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# FACT SHEET

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## AVIPA Plus Orchard Management - Kandahar

To improve the livelihoods of Kandahari orchard growers, the USAID-funded Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture (AVIPA) Plus has initiated a large scale Orchard Management Project in cooperation with local farming communities, *shuras* (councils), and governmental representatives in the province. Arghandab, the heart of the fruit-producing region in Kandahar, is the focus of the program, although AVIPA Plus expanded the program to other Kandahari districts as well.

### ORCHARD PRUNING AND CLEANING

- Designed in response to neglected orchard maintenance, sub-optimal fruit tree production, and lack of know-how in the farming community.
- 6,600 hectares of orchards in Arghandab and near the city of Kandahar cleaned and pruned from January to March 2010.
- 12,000 local farmers and workers trained and employed, receiving over \$2.5 million in wages.
- \$650,000 worth of hand tools for pruning and cleaning granted to workers at the end of the project.
- Impact:
  - Cleaning and pruning of orchards results in an estimated 30% increase in productivity, improved quality of yield, better health, and increased longevity of the plant.
  - Properly managed orchards can give 15 tons of produce per hectare in a conservative estimate, worth from between \$1,620 to \$3,600 per hectare, price depending on year and season.
  - Quick employment of local villagers selected by village *shuras* injects cash funds into the struggling agricultural economy.
  - Orchard management know-how and tools remain in the hands of the farmers.

### ORCHARD REHABILITATION: SAPLING PROJECT

- Designed as a natural continuation of the Orchard Pruning project, the Sapling Project replaces old trees and increases tree density by planting the next generation of high-value fruit trees.
- Saplings were provided by local nurseries approved by the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), in support of local agribusiness development and in accordance with the U.S. Government *Afghan First* strategy.
- Over 600,000 fruit trees (pomegranate, plum, and apricot) and 200,000 grape vines planted over the course of three weeks in the same 6,600 hectares of previously cleaned and pruned orchards.
- 5,900 local farmers and workers trained and employed, receiving about \$1 million in wages and equipment worth \$685,000.
- Impact: the two-year-old pomegranate saplings will start yielding fruit in two years, generating income of roughly \$10,000 to \$20,000 per hectare.

### INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

- Designed in response to the current aphid infestation of Kandahar's orchards, at the request of the farming community.
- The aphid infestation could have destroyed one-third of existing orchards.
- Most orchards cleaned and pruned under AVIPA's previous program were not affected by the infestation.
- In consultation with MAIL and the Agricultural Department of Kandahar University, a simple eco-friendly solution of soap and water was prepared and tested.
- To date, 7,350 workers trained and employed, generating \$1.3 million in income.
- Equipment, protective gear, and supplies worth \$260,000 provided.
- To date, 8,500 hectares have been sprayed against the aphid infestation in Arghandab, Zhari, Panjwayi, and Kandahar City districts, and the program will expand to Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province.