



Afghanistan Policy Page

A one-page brief on a major issue concerning U.S. policy and engagement in Afghanistan.

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Agriculture

Take Aways

- The **Agricultural sector is the most important industry** and is vital for employment, growth and sustainability in Afghanistan.
- The Ministry of Agriculture has prepared a **new master plan and a comprehensive strategy** for three years. The strategy aims transition the present subsistence agriculture to a commercial one.
- **Majority of Afghans are still engaged in agricultural activities.**
- Cultivated area under **poppy fell by 22 percent** in 2009, mainly in Helmand province.

Key Issues

- Agriculture Sector: **shrank 16.5% in 2008/2009**. The growing season was severely affected by nationwide drought conditions that harmed the production of both rain-fed and irrigated farms.
- **Wheat prices vary significantly** among provinces.
- In reaction to the increased production, wheat flour **income has fallen sharply for farmers**.
- **Agricultural support infrastructure is a key problem**. The lack of transport systems (inc roads and railways), irrigation systems, dry food stores, refrigeration – often constricting output, and/or preventing good from reaching markets.

Possible Questions

- Is there a comprehensive plan by the international community to support the Afghan Agricultural Master Plan?
- What are the U.S. benchmarks to support that Master Plan?
- What is the export plan for Afghan Agricultural goods? Is there a market-building strategy? How much of the international community / region is fed by Afghan products?
- How are provinces and districts involved in the Master Plan?
- How effective has U.S. agricultural assistance been?

Top Key Facts

- Agricultural land accounts for nearly **60% of total land area** in Afghanistan (crops, orchards, livestock) . But only around **15% of the total can be used for crops**.
- Agriculture is approx. **30% of GDP**.
- Agriculture employs more than **85 percent of the national work force**
- Major Crops (in order of size): **Wheat, Rice, Grapes**, Potatoes, Corn, Barley.
- **Cereal production** accounts for three quarters of agriculture.
- In 2008/09, **dried fruits** accounted for nearly half Afghanistan's total export.

In the News:

- **USDA CURRENTLY HAS A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER AND AN EXPERT ADVISOR IN KABUL AND INTENDS TO EXPAND THE OFFICE IN THE COMING MONTHS.** (USDA DEC 2009)
- **KHOST PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN — IT'S TOUGH DOING DEVELOPMENT WORK IN AN AFGHAN WAR ZONE. JUST ASK THE INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAM, A GROUP OF 64 FARMER-SOLDIERS WORKING IN KHOST, AN INSURGENCY-INFLAMED PROVINCE ON THE PAKISTAN BORDER.** (GLOBAL POST 20 NOV 2009)

Further Reading

<http://www.fao.org/countries/55528/en/afg/>
<http://www.worldbank.org.af/WBSITE/EXTERRNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/AFGHANISTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20154015~menuPK:305992~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:305985.00.html>

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