



An International Center
for Soil Fertility and
Agricultural Development

Success Story

IFDC Produces “Bread for Peace” in Afghanistan

What happens in Iraq after the war ends? Surprisingly agriculture in nearby Afghanistan may offer a clue. IFDC and its partners are convinced that agriculture is the engine that will deliver Afghanistan and other countries from the devastation of war to the prosperity of peace.

IFDC’s President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Amit H. Roy, says “When we arrived in Afghanistan in early 2002, agriculture was in desperate straits. Farmers had very little seed, virtually no fertilizer, and no credit was available. The entire agricultural infrastructure was gone.”

IFDC’s staff quickly evaluated the Afghan people’s potential that was silently waiting to be tapped. “It was their entrepreneurial spirit—that drive to work hard—despite all they’ve been through that convinced us that the private sector was the place to start rebuilding the Afghan agriculture,” says the Director of IFDC’s Market Development Division, Ian Gregory.

Recognizing that a spark of life remained in the country’s private agribusiness sector, IFDC carefully nurtured that sector back to life. Rather than dumping handouts of fertilizer and seed on a fragile market, IFDC offered farmers vouchers to exchange for fertilizer at their local dealer shops. After harvesting their wheat crops, the farmers used part of their wheat to pay for the fertilizer. The local villages are using the money for local improvements—new wells, irrigations systems, etc.

“This is vitally important, and that’s why we think the work that IFDC is doing is so vital to reinvigorating the agricultural sector,” says USAID’s Mission Director for Afghanistan, Craig Buck. “We think that these are the kinds of results that the private sector offers to the country in a more robust and efficient manner.”

Dramatic results are evident in the doubling of yields that the Afghan farmers have achieved thus far. The bread on Afghan farmers’ tables is evidence that the plan is working. “If we continue to build the private sector infrastructure, market forces will work for the Afghan people,” says M. Feisal Beig, IFDC Senior Marketing Specialist. “We will guarantee that they will get the chance that they deserve.”

Along with its partners and with continued support from USAID, IFDC vows to help the resilient Afghan people to replace despair with hope for a better tomorrow.

