

**IALC-USAID Sustainable Development of Drylands
Trip Report – Visit to Pakistan and Afghanistan
Oval Myers, Jr.
October 8-25, 2003**

Purpose of Trip:

The purpose of the trip was: (1) to reestablish professional and personal linkages with the leadership of the Northwest Frontier Province Agricultural University (NWFP AU), (2) to meet with representatives of the USAID Missions to Pakistan and Afghanistan to discuss and obtain support for the four-year extension of the IALC/USAID Cooperative Agreement, and (3) to initiate a training needs assessment, which allows for long range planning.

Summary of Findings:

The timing of this trip was nearly perfect. Our previous plans for February would have been too soon and a month later, after Ramadan, would likely have been less productive. This trip was useful and productive in many ways. It provided an in depth opportunity for John Santas, Abdul Qayyum Khan, Bob Freitas, and Oval Myers to function as a team in explaining and promoting this project. This trip provided an opportunity to thank the NWFP AU system for their past support and to encourage their continued role in the Afghan training process. This trip provided a necessary opportunity to explain more fully the goals, objectives, and training methodology of the project to both the Afghanistan and Pakistan USAID Missions. This trip provided an opportunity for interaction with selected major clients such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, NGOs, Kabul University, and the RAMP project.

The necessity of having a full-time Field Office Director in Pakistan became more and more evident as we progressed through the trip. Dr. Qayyum and his part-time assistant Afzal provide an excellent team because they are well known and well liked by our NWFP AU colleagues. Dr. Qayyum has also been able to function very well in Afghanistan. The part-time assistance of Sharif Abbasi from the RAMP project will help greatly in identifying and processing Afghan nominees for training.

Our findings relative to the training needs of our clientele were consistent with our project plan to provide a combination of short, medium, and degree training. The needs identified by the ADB Comprehensive Needs Assessment report, together with those we heard in our interviews, exceed our capability to deliver. We will try to get more specific training needs information from a survey questionnaire that will be distributed in the coming weeks. We will have to be careful that we match the training needs to the capability of our partner institution, the NWFP AU. Based on our interviews, a list of short courses for the coming year has been developed. The “twinning” and degree programs will require more information before we can begin.

Our training approach appears to be unique. Once fully explained, the logic of regional training of short, medium, and long-term degree duration is accepted as sound and leading toward sustainability. Additional buy-in support from both the Afghanistan and Pakistan USAID Missions to make this a more productive project appears likely. If the anticipated buy-ins occur, then more Home Office support will be needed to assist Dr. Qayyum and the NWFP AU system in planning, conducting, and monitoring the diverse training activities.

Land and Air Travel:

Outbound: Carbondale (BART van) – St. Louis – Chicago (AA) – London (AA) – Dubai (BA) – Islamabad (Emirates) – Kabul (PIA)

Within Pakistan: Rental SUV

Within Afghanistan: Rental van

Inbound: Kabul – Islamabad (PIA) – Dubai (Emirates) – London (Emirates) – Chicago (AA) – St. Louis (AA) – Carbondale (BART van)

Notes: All flights were on time, security was good, and service ranged from satisfactory to good (Emirates). The advice to arrive about two hours in advance for international flights is sound. Road conditions were good in Pakistan and adequate within Kabul, Afghanistan. Kabul streets were generally busy with multiple forms of transport. Street conditions ranged from good to poor depending on the location. The overnight in London was useful in allowing us to readjust our biological clocks. A similar overnight in Dubai should be considered if one arrives on a workday in Pakistan.

Summary of Activities:

Wednesday, October 8, departed Illinois

Thursday, October 9, in transit

Dr. Santas and I met in Chicago shortly before boarding for London. During a portion of that flight, subsequent flights, and layovers we discussed our visit to Pakistan and Afghanistan and how we should proceed in explaining the project and the need for “buy-in” to the respective Missions. We also discussed the NWFP AU and how its support was critical to proposed project activities. We decided to have John’s trip report focus more heavily on contacts made and on an overview of discussions and meetings. While I would not exclude contacts and meetings, my trip report would focus more on the training needs assessment.

Day One, Friday, October 10, 2003.

Our Project Field Director Dr. Abdul Qayyum Khan, former USAID Project Officer, and Mr. Afzal Sher, former driver for the Transformation and Integration of the Provincial Agricultural Network (TIPAN) project, met us at the Islamabad airport. The Islamabad

airport has changed little in the past decade and we exited through a crowd, perhaps 10 deep, of people there to meet their friends and relatives. When we arrived at the Islamabad Marriott, I was pleasantly surprised to be greeted by the same Bellhop Captain that was there 9 years ago and even more surprised when he addressed me by name.

Our room was excellent with a computer and Internet access. This allowed for good communication back home and for preparing documents as needed while we were in Islamabad. We had a continental breakfast and rested until lunchtime. Dr. Qayyum joined us for lunch at the Dynasty (Chinese restaurant) in the hotel. Following lunch, John, Qayyum and I met for about three hours with the principal topic being an update and critique of the three training courses held at the AU during August and September.

Day Two, Saturday, October 11

Following breakfast, Qayyum joined John and I for about a four-hour discussion on the operation of the field office, additional discussion of the training courses and the Afghan participants, and a general update on the NWFP AU system, which John and I had not seen for nine years. We had lunch at the Thai restaurant in the hotel.

In the afternoon and evening John and I worked separately. I spent several hours developing a 'Training Needs Analysis for Improving Afghanistan Agriculture' one-pager, which would help us more easily explain the training ideas and opportunities of our project, and also developed a set of 15 'Needs Analysis Questions', which we would use for guiding our interviews with our various contacts. (See attachments.) In addition to the resource material provided by the IALC TAC, a paper by Jeanette Swist obtained from the Internet at <http://adulthood.about.com> was used in developing the questions.

Day Three, Sunday, October 12

John and Qayyum met Bob Freitas for his approximate 5 am arrival at the Islamabad airport. I slept in and met John at 7 am for breakfast. John, Bob, Qayyum and I met from 9 am until 2 pm discussing a range of topics. This was a particularly useful meeting since it was Bob's first personal interaction with Qayyum. Among many items discussed was an agenda for the meeting on Monday with Margaret Harritt of USAID. Lunch in the hotel and then a brief tour of Islamabad since this was Bob's first visit to Pakistan. We visited the Faisal Mosque and the Margala Hills overlook of Islamabad.

Day Four, Monday, October 13

The best-laid plans often go astray and today was our reenactment of that old saying. We had all forgotten that today was Columbus Day and, therefore, US government offices were on holiday. Thus, no meeting would occur with Margaret Harritt. We utilized the extra time for the four of us to discuss more thoroughly our trip tomorrow to Peshawar and the NWFP AU. We also discussed the desirability of a visit to the US and Illinois by the NWFP AU Vice Chancellor Dr. S. Iqbal Shah and Dr. Qayyum. We also discussed the possibility of a visit by the VC and Qayyum to Afghanistan.

Late in the afternoon we drove around Islamabad to see the government buildings and then on to the nearby city of Rawalpindi. Since Islamabad is a planned city, a common saying is that the real Pakistan begins about 5 kms away in Rawalpindi. Dinner that evening was hosted by Dr. Qayyum at the rooftop restaurant at the Holiday Inn.

Day Five, Tuesday, October 14

We departed at 7 am for Peshawar. The “Grand Trunk” road from Islamabad to Peshawar has greatly improved; it is now four lanes all the way. Also speed is well controlled, which makes it a much safer highway. We arrived at the Pearl Continental Hotel in Peshawar about 9:30 am and checked into our rooms. Just as I had been surprised by bellhop recognition in Islamabad so was John by the bellhop at the Pearl who also remembered his name.

Out to the AU about 10:30 am and a quick stop at our project’s Field Office located in the building under the control of the Director of Works. We saw several pictures of the three different workshops. We met with VC Iqbal Shah at 11:00 am and continued our discussions with him for over an hour. The VC was glad to see us, expressed the support of the AU for our project, and was pleased that our project had been extended for four years.

We met with Dr. M. Jamal Khan who was the principal instructor in the “Irrigation Infrastructure Development and Water Management Practices” short course. He also invited two other instructors who helped with portions of the course. Dr. Jamal’s critique of the course, the backgrounds of the Afghan participants, and what might be changed in a second offering was helpful in allowing us to plan for the future. A brief walking tour of some of the buildings, including the library and a computer lab, before going to lunch.

Dr. Qayyum had arranged lunch with the VC and eight of his key Deans, Directors, and Professors at the Shiraz restaurant. This provided an excellent opportunity for interaction not only on the project but also on many other issues. After a brief return to the hotel, we returned to the AU campus for further visits, including a discussion with the principal instructor of the “Enterprise Development and Management Skills” short course. Several professors whom we were not able to see earlier in the day were around and we had the chance to visit. Some students, both male and female, were relaxing in the courtyard after classes. We also took a brief tour of the research farms and took several pictures.

We drove by where I had lived for 33 months from 1991-94 in Peshawar. Our house is now a guesthouse. This was a rewarding day for me for several reasons. Firstly, the chance to see and visit with old colleagues and friends; secondly, seeing how well the AU buildings and infrastructure have been maintained and even enhanced; and thirdly, how supportive the AU system are towards this opportunity of sharing their knowledge and skills with their Afghan neighbors.

Day Six, Wednesday, October 15

After breakfast our day began with a brief visit at the Pearl Continental from Dr. Nawab Ali, horticulture professor, who had been the principal instructor in the “ Post-harvest Management and Marketing Skills “ short course. Due to a communications mix-up on the previous evening Dr. Nawab and VC Iqbal Shah had gone to one Chinese restaurant and we had gone to another. An opportunity for interaction had been lost but a friendship had not. Dr. Nawab spent much of last year at the UIUC on a Fulbright and he and I had shared an adult Continuing Education program on Pakistan at Parkland College in Champaign. Nawab shared a copy of a June 2002 draft report prepared by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) entitled “Afghanistan Natural Resources and Agricultural Sector Comprehensive Needs Assessment”.

Our morning visit to Tarnab Research Institute was an unqualified success. We were hosted by the AU Director of Research and by the Director General, Tarnab. Also present was the AU Director of Outreach Dr. Zar Quresh, a former TIPAN trainee. They had invited some dozen researchers to meet with us and share in the discussions. Basically, they were very supportive of their role in the Afghan training process and, particularly interested in the researcher-to-researcher “twinning” program. We had time for a brief tour of some facilities including an olive nursery where they are grafting onto Afghan rootstocks and the seed production facility, which was new since TIPAN and which provided much of the wheat seed for the use of Afghanistan last year. It was interesting that Dr. Quresh was at an experiment station in Afghanistan on 9/11/2001 when the World Trade Center attacks occurred. The research system still feels that they got the smaller piece of the pie during TIPAN and their continued statement of that may have cost them some external support we learned in later discussions.

Our return to Islamabad started well but a fuel filter problem caused us to stop along the side of the road. Afzal was quick to catch a ride to the next town and arrange for a small Suzuki van to get us to Islamabad on time for our meeting with Asif M. Farrukh of USDA/FAS and with Margaret Harritt. The unexpected often happens in development work and the ability to be flexible and optimistic is a virtue.

Our meeting with Dr. Margaret M. Harritt and her assistant Mr. Saad A. Paracha, a NWFP AU graduate, was cordial and fruitful. Our explanation of our project’s objectives and strategy cleared up some uncertainty in their understanding of the project. Margaret asked us to prepare a two-page brief for Mission Director Mark Ward for exit discussion before we leave for home next week. She asked us to give her regards to Ray Baum of Chemonics with whom she used to work. She also asked us to think outside the box in considering out the AU could be strengthened to accomplish the Afghan training. John and I also met with Asif Farrukh, USDA/FAS, concerning research initiatives at the AU and a “Young Scientists” training program. This discussion will require revisiting after we return to Illinois.

We had dinner at the Dynasty restaurant in the hotel to complete a very informative and full day.

Day Seven, Thursday, October 16

Departed for the airport around 10:30 am for our 12:45 p.m. flight to Kabul. It was a good flight and we had no more difficulty getting through customs and getting our bags than in Islamabad. The view from the airplane as we neared Kabul confirmed that this is an arid place. I also got an impression of the large size of Kabul, which we learned later may have up to 2.5 million inhabitants.

A guide and driver arranged by Dr. Nasrat Wassimi, ICARDA, met us at the airport. The nearly new van provided comfortable and reliable transportation for our stay in Kabul. We tried to meet with Karri Goeldner, USAID, at her office at OIM (Office of International Migration). She had gone to the US Embassy so we went there but were unable to gain access. The US Embassies in both Pakistan and Afghanistan are highly secured. Probably necessary but they stand in stark contrast to the other parts of Islamabad and Kabul.

We returned to wait at OIM for Karri and were rewarded with discussions with Barbara Rodey, Gender Advisor USAID, and Dr. Peggy Poley, Education Advisor USAID. These discussions clarified the 25-year gap in education due to the Russian and intertribal wars and the Taliban rule. Women are especially behind and education is lacking at all levels. Emphasis on primary education is paramount but both individuals recognized that some more advanced training was needed to provide a measure of sustainability. We also met Francine Pierce, a freelance NGO type, who is working with women in the southern regions of Afghanistan.

Karri Goeldner appeared about 4:30 p.m. and met with us for some time. She was obviously very aware of our project, as she had served a selection and clearance role for participants in our first three short courses. We explained the various types of training we could carry out with the help of the NWFP AU including degree training. Her initial reactions were favorable to short courses with reservations for longer training activities. She stressed the need for conducting training courses in Afghanistan. We agreed to meet for dinner and further discussion on Saturday evening.

We went to ASSA 2 guesthouse, which would be our home for the week. It is a comfortable guesthouse that is UN approved. Rooms are large with good beds and a desk. Bathrooms are shared but sufficient and the water was hot. There are even four computers for rental use in the basement. (They were added about two months ago.)

This has been a full and interesting day. Kabul is much like I expected but, perhaps, more organized and functional than anticipated.

Day Eight, Friday, October 17

Even though this was a Holy Day, we were able to meet with Dr. Nasrat Wassimi, ICARDA, at 9 am in their Kabul offices. Dr. Wassimi maintains a home in the Tucson area and had visited with Bob about Afghanistan previously. Dr. Wassimi, an Afghan by

birth, was the leader of the Future Harvest Consortium, which effectively provided for inputs of seed and fertilizer during the first season after the Coalition War against the Taliban. This together with his long association with ICARDA makes him one of the leading authorities on Afghanistan's agriculture. We listened, asked numerous questions, and described our project in some detail. Like Karri yesterday, he felt that as much training as possible should be in Afghanistan, partly for logistical reasons of the participants. We were asked to join he and his colleagues for their lunch. Colleagues included expats Tony Van Gastel, Elizabeth Bailey and Bob Blake. This diverse group, representing not only different countries but also different disciplines, was preparing projects for funding consideration by RAMP (Rebuilding Agricultural Markets in Afghanistan Program). They and others were working on 17 proposals to be submitted. (More on RAMP later.)

We became tourists for about two hours with a first stop at the Intercontinental Hotel to see an exhibition and sale of jewelry and crafts made by Afghan women under the auspices of DACCAR, which was originally started in Pakistan during the major refugee years. We next drove through a section of Kabul leading to the hill top tomb of an early Shah. The tomb had been severely damaged during the tribal wars. We had an excellent view of Kabul from the hill. We also saw a couple of pickup cricket games going on in a rather large park and several families out for an afternoon of relaxation.

After our return to the guesthouse, we set outside and had a cup of tea. Our team discussions in Islamabad began to really bear fruit beginning today. We had shared in explaining the objectives and training opportunities of our project. We had listened carefully to the people with whom we met and had discussions. We discussed what we had seen and heard that day and on previous day's and how it fit with our goals and capability to deliver training.

I obtained the draft copy of the ADB Needs Assessment report and spent two plus hours reading all sections immediately pertinent to our project. Although the major focus was not on training, each section had a training needs component. It soon became evident that the ADB report identified training needs, which were compatible with our proposed training opportunities including degree training.

Day Nine, Saturday, October 18

German senior and graduate level students were implementing a German project on Information Technology at Kabul University. We met them at the guesthouse and were fascinated by their work and they agreed to show us around the new facility. It is a 32-station computer teaching facility with two additional smaller rooms with about 6-8 stations each for women and for research use.

We met with Dean Mohsini, Faculty of Agriculture, Kabul University, for an hour. Also present was Professor Alini, a soil scientist and AUB graduate, recently returned from refugee status. The Faculty currently has 544 students with some 40 Professors and instructors. Over half of the 40 have only a BS degree. Classrooms are poorly equipped

and textbooks are limited and, if available, over 25 years old and out-of-date. Laboratories are lacking even the simplest of equipment. Purdue University has had a minor influence due to a small linkage grant and has supplied 10 computer stations. Dean Mohsini stressed that they had benefited from good USAID and US university support in the past through projects led by Wyoming and Nebraska and that he hoped something of that type could occur again. He noted that his instructors were capable but lacked the training needed to teach modern agricultural theory and practice. They also needed English training as formerly most classes were in English but now most were in the local language. He tried to arrange a meeting with President Popal but the President had been called to a Ministry meeting.

Our next meeting was with Sharif Abassi, our training contact with RAMP. He had arranged a meeting with the First Deputy Minister of Agriculture, M. Sharif. Mr. Sharif visited quite openly with us. He pointed out that he had great staffing needs and that most of his staff was poorly trained. Horticulture and floriculture were two areas, which were particularly weak. We discussed the training opportunities of our project and he was quite interested in the short term “twinning” of research scientists and research stations. He introduced us to Mr. Qadir, Director of Research, and we made plans to tour two of the nearby research stations on Monday.

Lunch at the Intercontinental Hotel and then we returned to the guest house to prepare the two page brief requested by Margaret Harritt because we now felt that it would be useful also to Karri Goeldner and the people at RAMP. It was fairly easy to write four plus pages but took some real editing to reduce to just over two. (See attachment) A good exercise though because it allowed us to incorporate project accomplishments as well as to lay out plans for the next four years.

Our dinner meeting with Karri Goeldner was in a recently opened restaurant specializing in Thai and Chinese dishes. Seating was on cushions around a low table, very appropriate for a senior citizen like myself. The dinner was excellent and the conversation stimulating. We talked about other areas of Afghanistan and how reconstruction and rehabilitation were going outside of Kabul. Apparently Herat in the South is progressing faster than Mazur-ur-Sharif in the North, which is more like Kabul. At an appropriate moment, we told Karri of our visits to date, reiterated our thoughts on the necessity of a balanced training program, and gave her our “hot off the printer” two page brief. We agreed to have an exit meeting at 9:30 am Wednesday before we departed Kabul on Thursday.

Day 10, Sunday, October 19

We took Bob Freitas to the airport so he could go on to Jordan and work on the IALC component project there. The remaining three of us, John, Qayyum, and I went to the RAMP offices for our scheduled morning meeting. As we entered the building area, John and I stared in disbelief at seeing John Woods standing before us. John was on TDY for Chemonics. John was a long-time Professor at UIUC and he and I prepared and delivered a re-entry course for our TIPAN trainees some years ago.

Our meeting with RAMP being implemented by Chemonics, included Larry Morgan, Chief of Party, Ray Baum, Deputy Chief of Party, Sharif Abassi, Training Coordinator, John Woods and our three-person team. Larry explained the salient features of the USAID funded RAMP. It is programmed for \$150 million with major portions going for roads, irrigation improvements, and a significant portion for agricultural and agribusiness projects. Almost the entire development community is submitting projects from ICARDA to NGOs. Their role is to evaluate and select the projects, issue sub-contracts, and then be involved in the monitoring process. What a task!

They had read and critiqued our project at the request of USAID. Our proposal would fit in their unsolicited project category. If funded for the buy-in component, then it would probably be in the form of a sub-contract to IALC through RAMP. RAMP is a three-year project and they were obviously concerned about short-term success. Thus, our project, which includes short, medium, and long-term training, was a little suspect given their shorter-term view. We explained our project rationale and how it provided some measure of sustainability. They shared a brief of their Market Development Strategy and a print copy of a PowerPoint presentation.

We again tried to see the President of Kabul University but he was again in Ministry meetings. We had lunch at the Intercontinental Hotel. When we returned to the guesthouse a participant in the Horticulture short course had heard Dr. Qayyum was in town and came to visit. We visited outside over a cup of tea and received a first hand account of the value of the training to this participant. He has already transferred some of the information to colleagues in mini training opportunities. When we discussed whether such a course could be held now in Kabul, he felt that at the moment the business infrastructure was not available and less would be learned. It was good to see the affection and respect this individual had for Dr. Qayyum who nurtured all of the participants throughout the training period.

Day 11, Monday, October 20

We met with Keith Polo, Mercy Corps at 9 am. Mercy Corps is a major NGO in the agricultural rebuilding process in Afghanistan. Keith is a fairly recent UIUC MS graduate who has a long history of international involvement. Although their offices are in Kabul, much of their work is in the south of Afghanistan in the Herat and Helmond regions. Six individuals from Mercy Corps were in our short courses. They had all submitted written reports to Keith and stated that they had learned a lot that they could immediately use in their present position. Keith said there was a great need for women's training. He also talked about the former vocational agriculture schools, which used to provide much of the trained workforce and wondered if some sort of cooperative effort with the Illinois consortium universities might be possible. In response to our question of their providing some support for their trainees, particularly travel costs, his reply was why not? When asked the number of possible trainees for future courses he felt they could nominate 10-15 per year. We departed with an invitation for dinner at 7 p.m.

Our next visit was with German Agro Action (GAA). We met with DR. M. Aziz Osmanzai, Deputy Program Manager. He had assembled many of his staff including three of the four participants in our short courses. The response of the participants to our courses was very favorable. In fact, the participant who visited us yesterday at the guesthouse was present. They explained their program, which was quite extensive with demonstrations and training at the village level. Their work could see some benefit from the “twinning” training concept on specialized programs like wheat seed production, mushroom culture, and beekeeping. They also identified business skill training needs. One concern was the length of the short courses since their staff still had jobs to do. They responded favorably to paying travel costs of their participants. They would likely nominate 4-7 individuals each year for training. Long-term training was discussed favorably with the major constraint being loss of the individual for local employment and the need for family support while in training. It is interesting to note that about 1/3 of the 43 participants in our three short courses stated they would like to have degree training opportunities. This was an interesting meeting in that we started out pretty formally and by the time we neared the end were discussing things like friends as well as colleagues.

The fourth attempt to see Dr. M. Akbar Popal, President of Kabul University, was successful. We visited for about an hour. A plant pathology graduate of the University of Nebraska, he had his red “Cornhusker “ cap on his desk. We visited for a few minutes about plant pathology and plant breeding and then explained why we were here. He immediately offered his facilities for training with apologies for their limited resources. He was interested in having reciprocal visits with the VC of the NWFP AU. Many foreign institutions including Purdue, Tokyo University and others have signed MOUs but he has nothing with a regional university. Thus, a MOU with the consortium of the NWFP AU and UIUC/SIUC was of interest. Many of his young faculty could benefit from degree training and, perhaps, some NWFP AU professors might do some teaching at KU. This gave us more ideas to think about.

We met with Mr. Qadir, Director of Research, for a tour of two nearby research stations. The first was where the Future Harvest Consortium had erected warehouses for storing seed and fertilizer last year. Also some greenhouses were operable including ones built by a French project. The station was functioning, a MF tractor was preparing land and a nearly ready to harvest maize trial was present. Horticultural crops are a principal focus. The second research station was some 10 km away and located on another side of the city. Grapes were a major emphasis here and again a MF tractor was working on plots. From this station we could see the six-story, approximate 1000 room, former headquarters of the Taliban that had been destroyed by Coalition bombing. The stations were in surprisingly good shape and some work was being done. Mr. Qadir had had the opportunity to visit the US fairly recently and recounted a visit with Nobel laureate Norman Borlaug at Texas A & M.

The evening dinner with Keith Polo was a treat. He took us to a Chinese restaurant. Keith and I celebrated our good fortune with Heineken beer while John and Qayyum toasted us with Pepsi. This was a perfect ending to a very full and successful day.

Day 12, Tuesday, October 21

We met this morning with another large NGO the International Rescue Committee (IRC). They had sent seven people to our short courses. Two participants were among the 11 people assembled to meet with us. Ms. Analia Ramos, Agriculture Coordinator, led the meeting. Ms. Kara Pierson, Capacity Development Manager, Mr. Amanullah Hotak, Program Coordinator for the Central and Southeastern Regions, and Mr. M. Farid Atmar, Logistics Manager, were other principals at the meeting although everyone was given an opportunity to make comments. After sharing their goals and objectives, they provided us with considerable insight as to their training needs. These include Administration and Office Management Skills, Logistics and Operations Management, Organizing Agricultural Cooperatives, Fruit Preservation Techniques, Orchard Management, and Training of Trainers and Extension Methodology. They were willing to support travel costs of their participants. They were concerned about the timing of courses, which often are competing with work times in Afghanistan. They urged that some courses be given in Afghanistan. We asked one participant to name the people he had interacted with at the AU during his training and he was able to name 12. Our point in asking this question was to demonstrate the networking advantage of training at the AU. Courses taught in Kabul would probably have no more than two instructors. They would probably nominate 5-7 people per year for training. They shared a "Labor Market Information Survey" they had conducted concerning the agribusiness industry and the training needed at the farm or local enterprise level. A very informative report but it is directed at a level of training we are not equipped to address. We are best able to address the trainers who would then develop lower level training programs. After this our third meeting with NGOs, we feel more comfortable in planning to address their training needs.

Our next stop was a return visit to RAMP and a discussion with Sharif Abbasi on his specific comments about our project. It became apparent that most of the original concerns about such issues as conducting training in Afghanistan, the need for individual "twinning" training, and degree training had been answered during our previous visit. Sharif showed us a form he had developed to obtain information from Ministry employees that would allow decisions about possible training experiences. Ray Baum came in as we were near the completion of our discussions and we answered a few of his questions on delivery and timing. He had obviously talked with Karri Goeldner since our last visit, because he soon said he would like us to prepare a typical one page justification, which he would consider, modify and pass along the decision making chain. He emphasized that USAID funding discussions and decisions will likely occur in early December. We restated our pleasure with the working relationship between Sharif and Qayyum that would assist in the training coordination.

We had lunch at the Intercontinental Hotel and then a little relaxed shopping in the late afternoon. In the evening we prepared an extensive suggested list of Organized Short Courses and Workshops to give to Karri tomorrow. (See attachment)

Day 13, Wednesday, October 22

We arrived at OIM for our exit meeting with Karri Goeldner at 9:30 am. John updated Karri on our visits to three NGOs, RAMP, Kabul University, and to two experiment stations since our last meeting. We gave her our new list of short courses and workshops. (See attachment.) She asked a few questions about the Business Enterprise course and observed that some resources might be available in Kabul for helping with the training. Basically she now seemed comfortable with our proposed programs and indicated that she was inclined to recommend the entire first year buy-in to Terry Hardt. She asked if it would be possible to hold more short courses and we said we could go to 10 if additional funds were made available. She stated that our visit came at the perfect time because decisions needed to be made soon and some parts of our proposed activities were now better understood. Ray Baum of Chemonics made a similar statement yesterday.

Lunch at the Marco Polo restaurant was followed a visit to some markets to complete our shopping agenda. We met Dr. Atifa Rawan, University of Arizona, at the guesthouse. She had just arrived in Afghanistan to work on library upgrade projects.

With the likelihood that at least the first year buy-ins would come from the Afghanistan Mission, we turned our attention to buy-in needs from the Pakistan Mission that would support the development of the NWFP AU in their role as the principal training provider. We developed a seven-item list of support activities to present to Mark Ward, USAID Pakistan Mission Director, and Margaret Harritt. (See attachment.)

Day 14, Thursday, October 23

We finished preparing our materials for presentation to Mark Ward and completed our packing for the return trip to Islamabad. Qayyum called Margaret Harritt and she informed him that Mark and her would meet us at the Marriott Hotel at 6 p.m. Our flight to Islamabad was on schedule and we arrived at the Marriott shortly after 5 p.m.

We presented Mark and Margaret with our two-page project brief. We also gave them an oral synopsis of our week in Kabul. Following a few questions about some of our findings and interactions in Kabul, we presented Mark and Margaret with our activity list that would provide needed support and institutional growth opportunities to the NWFP AU. Mark liked most of the ideas but wondered how they compared with those that the VC might have on his list. We said we knew most would be on his list based on our discussions but surely our list was incomplete. He suggested that Dr. Qayyum visit the VC and that they develop a composite list. He further suggested that Margaret visit the NWFP AU and the VC with Qayyum in the coming week.

The Islamabad Mission is interested in high visibility projects that nurture Pakistan and Afghanistan relations. They are also supportive in helping the NWFP AU, which they and we have invested a decade of support, to assume its role as a regional center of excellence. Further effort will be needed by all parties to make this very worthwhile goal a reality.

Friday, October 24

Travel from Islamabad to London via Dubai with an overnight in London for rest and resetting the biological clock.

Saturday, October 25

Travel from London to Carbondale via Chicago and St. Louis.

John and I discussed various project-related ideas on the trip home. Obviously some of the parameters of the project could be enhanced if the USAID Mission buy-ins occur. We decided that forming an Afghanistan/Pakistan Training Working Group (APT) composed of former TIPAN project technical assistance team members could be useful in our planning and evaluation process.