

IALC-USAID Sustainable Development of Drylands
Trip Report – Visit to Japan, Afghanistan and Pakistan
Written by John W. Santas
Approved by Oval Myers, Jr. and Abdul Qayyum Khan
October 28 – November 17, 2005

Purpose of Trip:

Plan year four (FY/CY2006) of the Afghanistan-Pakistan component “Human Capacity Development for the Agriculture Sector in Afghanistan”. This was our third trip, in what has become an annual visit timed for October/November. These visits tend to concentrate on: A) Maintaining connections with organizations and institutions in the field, as personnel and programs continue to change, and B) Generating financial support in the form of supplemental funding and/or mission buy-ins, to cover the cost of technical short courses, research exchanges, advanced degree study and various other training activities. Core funds available through the ANE-IALC Cooperative Agreement are sufficient only to cover our time, travel and expenses.

Executive Summary:

Principal accomplishments, explained in detail under the daily log of activities, were:

1. Took the initial steps toward collaboration with Japanese universities and funding agencies during the three day seminar “Approach to Collaboration between Universities in Japan and the United States in International Agricultural Cooperation” held in Nagoya. We share a mutual interest in upgrading Kabul University and the improvement of higher education in agriculture in Afghanistan in general.
2. The Dean of Agriculture at Kabul University expressed appreciation for assistance provided through the NWFPAU, such as: visiting professors, library materials and staff training through M.Sc. programs and technical short courses. At Dean Mohsini’s request, a Memorandum of Understanding will be prepared to formally link his university with the NWFPAU, UIUC and SIUC. The President of Kabul University gave his verbal approval to this agreement when we met later in our visit, so we will proceed.
3. We continued strengthening and deepening the ALO-funded affiliation that our three universities have with the Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) in Mazar-e-Sharif. During this visit, BUFA staff were guided through a strategic planning exercise. This resulted in a document that describes where they envision themselves being 4 to 5 years in the future, and the specific types of assistance that is needed to reach these medium-term goals. This is a very useful document that contains most of the information needed to prepare a proposal or project paper for presentation to potential donor agencies.

4. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food (MAAHF); formally linking that Ministry with the NWFP AU, UIUC and SIUC. That agreement was also signed by the NWFP AU during this trip. We continued our active relationship with the Research Section of this Ministry by committing additional attention and resources to the two-way exchange of scientists that is based on “twinning” relationships between stations/institutes in the NWFP AU system and research stations in Afghanistan. During this visit, contributions were also made to the MAAHF research and demonstration efforts in the area of soybean production and utilization. NEI (Nutrition Education International) plays the lead role in these soybean activities, with technical assistance coming from the UIUC/SIUC/NWFP AU consortium. NEI is also one of our cooperating NGO’s in the BUFA project.
5. An informative discussion was held with Dr. James Sarn, USAID-Kabul’s Social Sector Development Officer and supervisor of the Mission’s Education Office. Our primary reason for meeting with Dr. Sarn was to update him on the BUFA project. We used this opportunity to inquire about the possibility of A) Additional time and resources for the Balkh project, and B) Whether the Education Office has scholarship funds that would allow the 20 already-accepted Afghans to begin M.Sc. study at the NWFP AU. Dr. Sarn told us flatly that USAID-Kabul would likely not invest in either of these possibilities. He informed us that infrastructure investments (roads, bridges, dams, etc.) are high priority for the Kabul mission at this stage. Any investments in higher education will most likely focus on teacher training for the elementary and secondary schools.
6. Our visit to RAMP (Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program) provided some consolation, because we finalized arrangements for funding the ten M.Sc. students (five from Kabul University and five from Nangarhar University) who are now enrolled at the NWFP AU. Through an earlier RAMP funding allocation, this group of ten enrolled for M.Sc. study in August 2004. RAMP funding and a supplemental letter of request to USAID-Kabul have been secured to support this group until their December 2006 degree completion date. Funding in the amount of \$133,538 will be transferred directly to UIUC through a Grant Agreement between RAMP-Kabul and UIUC. Any remaining portion, if needed, will come from USAID-Kabul after the RAMP project has ended.
7. Our meeting with Colonel Nancy Stevens provided a glimmer of hope as we continued our efforts to find support for training programs. She is a U.S. Army person, responsible for Political-Military Integration, with the Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan. The funding source to which she has access, is the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP). Funds from this \$30 million allocation are available to support agricultural development, but are being gobbled up fast for infrastructure projects (roads, power plants, dams, etc.). The Commander (Gen. Eikenberry) is the key person in the decision making process relative to CERP funds. We explained our human capacity development efforts to Col. Stevens and our need for support, especially for short courses and M.Sc.

training. She seemed enthusiastic about carrying our request to the Commander, serving as our advocate, and directing some of the CERP funds toward the needs of rural Afghanistan and the agriculture sector. We continue to provide Col. Stevens with “ammunition” to strengthen her argument, but no results yet.

8. As was the case in 2003 and 2004, our visit to the NWFPAU in Peshawar was a gratifying experience. This university continues to prosper and serve as an institution-building success story. The transition in leadership, from the four-year term of Syed Iqbal Shah to the new Vice Chancellor, Said Khan Khalil, has been smooth. Vice Chancellor Khalil is confident and enthusiastic in his new role.

Anwar Fazal Chishti (UIUC Ag. Econ. Ph.D) has been appointed Director of the Office of International Programs and Services. This unit is being established through assistance from USAID-Islamabad. Our interaction with Prof. Chishti was timely in his new role.

We also met with Prof. Dr. Farhatullah, Director of Advanced Studies and Research. He is responsible for accessing HEC (Higher Education Commission) resources, and using these resources to establish linkages with overseas universities. We drafted a joint UIUC/SIUC proposal describing various potential linkage activities. This proposal is being refined and will be submitted to Dr. Farhatullah for his transmission to HEC.

9. Our stop in Islamabad, as we pursued supplemental funding, was not very productive. Our meeting there was with Sandra Stajka, USAID-Islamabad Economic Growth Advisor, and Howard Anderson, USDA/FAS Agricultural Attaché to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Our 2004 visit with Sandra’s predecessor, Peter Duffy, resulted in a \$484,000 buy-in from USAID-Islamabad. Ms. Stajka informed that additional support from the Pakistan Mission will not be available this year. Dr. Anderson continues to give us advice, and hold out hope, that funds from monetized commodities (channeled through Afghanistan’s Ministry of Agriculture) can be used to support human capacity development, especially within the Extension Division of the Ministry. Accessing these funds will be a slow process and require patience. We are fortunate that Dr. Qayyum is our presence on the ground, to monitor these slowly unfolding events.
10. We determined that there is absolutely no basis in fact for the additional \$350,000 buy-in from USAID-Islamabad that was reported to the IALC Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Directors at their Fall, 2005 meeting.

Air Routing:

Outbound:

Champaign/St. Louis – Nagoya (AA) – Bangkok (JL) – Delhi (IA) – Kabul (IA)

Inbound:

Kabul – Peshawar (PIA) – Islamabad (surface) – London (BA) – Chicago (AA) – St. Louis/Champaign (AA)

Summary of Activities:

Friday, October 28 – Departed Illinois (10:00 a.m.)

Saturday, October 29 – Arrived Nagoya (4:10 p.m.)

Sunday, October 30 – Seminar Orientation and Reception

Monday, October 31 through Wednesday, November 2

During this three-day period it was our (Myers and Santas) honor to be among representatives from ten U.S. universities and a similar number from Japanese universities, in a seminar titled “Approach to Collaboration Between Universities in Japan and the United States in International Agricultural Development”. This seminar was held in Nagoya, Japan at Nagoya University. Sponsorship was provided by ALO, USAID and the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership. Our report for the third quarter of CY05 gave preliminary information on this seminar.

To summarize briefly: Seminar participants were asked to report on agricultural development projects and activities in which they are involved in various world regions. The “Call for Concept Papers”, which led to our selection, mentioned Afghanistan, and more specifically assistance being provided to Kabul University through the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology (TAUT). Prof. Kiyoshi Shimada is giving leadership to these TAUT efforts and was invited to this seminar. Our primary objective therefore, was to use this seminar as an opportunity to explore the possibility of collaboration with TAUT in making contributions to the development of Kabul University as well as higher education in agriculture throughout Afghanistan.

Through a series of discussions with Prof. Shimada, our seminar presentation, printed materials (information pieces and NWFPAU publications) and various other means; we delivered the message that we are ready to collaborate and have much to offer each other. Prof. Shimada will relay this information to his “Task Force”, which consists of four TAUT faculty members who are involved in Afghanistan and their efforts to assist Kabul University. We are now exchanging emails with Prof. Shimada, answering his remaining questions about the nature of our activities and NWFPAU capabilities. We

don't know where this will go in the months ahead, but at the very least, we were fortunate to have been involved in the Nagoya seminar and receive this visibility for the IALC/UIUC/NWFPAU activities in Afghanistan.

Thursday, November 3 – Nagoya - Bangkok

Friday, November 4 – Bangkok - Delhi

Saturday, November 5 – Delhi - Kabul

We were met by Dr. Qayyum on our early afternoon arrival in Kabul and went directly to a lunch meeting with Professor M. Yasin Mohsini, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at Kabul University. During our conversation he presented two specific requests for our assistance: 1) Continue to send NWFPAU Faculty as Visiting Professors, thus strengthening his depleted faculty ranks. He has been especially pleased to have Dr. Paigham Shah as a Visiting Professor of Crop Science this academic year. We assured him that we will do our best to convince AID-Islamabad to continue support for this activity. His urgent current need is for an English language instructor, if that person can be provided by the NWFPAU. 2) His second request was to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will formally link the Kabul University Faculty of Agriculture with the NWFPAU, SIUC and UIUC. We gave him a copy of the agreement that will link Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food (MAAHF) with the Illinois Universities and the NWFPAU. Dean Mohsini will review this document, but was confident it will meet his needs, so suggested we proceed with drafting the MoU to formally link our universities.

Having interacted with Professor Shimada during the "Japan-U.S. Dialogue Seminar" in Nagoya, we relayed greetings from the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology (TAUT) to Dean Mohsini. He was pleased to receive these greetings and made it clear that he values his university's affiliation with TAUT. It is clear that Dean Mohsini would welcome TAUT/UIUC/SIUC/NWFPAU collaboration in the upgrading of his Faculty. Dean Mohsini indicated that, although he appreciated the Japanese donation of laboratory equipment, there is a need for technical assistance to help his professors understand how to use this equipment. We were fortunate that Dean Mohsini could meet with us prior to his departure for Bangalore, India to explore collaboration with universities there. Our next stop was the ASSA 2 Guest House for check-in, after which we stopped at the home of UIUC alum, Vickie Sigman and her husband Jack, for a short visit. Vickie, a well-traveled international expert, has recently accepted an assignment to work in Afghanistan on an adult literacy project.

Sunday, November 6

The three of us prepared for our mid-morning departure via UN air shuttle to Mazar-e-Sharif, for a five-day/four night assignment at Balkh University working on our ALO-funded project to upgrade their Faculty of Agriculture. While in the departure

lounge at Kabul Airport, we had an informative discussion with two Land O' Lakes representatives who were working on the Afghanistan Dairy Revitalization Project.

We were met at the airport by Abdul Qayyum Ansari, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, and taken directly to the university. Our meeting with the President, Habibullah Habib, and follow-up discussions with Dean Ansari, focused on the accomplishments, status and plans for our ALO-funded project titled: "Balkh University Agriculture Faculty Development".

After finalizing plans with Dean Ansari on our agenda for this visit, he dropped us at the hotel so we could prepare for the strategic planning activities that will occupy much of our time. Later that evening Dean Ansari came to the hotel, with his son as the interpreter, for an after-hours discussion that refined our plans for the days ahead and shared his views on the future of his university and our institutional partnership.

Monday, November 7

We went to campus for a two-hour meeting with Dean Ansari, the three Department Heads and three selected faculty members, to introduce the strategic planning concept. We explained the questionnaire which solicited their views and ideas in four general areas. These will be distributed to all faculty, then after completion, become the centerpiece for a brainstorming session the next day. After using the afternoon to work on email, planning discussions and report-writing, we had dinner with Mark Henning. Mr. Henning is based in Mazar-e-Sharif and represents one of our NGO partners in the Balkh project, Joint Development Associates (JDA). Mark and JDA add significant value to this project. One of Mark's noteworthy contributions consists of involving BUFA students and faculty in the conduct of agronomic field trails that deal with production of maize, soybeans, canola, sunflower, and flax. His efforts to involve them in research and demonstrations have helped them better understand the value of practical, field-based experience as part of their instructional offerings. An additional way that JDA adds value is through Mark's day-to-day presence on the ground in Mazar-e-Sharif. This is important, because the other project implementers (SIUC, UIUC, NWFPAU, NEI), do not have that continuing presence.

Tuesday, November 8

Today's main feature was a seminar on Canola Production presented to a large gathering of faculty and students by Oval. Following this, he worked with Department of Plant Science Faculty, introducing them to an assortment of instructional materials he had brought for their use. The afternoon was used to prepare and purchase materials for the Wednesday brainstorming session that will be a key part of the strategic planning exercise. While Oval and Qayyum kept going, I took a day of sick leave.

Wednesday, November 9

The morning was used to catch up on email and finish the purchase of supplies for the afternoon session with faculty members. Of the total 15 staff in the Faculty of Agriculture, twelve gathered at the Hotel Tajikistan for lunch followed by a lively discussion on their vision for BUFA. Dr. Qayyum did a masterful job of facilitating the brainstorming session and “teasing out” ideas on where their Faculty should be three to five years from now in the areas of: 1) staff development, 2) curriculum, 3) teaching methodology/materials and 4) space/facilities. That evening we had dinner with Dean Ansari and President Habib, together with a large delegation from 12 Afghan universities that had assembled at Balkh University for a conference on Information Technology.

Thursday, November 10

It was a rainy day in Mazar and as anticipated, we were informed at 10:00 a.m. that the UN plane would not come in to take us back to Kabul. We had a wrap-up meeting with Dean Ansari, handed over a few remaining pieces of equipment, then began work on alternate transportation to Kabul. The vehicle and drivers that we routinely use in Kabul were available. They will drive to Mazar and take us back to Kabul on Friday, for our Saturday meetings. After making these arrangements, we summarized information from yesterday’s brainstorming session. Then we joined Mark Henning (JDA) for a meeting with Miriam Simonds, USAID representative with the Balkh Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT).

We gave Ms. Simonds an update on the BUFA project and assisted Mark in presenting a proposal that will continue USAID funding for the agronomic field research in which he has so effectively involved BUFA students and faculty. We enjoyed a stimulating conversation with Ms. Simonds on agricultural development in Afghanistan and Balkh Province. She will be at that post until September 2006, so we will keep her informed by scheduling upcoming consultants to meet with her.

Friday, November 11

We left Mazar-e-Sharif at 5:30 a.m. for an interesting and educational drive through diverse agricultural regions and countryside, including through the snowy Salang Pass, arriving Kabul at 3:30 p.m. We used the evening to prepare for Kabul meetings.

Saturday, November 12

Our first stop was an agreement signing ceremony in the office of Eng. Mohammad Sharif, First Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food. During his September visit to the NWFPAU and its research system, Minister Sharif suggested a formal agreement to link his Ministry with the NWFPAU and the two Illinois universities. He was pleased to see his idea come to fruition. During our stop in Peshawar, we will have this MoU signed by the NWFPAU Vice Chancellor. We enjoyed a cordial visit with Eng. Sharif, after which an NEI (Nutrition Education International) delegation led by Dr. Steven Kwon entered his office. NEI is the other NGO (in addition

to JDA) that is partnered with us in the BUFA project. After exchanging greetings with the NEI delegation, we moved on to the MAAHF Agricultural Research Institute.

Our first meeting in the research section was with Aziz Osmanzai, Head of the Institute. We had worked with Dr. Osmanzai previously, when he was with an NGO called German Agro-Action, and sent a number of his employees to our short courses. We then moved into detailed discussions with two of the Institute's Research Advisors, T.S. Parkbin and Asif Rashid. Our primary reason for visiting the Institute was to get advice and input on the selection and placement of NWFPAU research scientists who will go to Afghanistan on short term assignments through support provided by the USAID-Islamabad buy-in. These Advisors informed us of the need to strengthen research and investigative activity in the production and improvement of maize and vegetables in the provinces of Nangarhar, Parwan and Kabul. It is likely that Dr. Qayyum will arrange for these two advisors to visit the NWFP, using linkage funds in the Islamabad buy-in, to make final decisions on selection of Pakistani researchers for these assignments. Our final meeting was with the Institute's soil scientist, during which we learned that a full-service soil testing laboratory still does not exist in Afghanistan, although the Japanese have committed to set up a laboratory.

Our afternoon meeting was with the Education Office of USAID-Kabul. James McCloud oversees our BUFA project, but was not available, so was represented by his supervisor, Dr. James Sarn. Dr. Sarn is the Social Sector Development Officer. Shahnaz Hakim, an FSN in the Education Office, joined us for this meeting. The purpose was to give them an update on the BUFA project, with special emphasis on our visit to Balkh this trip and results of the Strategic Planning process that we carried out. Although Dr. Sarn was impressed by our accomplishments since project initiation, as well as during this visit, he was pessimistic about the possibility of additional time and funding for the BUFA project. We also made a strong plea for funding that would allow the pending group of 20 Afghans to enroll for M.Sc. study at the NWFPAU, but were given a polite refusal. Lack of funding is the reason cited for these decisions. Dr. Sarns explained that the Kabul Mission's emphasis is on infrastructure, and a preference to use funds for construction of roads, bridges and dams. Funding that is available for education will likely be concentrated at the primary and secondary levels. Not a pleasant message to hear, but we appreciated Dr. Sarn's candor and empathy. We finished the afternoon with a courtesy call on Dan Miller, the Agriculture and Rural Development Officer, then returned to the guest house to work on the trip report, email, and prepare for the next day. Nearly one year ago, Dan Miller had told us that his office will not fund the 20 pending M.Sc. students, so we didn't even bother to raise that question during our visit.

Sunday, November 13

Our first meeting was at the RAMP (Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program) Office, which is a USAID-funded project being implemented by Chemonics International. We had an informative discussion with Louis Faoro, Chief of Party, about plans to end the current project in June 2006 and then move to RAMP II. The nature of this follow-on project and whether Chemonics might be the contractor is unknown. We

thanked Mr. Faoro for the supplemental funding (Job Orders) we have received from RAMP in the amounts of \$400,000 and \$133,538, because that support allowed us to deliver critically needed training programs. Most of our time at the RAMP office was spent with Mr. Anwari, the Contracts Officer, finalizing our Grant Agreement for the second Job Order, (\$133,538) which will support the ten students enrolled in M.Sc. programs at the NWFP AU until their December 2006 completion.

Next, we were scheduled to meet with Col. Nancy Stevens, a U.S. Army representative, to discuss the possibility of supplemental support through the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), which provides Defense Department Funds for agricultural development projects that are implemented at the local level. Col. Stevens is responsible for Political-Military Integration within the Combined Forces Command. We expected this to be an exploratory discussion, to determine whether our resources (through the NWFP AU) might mesh with their agenda and needs. We had agreed to meet at the USAID compound at 10:00 a.m. After a brief wait and repeated attempts to contact Col. Stevens via cell phone, we were met by her colleague Maj. Prygiel and informed that Nancy was in another meeting. Maj. Prygiel indicated he would discuss these topics with us, but immediately left the area and did not return. Attempts at phone contact with Col. Stevens the rest of the day were unsuccessful. (The above paragraph, on a frustrating episode, is left in the trip report to illustrate the nature of development work. The next day's entry will give the rest of the story.)

While Oval was presenting lectures on soybean production in a seminar organized by NEI, Qayyum and I paid a visit to the new president of Kabul University, Dr. Ashraf Ghani. The former president, Akbar Popal, has returned to the Faculty of Agriculture. Dr. Ghani spent 10 years at Johns Hopkins, 10 years at the World Bank, then became Minister of Finance in Afghanistan, and now has launched a very ambitious plan to reform Kabul University. We enjoyed listening to his plans and gave him details on our project's contributions to upgrading his Agriculture Faculty. We informed him of Dean Mohsini's request for a Memorandum of Understanding that would link Kabul University with UIUC, SIUC and the NWFP AU. He reviewed the three-page agreement that had been given to Dean Mohsini in draft form and advised us to proceed. Dr. Qayyum will initiate this agreement preparation/negotiation process in the Field Office.

Monday, November 14

Checked the email before breakfast and found a message from Col. Stevens expressing regret on yesterday's confusion and offering to meet. Contacted her by phone and agreed to meet at the USAID compound at 10:00 a.m. Qayyum and I went there after dropping Oval at MAAHF to continue the soybean lectures. Our discussions were informative and encouraging. Col. Stevens confirmed that CERP is a \$30 million fund for use at the discretion of the commander, Gen. Eikenberry. She explained further, that \$23 million has already been spent because there is lively competition to get these funds for infrastructure, i.e., roads, bridges, power plants, etc. Col. Stevens seems willing to argue for investing some of these funds in human capacity development for the agriculture sector. She may be able to do this in her role as the liaison between Gen.

Eikenberry and the MAAHF. We explained our human capacity development efforts, using the series of information pieces we have produced. These have proven especially effective in situations like this. We informed her that our current priorities are on funding for M.Sc. training and for technical short courses. She will review the assortment of printed materials that we provided and stay in touch.

We went back to the ministry, picked up Oval from the soybean lectures, had lunch and went to the airport for travel to Peshawar. That evening we had dinner with Anwar Chishti, the Illinois-trained economist who has just been appointed Director of the Office of International Programs and Services. This office is being established at the NWFP AU through support from the AID-Islamabad buy-in.

Tuesday, November 15

Our first meeting was with the recently-appointed NWFP AU Vice Chancellor, Said Khan Khalil. The primary item of business was placing his signature on the four-party MoU which links the NWFP AU with Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture and the two Illinois Universities. We informed Dr. Khalil that during coming months we will ask him to sign similar agreements with Kabul University and Balkh University. The Vice Chancellor informed us of his increasingly deep appreciation for what the TIPAN project did for his university, particularly as a result of the past two days. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) had just completed a campus visit to review their post-graduate programs and had given them unconditional approval. He was pleased!

Our next meeting was with Dr. Farhatullah, Director of Advanced Studies and Research. He is responsible for developing linkage programs with foreign universities and then accessing HEC financial support for these linkage activities. HEC has received a sizeable grant from USAID Pakistan and all universities in the country are competing for these funds. I had given Dr. Farhatullah a preliminary response in July, by completing a survey form that he circulated. Our meeting served to update and expand my earlier response, mostly by developing a joint UIUC/SIUC response. He welcomes the idea of working with both universities, so Oval and I will prepare a more detailed response which captures the many ideas on linkage possibilities that surfaced during our meeting. Prof. Chishti also participated in this meeting in his capacity as the newly-appointed Director of International Programs and Services.

Our next meeting was with the three NWFP AU representatives (Abdur Rab – Horticulture, Ibrahim Khattak – English, and Agha Jabarkhil – Computers) who have completed assignments at Balkh University as targeted consultants. It was extremely informative to hear about their experiences at Balkh, their impressions, and their recommendations for next steps in upgrading the agriculture faculty.

Next we joined the Vice Chancellor for lunch at the Shiraz, along with Professors Chishti, Farhatullah, and UIUC alum, Dr. Naeem. A pleasant way to end a visit that left Oval, Qayyum and me filled with pride to have been involved in making this university

the impressive institution it is today. We left Peshawar at 3:00 p.m. for the drive to Islamabad, to be in place for meeting with USAID and USDA.

Wednesday, November 16

Used the morning to work on project related financial matters and prepare for a noon meeting with Sandra Stajka, USAID Islamabad Economic Growth Advisor and Howard Anderson, USDA/FAS Agricultural Attaché serving Pakistan and Afghanistan. They decided to have a joint meeting with us instead of separate sessions, because Sandra has limited involvement in agricultural programming and depends on Howard to play a lead role in this area. We are fortunate that Dr. Anderson has a deeper interest and commitment to agricultural development than is the case with most Agricultural Attachés. During our 2004 TDY, we met with Howard in Kabul and benefited considerably from the interaction and his advice. During our 2004 TDY, we also worked with Peter Duffy when he was in the Islamabad Mission. Mr. Duffy played the lead role in arranging our \$484,000 buy-in from the Islamabad Mission. Sandra is his replacement. She told us up-front that there are no possibilities for buy-in support at this time, citing earthquake relief as a drain on their resources and the “no investment in agriculture” stance taken when the Mission was re-opened in 2002. She did mention a March 2006 review of Mission priorities, and gave us suggestions on offices/individuals in USAID-Washington that we might contact to request supplemental financial support.

Dr. Anderson has been working diligently to help us access funds that were made available through commodities (soybeans) that were donated to Afghanistan, then monetized (sold) in Pakistan, with the proceeds being returned to Afghanistan where they are now stuck in the Ministry of Finance. An estimated \$4 million allocation will eventually be released to the MAAHF in Afghanistan, with part of that intended to upgrade capacity in the Extension Division of the Ministry. In Howard’s view, this includes human capacity development through training programs delivered by the NWFPAU. Another parcel in the proceeds from monetized commodities, (about \$4 million), is supposed to be released to the Ministry of Higher Education.

The process of moving these funds to their end-use point is slow and testing everyone’s patience. We are fortunate to have Howard as an advocate for our project and our training programs. He mentioned that Philippe Chabot recently arrived in Kabul to serve as the USDA representative. Dr. Qayyum and Dr. Chabot have worked together in Afghanistan (during Philippe’s service with Mercy Corps) so they will resume this relationship and attempt to make progress in moving funds through the system to support training that is so critical to the recovery of Afghanistan’s agriculture sector. Unfortunately we will leave tomorrow without securing funds for the twenty waiting M.Sc. students or for FY06 technical short courses.

Thursday, November 17

Departed Islamabad at 8:00 a.m. for return travel via London and Chicago

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
Long-Term Degree Training Program under RAMP
As of December 31, 2005

The following ten participants, five each from the Faculty of Agriculture at Kabul University and the Faculty of Agriculture at Nangarhar University, sponsored by the RAMP Project through USAID–Kabul; are enrolled in Masters Degree Programs at the NWFP Agricultural University, Peshawar, Pakistan. This program is being administered by the Field Office of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Their progress toward completion of degree requirements is reported against each participant as under:

S.No.	Name	Nominating University	Discipline	Required Course-work	Research Program/Thesis	Graduation Date
1.	Mohammad Salim	Kabul	Plant Protection	Completed	Working on research proposal	
2.	Sakhidad Saleem	Kabul	Plant Protection	Completed	Working on research proposal	
3.	Noor Mohammad	Kabul	Horticulture	Completed	Working on research proposal	
4.	Masood	Kabul	Horticulture	Completed	Started research activities	
5.	Hussain Gul	Kabul	Agricultural Economics	Completed	Working on proposal	
6.	Najamuddin Najam	Nangarhar	Plant Protection	Completed	Working on research proposal	
7.	Saidajan Abdiani	Nangarhar	Horticulture	Completed	Working on research proposal	
8.	Abdul Wahab	Nangarhar	Plant Breeding	Completed	Started research activities	
9.	Mir Hatam Niazi	Nangarhar	Poultry	Completed	Completed lab. Research	
10.	Mohammad Bashir Dodial	Nangarhar	Agricultural Extension	Completed	Started research activities	

Auxiliary training activities planned for 2006

1.	Computer Applications					
2.	Teaching Methodologies					
3.	Research Methodologies					
4.	Operation & Maintenance of Research Stations					

AGENDA

Afghanistan-Pakistan Training (APT) Group Meeting
Wednesday, December 14, 2005
Spitze Room, ACES Library

- 1) Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) Update
 - a) Targeted Consultancies Recently Completed by:
 - Abdur Rab (Horticulture)
 - Ibrahim Khattak (English)
 - Agha Jabarkhil (Computers)
In August 2005

 - Bob Arthur (Animal Science/Curriculum)
 - John Groninger (Forestry)
 - Agha Jabarkhil (Computers/Escort/Interpreter)
In October 2005

 - Oval Myers (Crop Science)
 - Abdul Qayyum Khan (Economics)
 - John Santas (Strategic Planning)
In November 2005
 - b) JDA and NEI Contributions
 - c) Continuation Possibilities
- 2) Japan-U.S. University Dialogue Seminar in Nagoya
- 3) Update on IALC/UIUC Activities in “Human Capacity Development for the Agriculture Sector in Afghanistan”, covering the following:
 - a) Degree Training underway
 - b) Research Exchanges and “Twinning” of research stations
 - c) Technical Short Courses offerings
 - d) Visiting professors
 - e) MoU’s and Linkages involving UIUC, SIUC and NWFPAU
 - f) English Language Center and International Programs Office at NWFPAU
 - g) New funding possibilities
- 4) HEC-funded continuing linkages with the NWFPAU
- 5) Illinois Involvement in NEI Soybean Initiatives
- 6) Recommendations and input to March 2006 meetings of IALC Technical Advisory Committee and Board of Directors
- 7) Other Items contributed by APT members