

RMLSP Farmers Field Day: learning by seeing

On July 22nd, 2016, DCA, RMLSP, and MAIL organised and conducted a Farmers Field Day in the province of Bamyan (Shebertoo). A Farmers Field Day is a type of meeting whereby farmers, agri-business people and other stakeholders in agriculture discuss and demonstrate topics related to livestock and agricultural practices. A total of 160 participants, 50 % female and 50% male, were invited. His Excellency the Minister of MAIL, the DAIL Director, the Deputy Governor, and several other senior level officials and stakeholders also participated in the field day.



Several speeches were held, and a series of inspiring demonstrations were given. For instance, on urea treatment, and on dairy production using special churning machines and qurut boxes. There was also a fully equipped mobile VFU clinic present. These were of special interest to the nomadic farmers (pastoralists) who were among the participants. Several product examples such as concentrate feed, animal medicine, soap, and handicrafts made by Self Help Groups were available for sale. In addition, some 500 sheep and goats were vaccinated during the field day.

A Farmers Field Day is an excellent opportunity for farmers to learn by seeing the performance of recommended practices adopted by other successful farmers. Participants learn best practices from progressive farmers who have already been trained in this area, and are eager to show these methods to the other farmers of their community. Farmers also discuss the field day informally with their fellow farmers and extension workers. This helps to convince the farmers, including those that cannot read or write, to adopt favourable practices in livestock keeping. The importance of demonstration, especially in largely illiterate communities cannot be overemphasized.

Moreover, beneficiaries of the RMLSP project told the audience that mortality rates of their livestock have decreased, livestock productivity and livestock of-take increased, and that their overall livelihood has improved since the inception of the project. The beneficiaries remarked that the extension program in particular contributed significantly to the marked improvement in their knowledge, attitude, and practices as livestock producers in the targeted villages.



Farmers not only learn new methods during the Farmers Field Day but also other livestock NGOs on how to use these methods, and how to spread them among their beneficiaries as well. Thus, the impact of a Farmers Field Day reaches well beyond the participants being present on the day.