

MEDIA ADVISORY

USDA Satellite Features Feed

July 16, 2009

Contact: USDA-TV (202) 720-6445 or (202) 720-3319

FEATURE – USDA AG EXPERTS IN AFGHANISTAN, Part 2 - FARAH

INTRO: Experts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture are helping to rebuild farming communities in Afghanistan. The USDA's Patrick O'Leary has more in the second of a 5-part series. (2:02)

Richardson VO: It'd be great just to give these people a little stability and a little hope. You can see it in their faces. They've had a tough life. And here in Farah, forget trying to make a better life, just trying to make a life out here is hard going

DARREN RICHARDSON IS FROM TEXAS, A VETERAN OF THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE. BUT HERE IN AFGHANISTAN'S FARAH (FUR-RAH) PROVINCE, HE'S A KEY MEMBER OF A TEAM HELPING TO REBUILD THIS WAR-TORN NATION – ONE FARM AT A TIME.

Darren Richardson, USDA Ag Expert: My main background has been in range management, irrigation assistance and erosion control. Here in Farah, we're extremely dry, four inches of rainfall a year. We're looking at check dams on some watersheds, we have irrigation canals that we're refurbishing, some diversion works that we're helping them rebuild, retaining walls to help stabilize stream banks.

THE U.S. TEAM ALSO OPERATES A DEMONSTRATION FARM, AND HELPS THE TEACHERS AT THE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL.

Richardson: We have to give that water in the form of irrigation. (Translator speaks) And if I give you an answer that doesn't answer your question, ask it again, I may not have understood you.

Richardson: Also being able to provide them some textbooks in Dari and Pashtu, which they haven't had before. *I hope you can get good use out of them.*

Abdul Woudoud, Teacher: Thank you for bringing the books and explain about the agriculture and irrigation. All the students are happy and I hope to continue in the future.

SMALL SUCCESSES ARE PART OF GREATER GOALS FOR THE U-S-D-A ADVISORS AND THEIR TEAMMATES.

Rich Sessoms, U.S. Navy: We work closely with the governor of Farah to identify projects out in town that we can do to improve the life of the people, and hopefully it will improve their opinion of the government, create support of the government, less support for the Taliban..

Richardson: It's a great feeling being over here. To help provide stability and hope out here, you don't get opportunities like this very often working for U-S-D-A.

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M PAT O'LEARY.

TAG: For more information on USDA activities in Afghanistan and in Iraq, including openings for agricultural experts, send an email to: prt@fas.usda.gov