

Lessons from USDA in Iraq and Afghanistan

EDITED BY BERNARD CARREAU

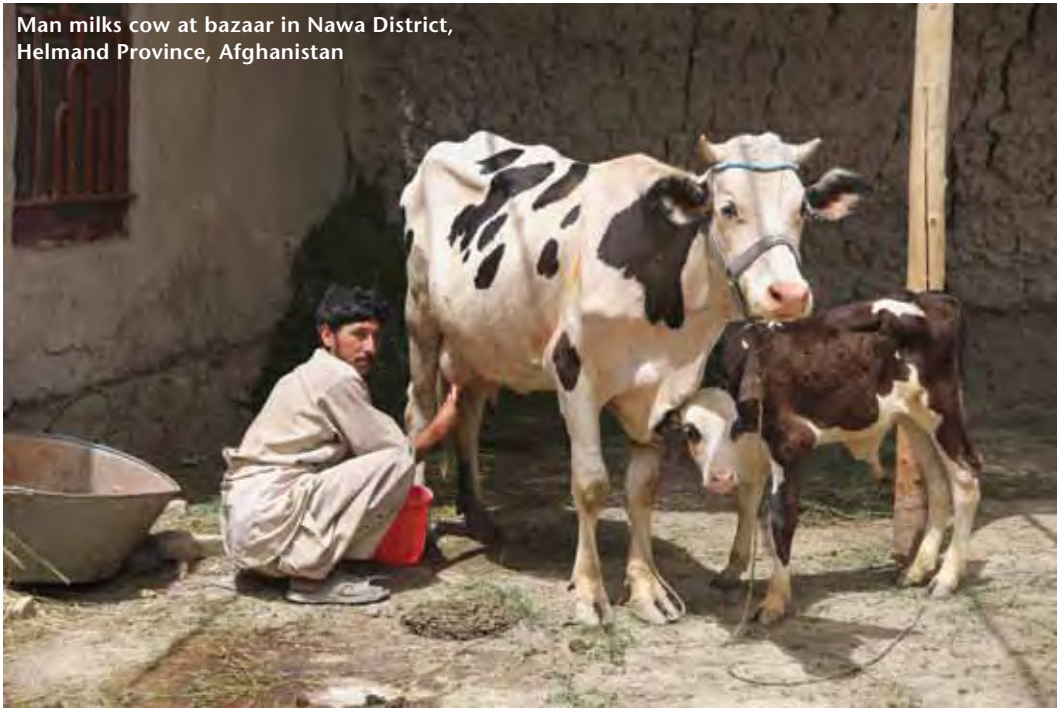
In July 2009, the Center for Complex Operations (CCO) facilitated a workshop sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to capture the experiences of USDA agricultural advisors deployed to ministries and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Iraq and Afghanistan. The discussions yielded numerous individual observations, insights, and potential lessons from the work of these advisors on PRTs in these countries. This article presents a broad overview of the challenges identified by the conference participants and highlights key recommendations generated as a result of suggestions and comments made at the workshop.

The workshop was intended to capture insights and lessons from the field to develop recommendations for improvements in PRT operations, with a particular focus on agricultural development. The 30 participants came from a broad spectrum of USDA: the National Resources Conservation Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Agricultural Marketing Service, and the Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration.

To focus the agenda, CCO and USDA designed a preworkshop survey administered to the 30 USDA returnees (22 from Iraq and 8 from Afghanistan). After receiving 24 responses, CCO and USDA used the results to develop an agenda built around facilitated group discussions in four areas: doctrine and guidance, civil-military cooperation and command and control relationships, projects and their impact on the host nation, and administrative issues.

This article, edited by Bernard Carreau, Deputy Director for Lessons Learned and Training Support in the Center for Complex Operations, is based on "Lessons Learned Workshop for USDA Personnel Deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan," a report issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in July 2009.

Man milks cow at bazaar in Nawa District,
Helmand Province, Afghanistan



U.S. Marine Corps (William Gresson)

Doctrine and Guidance

Absence of Overall U.S. Government Agriculture Strategy. Numerous participants noted the absence of an overarching agriculture strategy for either Iraq or Afghanistan. This deficiency at the national level precluded a potential source of guidance for activities at the provincial level and unified effort among the various agriculture projects in theater. PRTs are responsible for design and implementation of projects at the district level to fit into the local mission, but they do not necessarily support a national agricultural program that addresses critical areas, such as irrigation, seed control, output distribution, agricultural law, agricultural credit, and land management issues.

Several advisors noted that a national agriculture strategy for Afghanistan had circulated among PRTs and that there was an awareness of the Afghan National Development Strategy and Provincial Development Plans, but there were no clear linkages between these strategies and concrete project goals. Some advisors noted that several U.S. agencies have developed their own strategies for country-wide agriculture programs, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Agricultural Reconstruction and Development Program for Iraq, but these individual agency strategies were not consistently disseminated.

To address this issue, many participants argued that USDA should take the lead in developing or reviewing all U.S. agriculture strategies at the national and local levels in conjunction with host nation agricultural authorities.¹ The overall strategy should aim to identify inefficiencies, duplication, and mutually exclusive goals, and incoming advisors should use these strategies as the starting points for project planning at the local level. Agricultural advisors noted that such a strategy must

clearly articulate the importance of tailoring agriculture projects to local traditions, knowledge, and capacity. Finally, doctrine and guidance should pay more attention to familiarizing USDA staff with the notion that agriculture projects will vary depending on whether they take place during a combat, stabilization, or reconstruction phase of an operation.

Unrealistic Expectations for Agricultural Development. Some participants expressed concern that current expectations of what agricultural development can achieve in Iraq—and especially in Afghanistan—are inflated. Many U.S. programs favor multimillion-dollar projects involving major infrastructure and modern heavy machinery, attempting to apply American-style, 21st-century agricultural technologies and methodologies to the local agricultural context. Smaller scale projects are more sustainable, appropriate, and relevant to local needs and capabilities. The U.S. Government should recognize that agriculture in Iraq is equivalent to U.S. agriculture in the 1950s, and the agriculture sector in Afghanistan is even more primitive by U.S. standards. Therefore, it is unrealistic to expect the same level of output for either Iraq or Afghanistan even with the introduction of the modern systems and technologies. While new techniques can be introduced to increase efficiencies, program administrators need to think long and hard about how sustainable the new systems will be given the state of local tradition, knowledge, and capacity. Several participants told stories about U.S. programs that provided John Deere tractors or other industrial machinery to local farmers in Afghanistan and Iraq, which fell into disuse or were stripped for parts as soon as routine maintenance was required. Many remarked that instead of a John Deere tractor, oxen and simple tools such as hoes or shovels may be more appropriate to achieve sustainable progress.

Future advisors need to understand that it is neither possible nor feasible to replicate the U.S. agriculture sector in these countries. Instead, the key to successful agricultural development lies in supporting the host nation as it pursues its own development strategies for improving the indigenous agriculture sector. All agricultural actors (particularly contractors and USAID personnel) need to tailor their projects to local conditions and provide tools and technologies appropriate to local skill levels and traditions. This recognition should be a guiding principle of any overall agriculture strategy and incorporated in doctrine and guidance.

Tension Between Mentoring Role and Project Promotion. USDA advisors are sometimes torn between their role as advisors to Iraqis and Afghans on how to establish their own agriculture programs and pressures to independently resource and select specific agriculture projects to implement. Direct selection and funding of agriculture projects mean that locals do not solve agricultural problems through their own means and mechanisms. Yet, as many advisors pointed out, Iraqis and Afghans have considerable agricultural expertise based on centuries of tradition, even if

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they do not meet modern U.S. standards. One participant stated that Afghans can make anything grow, and pointed out their irrigation prowess by saying that they “can make water flow up a mountain.”

In Iraq, provincial and district agriculture plans were generally more advanced, and often

there were sufficient central and provincial government funds available to support most agricultural initiatives. Therefore, participants generally agreed that it was best for the United States to primarily provide mentoring and advice. When promoting projects, Washington should require at least some Iraqi funding. Some advisors went so far as to say that the United States should give only advice and no funding in Iraq. In Afghanistan, where government coffers are more threadbare, there is still a need to provide some program funding. The challenge for American advisors is to identify which elements of the U.S. system can be translated into the local context

it may be advisable in a high-threat environment to focus on training and mentoring, rather than building potentially vulnerable infrastructure

and which elements should be overlooked in favor of local agricultural traditions.

Advisors should review doctrine and guidance documents and identify programs that only replicate the U.S. agriculture sector in Afghanistan or Iraq without taking account of local traditions and capabilities. Programs should draw from U.S. expertise and technologies only to the extent that they mesh with local traditions and capacity. The emerging agriculture strategies should encourage the development of local solutions with partners to build sustainable capacity in conjunction with local stakeholders. Similarly, the USDA PRT handbooks should be revised to emphasize this dynamic.

Need for Agriculture Strategy Modification. Operational planners must recognize that the rehabilitation of Iraq's and Afghanistan's agriculture sectors involves at least three phases of operation: major combat, stabilization, and

reconstruction. The combat phase may include prolonged counterinsurgency or counterterrorism operations. It is difficult to recognize which stage of operations advisors may find themselves in at any given time as stages may overlap, progress rapidly, or even regress. For instance, if an area is not completely stabilized, it may be unwise to presume that the operation has reached the reconstruction phase and pursue a long-term development strategy.

Some participants believed that USDA should develop guidance on the types of programs that may be appropriate for different phases of an operation in each country and region. Local agricultural advisors should have enough leeway and flexibility to design suitable programs. In addition, USDA advisors need to build closer relationships with the military to learn more about the security situation, and military commanders need to find a way to share security information with these advisors so they can plan their projects accordingly. For example, it may be advisable in a high-threat environment to focus on training and mentoring, rather than building potentially vulnerable infrastructure.

Interagency Cooperation

Different Approaches to Agricultural Development. In general, civilian-military cooperation was good, and USDA advisors had high regard for their military counterparts. However, the military and USDA have different approaches to agricultural development, and cultural misunderstandings often marred civil-military relations. USDA's agriculture projects are generally smaller scale, target specific, and long term, while the military generally supports large-scale, high-impact, and high-profile projects. Participants noted that the military routinely made incorrect assumptions about civilian operations and overestimated the pace

at which agricultural development could be completed and the difficulties in obtaining funding. USDA advisors recognized that officers did not understand the advisors' role and that the officers often had difficulty reporting agriculture activities up the military chain of command. While Civil Affairs teams were generally more helpful, they were not always present, and some advisors devoted an inordinate amount of their time explaining to commanders what they can do.

Workshop participants believed that part of the problem can be addressed through education. Military personnel working with civilian reconstruction teams and their superiors should be acclimatized to civilian development operations in predeployment training. PRT leaders without an agricultural background should understand that it is not always easy to show results for agriculture projects in a short time frame. Yet it is also critical that commanders and agricultural experts take an "equal seat at the table," so both groups can excel at their areas of expertise and maintain a good, cooperative relationship.² One measure discussed at the workshop was to set up a mechanism for USDA PRT members to evaluate their commanders or team leaders.

Tension Between Internal Agency Priorities and Local Needs. Many participants were critical of the pressure on military staff to spend significant amounts of Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) money on large projects with a completion time frame of 6 months to a year. Commanders often favored projects such as roads, schools, and district centers even if these projects were not sustainable or desired by the local population, because such projects were very visible, measurable in terms of resources, and quick. This was important to commanders so they could show progress during their tours. But agriculture programs often require at least 3 years to be developed, and

frequently there is no measurable result within the time of a commander's tour. Whereas Department of Defense (DOD) and USAID agriculture projects were often in the million-dollar range, smaller projects in the range of \$25,000 to \$50,000 were consistently more effective and responsive to local needs. For their part, State Department Foreign Service Officers were often unwilling to take risks or alter previous programs for fear of a negative effect on their next assignment.

Many workshop participants believed that an integrated command team with military commanders and civilian experts on equal footing (except when security issues are involved) should determine agricultural development priorities. Other participants noted that integrated command teams nominally already exist in Afghan PRTs. However, advisors shared many examples in which this arrangement did not work in practice. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, commanders and senior officers need training on the importance of agriculture to the national and local economies. In theater, the commanding general should issue a directive regarding the importance of assisting the agriculture sector and revise measures of effectiveness and guidelines on project evaluation. Instead of counting buildings completed, measurement should include the number of agriculture projects and initiatives begun or enhanced.³

Relatively Low Grades of USDA Advisors. The relatively low grades of some agricultural advisors caused them to lose influence and prestige in the eyes of some commanders and civilians from other agencies. This especially affected USDA advisors from rural areas, who might be at the GS-12 or GS-13 levels,⁴ even though they have many years of experience. While these grades are relatively high in relation to the cost of living in rural communities, they are considered

midlevel by Washington standards and of lesser rank in the eyes of military commanders and some Foreign Service Officers. This often made a significant difference in terms of access to officers

even where good working relationships existed, the constant rotation of PRT personnel threatened the continuity of programs and progress

and commanders, resources, escorts, accommodations, favors, and, most importantly, the weight and seriousness accorded to their opinions. One participant remarked that the commander paid attention to the State representative because of State's Chief of Mission authority; he listened to USAID officers because they had funding; but he just tolerated USDA advisors.

Participants floated several ideas to improve the perceived status (grade) of USDA advisors within the PRT. A directive from the PRT team leader's home agency (DOD/State) aimed at reinforcing the equal status of the PRT agricultural expert would be useful. Providing USDA with its own stabilization and reconstruction funding (see below) would give the advisors more independence and prestige in the eyes of military commanders and other civilian agency officials. Temporary promotions for USDA personnel deployed to PRTs would be an additional way to mitigate the problem of their undermined authority vis-à-vis interagency colleagues. So three possible remedies were suggested:

- ❖ inclusion of civil development operations in military training
- ❖ temporary promotions of USDA personnel to GS grades that match their interagency colleagues

- ❖ allocation of dedicated USDA funding sources for PRT projects.

Importance of Interpersonal Relationships.

USDA advisors asserted that their ability to work effectively with interagency partners depended almost entirely on developing positive interpersonal relationships. While many participants said they had good experiences with the military in terms of cooperation and support, others had negative experiences. Some advisors, especially those who had spent their whole careers in regional U.S. offices, had no prior work experience with partner agencies. Even where good working relationships existed, the constant rotation of PRT personnel threatened the continuity of programs and progress.

To reduce tension in the field, it would be helpful for USDA advisors to train with the military members of the PRT, or at the very least meet them before deployment. Incoming PRT advisors should recognize that developing good interpersonal relationships in the field is critical to the success of the PRT advisor regardless of the team's structure, command relationships, or funding sources. PRT members should train together to promote these working relationships at the outset and familiarize themselves with the missions of partnering agencies before deployment. Furthermore, all elements of the team should ideally deploy at the same time to aid unit cohesion. Some advisors suggested that personnel across all agencies—even those who do not deploy—should participate in cross-training and exercises with their PRT partner agencies.

PRT Organization and Command and Control

Unclear and Overlapping Military Chains of Command. Advisors discussed at length the numerous chains of command in the military, including the roles and reporting chains of the

task force, brigade, and regional commanders,⁵ and how these competing power centers sometimes caused confusion and lack of coordination among USDA and civilian agency officials. The multiple military chains of command added to the challenges for USDA advisors to get their voices heard.

Under the Integrated Campaign Plan issued in August 2009, the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces–Afghanistan are currently working to consolidate military command and control lines for the Afghan theater. For future agricultural advisors, it would be advantageous to have an explanation of military command and control relationships included in the relevant USDA PRT handbooks.

Agriculture as Separate Pillar. Most advisors believed that agriculture should be treated as a separate sector, or pillar, in addition to such traditional areas as governance, rule of law, and economic development. Right now, agriculture tends to get lumped into the broader pillar of economic development, which is often led by persons with little agricultural background. Advisors from Afghanistan suggested that agriculture should be represented as a separate activity during the commander’s morning briefings.

Inappropriate Expertise of Agricultural Advisors for Particular PRTs. Advisors perceived that PRTs were not put together with any prior analysis of the goals and projects for the particular regions. PRT members often did not know what expertise members of their own team possessed, and agricultural advisors expressed a desire to know what expertise their counterparts in other PRTs had. Some agricultural advisors lamented that often advisors in other regions would have been better suited to the PRT in which they were stationed.

As an initial matter, it would be helpful to create a database showing where people are

located, their expertise, and current projects in order to coordinate efforts in the field. Access to this information would enable greater coordination among PRTs to prevent duplication of tasks and promote more efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, a mobile team with the ability to respond to requests for aid in project completion or monitoring where needed would be useful. Moreover, when recruiting advisors, the hiring manager needs to look for candidates with a variety of experiences, who have done different jobs, shown ingenuity, and know they may be called upon to do just about anything. Increased overlap between rotations (see below) might also help to mitigate this problem.

Poor Coordination Between Incoming and Outgoing Personnel. The level of coordination between incoming and outgoing personnel was insufficient to facilitate a smooth transition and maximize information-sharing. Several advisors noted that it is not possible to prepare for everything that can happen in the field and that after the initial acclimation period, new advisors should reassess their goals and identify the most urgent issues in the area of operation. In addition, many expressed concern that their projects would not be continued at the end of their assignment.

Hand-off procedures between incoming and outgoing teams need to be standardized and information dissemination improved regarding new advisors and their areas of expertise. An overlap of 2 months would be ideal to preserve established relationships and allow for the introduction of the advisor to local contacts. However, the new agricultural advisor should not blindly follow the path of the previous advisor; some reassessment of current projects may be needed. An alternative model, suggested by USDA, would be to have two agricultural advisors per PRT with a 6-month overlap.

Unreliable Email Communication Between PRT Members. Advisors expressed the importance of being on the right email lists in order to stay current on new projects, procedures, and meetings. Many advisors maintained up to five email accounts, including their home agency accounts, which were sometimes unreliable. As a result, they resorted to Google and Hotmail accounts as the most reliable means of sending email. In addition, some advisors did not like using their DOD email accounts when communicating with locals because of the potential impression that they were part of the military.

One participant recommended creating an online SharePoint server that would allow PRT members to post their schedules, as well as any other vital information, to help coordinate activities and ensure that everyone was kept abreast of programs, meetings, and new procedures. The server could be used to post information on PRT members, their areas of expertise, and current projects, and could also serve as a useful tool when advisors rotate out and new advisors arrive.⁶

Agribusiness Development Teams

Many advisors in Afghanistan highlighted the insufficient coordination between the U.S. Army National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) activities and PRT agriculture projects.⁷ Several state National Guards have begun to form such teams, and there are now five ADTs in Afghanistan. ADTs do not come under the PRT command structure. According to most participants, the quality of the teams in Afghanistan and their individual members varied—some were good and some were not. In general, ADTs work under 3- to 5-year plans and have some distinct advantages over USDA advisors, including their own funding. ADTs have combat training and the transport and logistical support necessary to move

around the region and confer with farmers and ministry officials with far greater ease.

ADTs are often staffed with experienced farmers, agribusiness owners, and sometimes USDA staff. The ADTs often consider their staffs to be more experienced than the USDA advisors and believed that they have sufficient expertise to manage the agriculture sector programming without additional assistance from USDA. Frequently, the ADT commander is at a higher grade than the PRT commander, resulting in less influence for the USDA advisor over decisions affecting the agriculture sector.

Workshop participants believed that USDA and ADTs need to jointly identify issues that limit their effective coordination on agricultural issues and programs. They recommended incorporating USDA advisors into the ADTs. The Civil-Military Integrating Instructions contained in the Integrated Campaign Plan issued in August 2009 foresee both USDA and ADT representation on Provincial Integrated Teams.

Projects

Advisors reported that successful agriculture projects depend on having in place critical infrastructure such as energy, water, transportation, and communications. These areas are typically handled by members of the economic development teams, but often there is no coordination of strategies with agricultural advisors. The work of the advisors should complement the development strategies and work of other PRT members. Surveys of the district reflecting the limitations of the current infrastructure should be provided to agricultural advisors before deployment so they can assess the feasibility of agricultural development projects.

USDA advisors were unhappy with certain agribusiness efforts used for short-term

counterinsurgency objectives. Advisors attributed these actions both to the military (through CERP funding) and to USAID. Short-term employment threatened to distort the local labor market, artificially increasing pay and stripping farms of laborers. Workshop participants recommended that agricultural advisors be included in operational planning for counterinsurgency operations.⁸

Finally, agricultural advisors found themselves entangled with issues pertaining to property, water, conservation, and agricultural laws. Sometimes agricultural advisors were unintentionally aiding illegal activity through projects that violated local government procedures and local law. Workshop participants recommended that relevant legal issues be included in the interagency planning and that USDA advisors be trained in local law and have access to PRT legal support.

Host Nation Relations

Importance of Local Buy-in and Understanding Local Culture. PRTs attempting to achieve buy-in from local governance and community leaders found themselves vulnerable to the political concerns of local power players. Projects could stall at any point if one group thought it was working against its interest or too much to the advantage of another group. Farmers' unions in particular would compete along ethnic lines, and many advisors found that working through local councils, rather than directly with sheikhs and local leaders, neutralized some of the maneuvering. Agricultural advisors should receive training on dealing with local power politics and information on local power structures before deployment. Moreover, as suggested above, some significant overlap between advisors' tours would facilitate much more rapid on-the-job learning about local conditions.

Local involvement was a key leading indicator of project success. In Iraq, U.S. funding was most effective when matched with Iraqi government time, money, and other resources. Advisors found that when there was true local support for a project, the Iraqis were extremely skillful at obtaining their own money. Projects proposed by Iraqis to the PRT were also more likely to flourish. Workshop participants advised that development projects must achieve local buy-in at the outset and recommended that agricultural advisors be instructed how to look for local demand signals. The extent of local buy-in should feature prominently in project evaluations.

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Need for Understanding Corruption and Kickbacks in Context. Advisors were often unprepared to deal with local corruption. Conflicting objectives of achieving local buy-in and promoting good governance forced advisors to choose between “greasing the wheel” and not getting the cooperation of local officials. USDA advisors were unsure of the extent to which corruption was a function of “a few bad apples” or a part of local culture that could not be changed. Workshop participants recommended more pre-deployment training on corruption and cultural familiarity. Improved institutional knowledge about local actors would also prepare advisors for working with host nation governments. In addition, the USDA report suggests that the department could explore ways of tapping into current U.S. efforts to improve sociocultural awareness such as the Human Terrain System, Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, and the Defense Intelligence Agency's Human Factors Analysis Center.

Need for Reliable Interpreters. Advisors complained that most of the well-trained and reliable interpreters were retained by Embassy staff and other high-level organizations. Workshop participants suggested training educated interpreters in agriculture and employing them as replacement advisors. In addition, commanders should ensure that a sufficient number of skilled interpreters are delegated to tactical operations and not held by higher officials, and interpreters should receive assignments consistent with their skills and background.

advisors should receive training on Iraqi or Afghan culture and history and on how to negotiate and work with tribal leaders, host government officials, extension agents, farmers, and other agricultural stakeholders

Funding and Oversight

Control of Money Equals Control of Policy. Workshop participants noted that because USAID and DOD controlled the funding, they also controlled the development agenda, which allowed them to act without consulting other PRT members and with little oversight of their activities. Because agricultural advisors did not bring any money to the table, they had to rely primarily on the military for funding. Many felt as though they had to constantly sell their ideas. According to the agricultural advisors, the projects most likely to be funded and supported by the military were not necessarily the most useful ones. USDA advisors were seen as a burden and a nuisance because they did not bring funding to the table.⁹ Most advisors thought it would be helpful for the USDA advisors to have access to their agency's seed money in order to set their own agendas,

jumpstart small-scale agriculture projects, and gain the respect of other PRT members.

Poor Oversight and Management of Projects. The three-bid process of contracting was slow and ineffective. Many projects were lost because it took money so long to filter through the system. USAID only allocated money for large-scale projects and rarely gave the small amounts of money that most agriculture projects required. Advisors complained that once USAID gave money to contractors, there would be no followup, and many cited the need for greater accountability of USAID funds. Another problem was that the bidding process did not account for the agricultural year, which meant that by the time the bidding process was complete, the planting season for crops might have already passed. Furthermore, it can be difficult to know at what point U.S. funding assistance becomes counterproductive as each province and district has its own leadership and priorities.

Many workshop participants believed that USDA advisors should have some authority over funding either by direct control or through some type of signoff mechanism. An approval committee for granting funds could yield effective input from all areas along with greater oversight of USAID funding and projects.

Training and Personnel

Inadequate Predeployment Training and Intelligence. Many agricultural advisors described difficulty adjusting to Iraqi/Afghan culture and noted that successful interaction with locals required an in-depth understanding of the nuances and cultural sensitivities of the people. The right temperament for work in the field is a crucial aspect of successful interaction, and some advisors suggested the use of personality tests during training. Advisors should receive



Worker prepares plumbing for construction project sponsored by Nangarhar Agribusiness Development Team

training on Iraqi or Afghan culture and history and on how to negotiate and work with tribal leaders, host government officials, extension agents, farmers, and other agricultural stakeholders.

Many PRT members are ill informed about local conditions before arrival. The broad economic situation of the countries and their relevant agricultural issues need to be introduced prior to deployment. Also, many documents such as DOD country reports, USAID reports, soil reports, and weather reports would have been helpful had the advisors known they were available to them. In addition, PRT members need access to detailed sociocultural and economic information and intelligence for their area, either through each home agency or through the PRT support structure.

Difficulty in Extending Tours. Some agricultural advisors were willing to extend their tours, but their home bureaus often could not backfill behind the deployed staff. Therefore, the home agency is reluctant to give permission for extensions, and career employees are reluctant to take an initial position or extend without guarantee of having their position held. The Agriculture Secretary should encourage USDA bureaus to support the U.S. reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq by accommodating employees' requested extensions beyond 1 year and by guaranteeing their position upon their return. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ USAID has a central role in agricultural development strategies, as do other U.S. Government participants, including the Services. Some observers argue that USAID should take the lead in agriculture strategy in consultation with USDA. With respect to Afghanistan, the USDA report notes that the Department of State, under the auspices of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, has developed the Agricultural Assistance Strategy for Afghanistan, which is a coordinated effort among State, USAID, USDA, the Services, and other agencies to provide agriculture assistance to Afghanistan's national and regional governments. The USDA report also cites the United States Government Integrated Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan (August 10, 2009), which was issued after the tours of the workshop participants.

² The USDA report notes that "it remains to be seen whether the Civil-Military Integrating Instructions contained in the Integrated Campaign Plan for Afghanistan will help to address this issue." The instructions create a civilian-military integrated decisionmaking structure to enhance coordination and unity of effort at the national, regional, and district levels. USDA is one of the participating agencies.

³ The USDA report notes, "Potentially, this could be accommodated within the Interagency Quarterly Assessments proposed in the Integrated Campaign Plan for Afghanistan, and the Office of Provincial Affairs performance assessment system in Iraq."

⁴ The Center for Complex Operations survey showed that over half of the respondents were either GS-12s or GS-13s, and no agricultural advisor was above a GS-14.

⁵ In Afghanistan, there were several chains of command in the military. First is the battalion or task force (TF) commander, who is an O-5 representing the maneuver element in the provincial area of responsibility. The TF commander reports to an O-6 brigade commander (regional commander). The PRT commander is an O-5 and also reports to the regional commander but, because of tradition and military culture, generally does not have the same status as the TF (maneuver) commander, even though they share the same rank. Finally, there is the Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) commander, who is generally an O-6 and thus outranks the PRT commander. The ADT commander reports directly to the regional commander, thus bypassing the PRT commander.

⁶ The USDA report notes that currently USDA is developing a SharePoint site for its Iraq PRT members.

⁷ The Center for Army Lessons Learned issued the Agribusiness Development Team Handbook in November 2009, after the workshop took place. See <<http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/docs/10-10/toc.asp>>. The command and control structure of the ADTs calls for USDA and USAID advisors to the ADT commander.

⁸ USDA notes in the report that this could be done through the civil-military mechanisms proposed in the Integrated Campaign Plan.

⁹ According to several workshop participants, USDA funding was in fact available to them, but no one knew how to procure it.