



Catalyzing Transformational Development

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This past winter in Afghanistan was the coldest in many years, but very dry. For different reasons much of the winter wheat did not get planted. The window of opportunity for planting the spring wheat was so short that much of that didn't get planted as well. All this was followed by inadequate spring rains and many fear we are heading for a very hard year. Pakistan has cut off all wheat flour exports to keep their own prices down, causing ours here to double. The price of wheat, oil, and rice, the 3 staples of an Afghan home, are all inflated and there is much fear of what the future holds.

Please remember these people, and also our staff as we seek wisdom on when and how to help. It's not as straight forward as you think it would be, to help people in a place where everyone needs something.

JDA is thankful for all who support our work here in Afghanistan and for contributing to the peaceful and stable future of the Afghan people. We are blessed to be your hands and feet, your voice of encouragement and hope to these people.

Mark Henning
Program Manager—Agriculture
Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan

Strawberries - “berries of the ground” in Dari

This spring JDA/OH* harvested and sold 1,260 pounds of strawberries. This big red juicy fruit was a success in the Mazar-i-Sharif market, as no one else grows strawberries in our northern city. Even though food prices have soared due to inflation, many shopkeepers were still willing to pay top dollar for the strawberries.



With the hot temperatures and a lack of refrigeration options, they needed to be harvested, sold and eaten quickly.

The turnover rate was amazing, showing that the demand well exceeded the supply. JDA and OH look forward to a bigger harvest next year and seeing even more children's eyes light up at the site of these delicious berries!



JDA's US staff are excited to have such a treat in Mazar and have enjoyed introducing these to their Afghan friends. call them *tUte zamin!* which means *berries of the ground* in Dari. Many have never tasted them. There is potential for strawberries to become a new, profitable crop for Afghan farmers.

Afghan Sun-Dried Tomatoes



This year OH will be the first business in Afghanistan to export sun-dried tomatoes. The new development vocational/training center will be the home to a tomato drying facility this summer (*see page 2*).

OH will be joining farmers, village women, newly trained OH staff, and a US buyer, to create a value-added-chain in the tomato sector that will benefit everyone. In July, a few of the OH staff hope to travel to Turkey to tour and learn from an operational sun drying tomato facility.



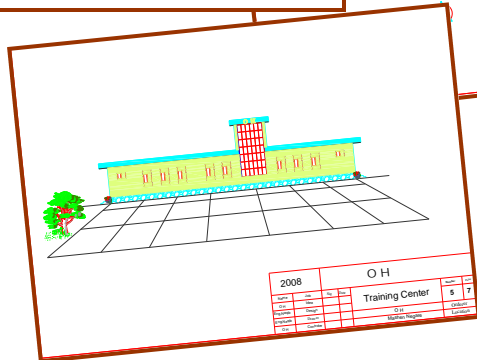
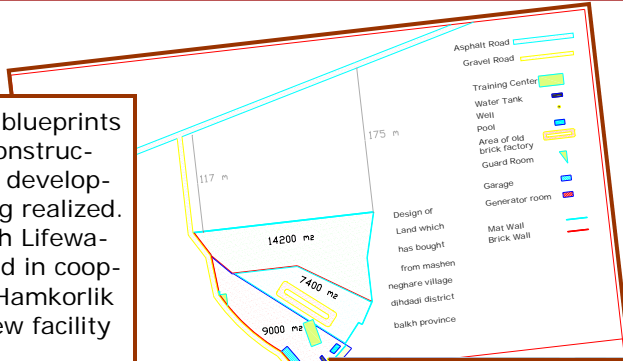
It started last year when JDA tested tomato seed varieties and found one to be particularly conducive to the drying process. In March, OH teamed up with one of JDA's funding partners to provide this tomato seed variety to local farmers. OH has applied for a grant that will fund the purchase of the necessary equipment to clean, dry and package the fresh tomatoes for export. The processing work will be done by local women, a much needed income generation opportunity for them and their families.

*Osio Hamkorlik means Asian Assistance in Dari. You can expect to see OH in most of our newsletters. It is a company registered in Afghanistan that sells farming equipment and does construction. OH is a separate entity from JDA; the two work alongside each other and in cooperation to further the common goal of catalyzing the economic and educational development of Central Asia.

Development Center—Under Construction



From sketches and blueprints to bulldozing and construction, the need for a development center is being realized. JDA, partnering with Lifewater International and in cooperation with Osiyo Hamkorlik will dedicate this new facility in October.



The Development Center

They want to buy a goat? This translation must be wrong . . .

I had been keeping track of our petty cash for the construction of the Development Center. When I was handed a voucher that simply requested money for a *goat*, I immediately assumed that someone had translated a type of construction material or equipment incorrectly. After an animated discussion in both Dari and English that concluded with an actual *drawing of a goat*, I was ready to accept that he was actually wanting to buy a goat. AND that he was a pretty good artist.

A goat for construction. Maybe this was another example of “appropriate technology” I hadn’t yet discovered? I asked what the goat was for after all, I had to charge it to the right line-item! But I didn’t understand the response and was quite honestly, tired out from the conversation. So I just handed over the cash.

Later that day, I asked my supervisor about it. “Hey, I just gave out money for a goat. I hope that’s ok? I couldn’t understand what it was for..... what *IS* it for??” She explained to me that a sacrifice must be made and blood spilled on the foundation of any new building as a blessing. This is a crucial aspect of beginning a construction project.

“But it wasn’t in the budget!” Just like a lot of other cultural things I hadn’t “budgeted” for, this goat taught me to assume nothing, but expect that a surprise is always around the corner in Afghanistan.

— an American, still learning.



Education & Vocational Training

- Safe water, sanitation and hygiene education
- Agricultural systems, methods & techniques, including:
 - Greenhouse construction & mgmt
 - Strawberry production
 - Mechanized plowing, planting, & reaping

Employment & Small Business Development

- Dried tomato processing & packaging
- Oil from seed production
- 2-Wheel Tractor
- Well drilling



Making the sacrifice at the construction site.

Please consider supporting JDA this year. We’d love to hear from you.

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