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**AFGHANISTAN**

# SUCCESS STORY

## Farmers Trade Poppies for Other Crops

### Seed program brings farmers alternative crops and technical support



Photo: USAID

Afghan farmers cash in seed and fertilizer vouchers as part of a USAID-assisted poppy eradication program.

***“Farmers are happy to see the Government of Afghanistan delivering upon their promise to provide some assistance to farmers in connection with poppy eradication,” said Haji Khairullah, Zhari Dast District Police Commander.***

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Afghanistan’s beautiful plains and fertile valleys have hosted many kinds of crops — but one crop has repeatedly caused the country and its people immeasurable harm: poppy. Farmers dependent upon their land often turned to poppy cultivation because it brought more revenue than ordinary crops. But opium revenue also brings instability and threatens the country’s security. Farmers said that if they had a viable alternative, they would grow other crops.

USAID responded by helping the Afghan government in its newly established poppy eradication campaign. Working together with Afghanistan’s agriculture ministry, USAID broadcast radio announcements about the program, in which farmers receive vouchers for seed and fertilizer, as well as technical assistance for one harvest season. Through the radio campaign and in collaboration with local communities, USAID identified farming cooperatives interested in participating in the program and distributed vouchers for seeds and fertilizer — all in time for the crucial spring planting season. Once the crops are harvested and sold, the farmers will repay the value of the seed and fertilizer to a fund that will be used for community development projects.

In Kandahar province alone, over 8,000 farmers are learning how to successfully raise and market different crops with USAID technical assistance.

Farmers participating in the program expressed satisfaction with the quality of the seeds and fertilizer being provided. They were well informed about the program — they understood that they were required to repay the value of the voucher after harvest, and that the program’s purpose was to mitigate the economic impact of poppy eradication.

“Farmers are happy to see the government of Afghanistan delivering upon its promise to provide some assistance to farmers in connection with poppy eradication,” said Haji Khairullah, District Police Commander. Complete eradication may be a long way away, but USAID’s program shows that there is support among Afghan farmers to make the dangers and instability of poppy cultivation history.