



New Methods for Farmers in Southern Afghanistan

HELMAND, AFGHANISTAN - Joint Development Associates International, Inc. (JDA) and its partner, Osiyo Hamkorlik Trading, Ltd. (OH), received an invitation to demonstrate and to set up local dealerships for its tractors and farming methods in Helmand province. This came about as a result of JDA and OH taking part in the AgFair '07 in May in Kabul.

At the request of USAID, three staff from OH flew to the Helmand province on June 9th to participate in an Alternative Livelihoods Program (ALP). As the plane took off from Kabul to Lashkar Gah, the pilot explained that the place they were headed into was considered a war zone.

The landing was made with a very rapid descent to a highly secured airport under the control of United States PRT soldiers (Provincial Reconstruction Team). The staff were met by armed guards and transported in Land Cruisers to the ALP office, two and half miles away.

At the ALP office they were greeted by the manager of the Department of Agriculture and by an American staff member. They enjoyed lunch together and then made plans for the workshops scheduled for the following three days.

Once again our staff were escorted by armed guards and taken to the ALP guest house. They had never experienced such a dangerous situation and our staff admitted that these working conditions created quite a bit of fear and anxiety for them.

The workshop began at 9:30 the following morning. There were many participants from the Afghanistan Department of Agriculture, the School of Agriculture, as well as a number of local farmers and mechanics, and businessmen.

They viewed a DVD which showed the tractor at work tilling, sowing and reaping in actual use in northern Afghanistan. It showed fields at each stage of planting and the final results. The staff then gave an explanation of the tractors, including accessories, maintenance, and its functions in agriculture. Until noon the participants were involved with the actual assembling of a tractor and its accessories. They experienced driving the tractor with a reaper attached.

Because of the heat, the workshop took a break from noon to three. In the afternoon, the tractor was assembled again and participants were trained on pulling a trailer behind the tractor. The day concluded with opportunities for questions and answers.

One of the staff met with local traders to discuss marketing the tractors to local farmers?

The second day of the workshop took place on the ALP research farm which had to be secured first, by American soldiers. The tractor, towing its implements was driven three miles through the city to the farm, which demonstrated its ability to transport produce to markets.

On this day, there were a number of farmers were very interested in the reaper capabilities. The staff demonstrated this and the use of the seeder and seeder calibration. Because of the extreme dryness of the land, however, the tiller could not be demonstrated, as well as it could have, had there been moisture in the ground.

Overall the workshop was a success and those who participated agreed that the two wheeled tractor being imported and marketed by OH was a viable and welcome innovation for the development of agriculture in Afghanistan. In hopes of purchasing these tractors, farmers are preparing their land for its use.

The ALP office distributed certificates for the completion of the workshop to the more than twenty farmers and mechanics who participated. The OH staff were particularly impressed with one farmer who traveled from a very distant village in order to learn about new farming methods and the tractor. He was hard working and actively participated in the assembling part of the demonstrations.

The OH staff flew out under armed guard, arriving safely in Kabul.

Since March 2005, the Afghanistan Alternative Livelihoods Program (ALP) has been implementing a conceptual approach designed to strengthen the Afghan Government's capacity to address illicit cultivation activities and to promote economic opportunities. The main objectives of the program are the acceleration of licit economic growth and business activity, and the creation of cash-for-work employment opportunities.

Osiyo Hamkorlik Trading, Ltd. is a for-profit business started in November, 2006, by Joint Development Associates, Inc., to import small appropriate equipment. This equipment is then demonstrated and sold to small farmers to decrease their labor input on their farms which will increase their economic livelihood. Small appropriate equipment is vital for farmers with small plots of land to help create alternative livelihoods. Because JDA is a not-for-profit organization, Osiyo Hamkorlik works in parallel with JDA to help raise the capacity of Afghan farmers and any profits from OH are then used to expand the development work of JDA.



June is wheat harvest time! A good way to demonstrate how quickly the two-wheel tractor can cut wheat and save money for a farmer!

Demonstrating that easy labor savings potential for cutting wheat. Farmers were impressed!



It only takes a few minutes to cut this one hectare of wheat with this tractor, traditional methods are done by hiring several people cutting with a sickle.

A 15 hp engine, replaces two sturdy oxen, which cost \$2,000 each and \$500 each in feed yearly.

Driving the tractor to the fields. A new vehicle to transport people and product to and from the market!



Assembled tractor with reaper attachment.



Assembling the tractor and teaching maintenance.