JOINT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES

Catalizing Transformational Development

Crops Suffer Due to Tiny Pest

NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN – If you love melons, northern Afghanistan is the place to be! Northern Afghanistan boasts the largest melon production area in the country and offers a variety of these tasty fruits. Unfortunately, farmers have to deal with melon flies damaging their crops, limiting their production and income.

JDA began research in melon fly control on *36* hectares of farm land across three provinces of northern Afghanistan. The results showed that farmers were applying highly toxic insecticides frequently and, typically, with poor control. JDA was able to develop a plan for the proper use and type of insecticide farmers should use. Farmers who used the correct chemical and field sanitation methods on their melon crops increased their profits 71-112% from 2006 to 2007. Moreover, compared to many farmers' current practices, JDA's approach takes less time and money, and dramatically decreases their exposure to harmful pesticides.

JDA works with the Food Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO assists in the experimental design of some farming plots and JDA provides FAO with spinosad (a beneficial insecticide less toxic than any other pesticide available in Afghanistan) for their field experiment work.
JDA placed two Balkh University Faculty of Agriculture (BUFA) students to work in the FAO melon fly lab as interns. These BUFA students gained first hand practical experience in a controlled scientific study, which is something most BUFA students never get in their four years of study.

FAO organized a joint melon fly meeting with JDA, the Afghan Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and the Livestock and the Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program to present findings from the research and program implementation. Directors from six northern provinces were present.

Currently JDA and FAO are continuing training in a number of the northern provinces including members of government, input dealers and farmers. Input dealers supply farmers with pesticides, and farmers buy what the dealer recommends. Whatever the input dealer has on hand is what they sell regardless if it is the right or best chemical to control melon fly. Input dealers must be trained to know what chemical to apply, how to properly and safely apply it and how often. The same training is being given to farmers.







Melons are a good source of income for these farmers, however, the melon fly is damaging their crops.