

MEDIA ADVISORY

USDA Satellite Features Feed

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FEATURE – USDA AG EXPERTS IN AFGHANISTAN, Part 3 - ZABOL

INTRO: U.S. Department of Agriculture experts are helping to rebuild the farming areas of Afghanistan. The USDA's Patrick O'Leary has more in the third of a 5-part series.

(2:05)

Greco VO: This province Zabol is probably the poorest. And I should hope that whatever we do here will pull this country into another century, perhaps.

FOR CHRISTOPH GRECO (GREH-COE), A U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ADVISOR, SECURITY IS THE MAIN FACTOR IN THE UNSTABLE ZABOL (ZAH-BUHL) PROVINCE OF AFGHANISTAN. HEAVILY ARMED SUPPORT IS NEEDED FOR THE SIMPLEST VISIT TO THE VILLAGE, WHERE RESOURCES ARE FEW AND CHALLENGES ARE MANY.

The village gets their drinking water, they do laundry, everything from here?

Christoph Greco, USDA Ag Expert: They have a problem with water here. So the village has gone together to get a well.

GRECO IS PART OF A PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, OR P-R-T, ALONG WITH OTHER U-S AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES. AMONG THEIR GOALS IS STABILITY THROUGH IMPROVED AGRICULTURE.

Greco: Capacity building has been our main focus here, over the past year, my main focus. Trying to build some things up so it can get a little more secure. We've been training their agriculture extensionists. Now we're going to bring in progressive farmers, train them, let them go out to their districts and be connected to the agriculture department.

Bismallah Harifel, Director of Agriculture, Zabol Province: (through translator) The PRT project has a positive effect on Zabol. And we have a close relationship with Zabol PRT members.

Greco: This village, also, we gave them some wheat seed. They're under-cropping those trees with wheat, which is very smart.

Basharmal Nasar, Contractor: (through translator): I am extremely happy working closely with the farmers, because that is my expertise. Whenever I am helping them with the new seeds, it really is making me happy.

PROGRESS IS SLOW BUT STEADY FOR THE ROUGHLY TWO DOZEN U-S-D-A AG ADVISORS IN AFGHANISTAN.

Greco: We need more people here. There's much more focus now on agriculture. And there's certainly the opportunity here.

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: pri@fas.usda.gov