Women in Agriculture Farm Day 2013

31 August, 2013; Kabul, Afghanistan

The AAEP Women in Agriculture project’s horticultural training center at Darulaman Farm demonstrates many techniques and novel practices in organic farming and kitchen gardens, including compost production, apiculture, vermiculture, poultry farming, and container gardening. Farm Day showcased this innovative way of Teaching and Learning by Doing.

Objectives of Farm Day
1. To open the demonstration farm to the public to use for training and cooperation toward the goal of improving family food security and nutrition in Afghanistan.
2. To showcase and extend knowledge gained about the various organic farming methods and simple, affordable technologies that are modeled on the demonstration farm.
3. To provide a platform for cooperation between DAIL-Home Economics and the other departments of MAIL.

Farm Day was attended by officials and representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock/MAIL (including the Minister, the Director of Home Economics and the Director of Livestock), the Kabul-DAIL (Director), Kabul University, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Environmental Protection Ministry, NGO’s and partners. Many Extension and project staff attended, along with DAIL extension managers from 14 surrounding districts and 12 women from the 10,000 Women Project in Istalif.

The program began with a beautiful recitation of the Quran from a Kabul University student intern. It was followed by an introduction of special guests and a brief speech from the Minister of Agriculture. He asked that the attendees note the new technologies presented, and he looked forward to seeing a replication in every region of the country! AAEP-WIA presented the Minister and the Director of Home Economics with a simple token of appreciation for allowing us to work with them and the women of Afghanistan. One of the Farmer Field School leaders shared her experiences with the farm trainings and the demonstration farm in her community. Sophia Wilcox then gave an overview of the three facets of the WIA program, the Farmer Field Schools, the Work Groups, and the mentoring program, and she described where the project will go from here.

After the program, approximately 200 attendees walked over to the farm to tour the various plots. The women from the Farmer Field School and the University interns were stationed around the farm in order to explain the different methods and comparisons being utilized on the farm. Refreshment tents were located around the farm as well, so that visitors could take a break to drink lemonade or eat some fresh watermelon along the way. The Minister of Agriculture had a large group following him, and he willingly took lead of the tour sharing all he had learned on his visit the week prior. He said you will learn more here in a day than 4 years in University! -- Learning by Doing! TV One invited Marghuba Safi to interview and discuss the WIA project in their studio. The segment aired on Tuesday and included footage of Farm day and the different aspects of the farm. AAEP-WIA received many positive comments and reviews of the day.

Following the event, the USDA Embassy staff also took a tour. Peter Benson interviewed the FFS Leaders and the University interns, taking time to learn about the farm, the plants, the methods and their experiences working on the farm.