low due to recurrent drought, prolonged winter and lack of awareness of farmers." Eng. Alimi appreciated the successful privatization of the veterinary services and underlined the role of public sector in the regulatory system.

Progressive farmers displayed different extension materials (posters, fact sheets, leaflets and tip sheets) on the walls and explained the messages to the rest of the participants.

*Fig 2. Progressive farmers display and explain livestock extension posters to the participants of the field day.*



Such field days are believed to motivate progressive farmers to create awareness among their community and to encourage a farmers-to-farmers approach. Also significant benefits are achieved in knowledge management through review of the programs with all stakeholders.

Our program in this province serves more than 106,000 men and women livestock herders through increased access to veterinary services, extension campaigns and development of value chains of livestock products.

Badakhshan is one of the largest provinces in Afghanistan with a vast area of pastureland and an extensive livestock population. It is also known for hosting mobile pastoralists (Kuchis) from as many as six provinces. Hence, livestock related operations in this province bring about significant changes in the livelihood of the community.