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Kholm Tractor Days



Kholm Afghanistan- For some young boys in Kholm, a village in northern Afghanistan, this was not just another day at school. The tractor demonstration was coming to town. The boys left school and walked to a nearby field to meet their fathers to see how this new farming equipment works. Their fathers support their families by growing "gandum" (wheat) and "jow" (animal feed). The boys' fathers are members of an agricultural cooperative, and today twenty-four of them have come out to see something new, a Chinese Two-Wheel Tractor.



JDA staff contacted the chief of the agricultural cooperative in Kholm to explain how the Chinese tractors work. They are extremely efficient and more cost-effective in the long-run than the traditional oxen and plow method that the farmers currently use. The chief was very interested in the tractor and invited them to come to a field they would prepare to show all the farmers, first-hand, how the tractors work.

The farmers were amazed at the tractor's capabilities and enjoyed the opportunity to plow a row of the field themselves. Though the day was a success, there are yet many obstacles facing these farmers and others like them all across Afghanistan.

The farmers in Kholm only have expendable cash after a crop yield, which only happens once a year and even then is unpredictable. To purchase any large farm equipment, they need some type of payment schedule to match their cash flow. But for lending institutions and businesses, this is difficult because of their own cash flow needs; they need a monthly income of loan repayments.



All the banks, credit unions and microfinance institutions in northern Afghanistan are struggling for the same reason - it is difficult to collect monthly payments from borrowers. JDA staff have been hearing about these problems from lenders and farmers throughout Afghanistan at the agricultural fairs in which they have taken part in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif over the past. As a result, several loan products have been structured with loan payment options for farmers. Farmers need mechanization to increase their production and reduce their labor input, which will directly increase their ability to have more income and a greater quality of life.

