



SUCCESS STORY

Afghan Women Improve Animal Health

Female para-veterinarians are increasing livestock productivity while supporting their families.



Photo: USAID/ASAP

Momena Mohammadi uses her stethoscope to check the health of cattle in the province of Hirat.

“If you compare the situation with some years ago, it’s much different now,” Mohammadi said. “Women are active in many aspects of life in Afghanistan. They are going to school and operating businesses. Things are changing.”

When para-veterinarian Momena Mohammadi drives to villages to treat farmers’ livestock, other Afghan women ask her how they too can become a paravet. Women are not the only ones eager to follow in her footsteps; Mohammadi’s husband and eldest son also want to earn a living through veterinary services.

“Most of the people in Afghanistan are involved in agriculture and livestock, so this has an important role in Afghanistan’s economy and in improving the livelihoods of families,” said 30-year-old Mohammadi. “Strengthening this sector will help all the people and the general economy of Afghanistan.”

With the assistance of USAID, Mohammadi graduated from a paravet course and began running a veterinary field unit (VFU) more than two years ago in Hirat province. Mohammadi has clients in approximately 15 villages and offers services like vaccination, pregnancy tests, de-worming, and castration. Often she will drive her car alone to see clients and treat livestock, but occasionally her husband will accompany her to more remote villages.

Her husband is supportive of the career, and Mohammadi is the sole breadwinner for her family, which includes three sons ranging in age from five to 16. Mohammadi estimates that her gross sales are 20,000 afghanis, or \$400, each month.

Mohammadi attended a paravet program for six months to learn about diseases, nutrition, anatomy, and other subjects that enable her to improve livestock health. She also received training in business management to help her manage her VFU. Mohammadi graduated first in a class of 20 men and women. USAID provided equipment, ranging from a refrigerator for medicine storage to surgical instruments, to help her establish her VFU.

Mohammadi is one of several female paravets assisted by USAID. With such support, Mohammadi said women are becoming a growing force in Afghan society. “If you compare the situation with some years ago, it’s much different now,” said Mohammadi. “Women are active in many aspects in life in Afghanistan. They are going to school and operating businesses. Things are changing.”