

Joint Development Associates International

December 2011

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our second month of Scenes from Afghanistan; an opportunity for you to meet the people whose lives we touch and see the places we visit.

Northern Afghanistan has already had snow and the December cold is an unrelenting foe that is never truly conquered. Homes, offices and classrooms may be heated with charcoal, dung, sawdust, wood or diesel. There are no holiday lights and the New Year doesn't come here until March 20th with the spring equinox. Winter wheat is in the ground with the hope that snow and rain will provide the moisture it needs.

Please do share **Scenes** with others! Whether the interest is in promoting healthier lives for families in rural areas, introducing farmers to new crops or adding agricultural lab work for interns at the local university - we would love to have your friends and colleagues join us. **Scenes** is also available by email. Visit our website www.jdainternational.org to sign up.

For all of us in the US and Afghanistan,

Bob and Cathy Hedlund

Juicy Strawberries Huge Success in Sholgara

"Berries of the ground" as strawberries are called in Dari, are a hugely popular and highly profitable crop in Afghanistan. And in late fall a new generation of strawberry plants were put in the ground.

Building on the success of a similar project to introduce the juicy fruit in Balkh province a few years ago, JDA repeated efforts this year. Fifty-five farmers from 15 villages in Sholgara, south of Balkh province in Northern Afghanistan, learned how to prepare the soil, plant and care for the fruit, as well as harvest and market their new crop. Hot temperatures and lack of refrigeration means the fruit needs to be picked, sold and eaten quickly. But many Afghan families have never tasted a strawberry, and now the delicious berries are in high demand.



Starting with 500 plants each, most participating farmers plan to advance their agronomy training next season, and extend their enterprises through the sale of strawberry crowns. Some farmers, who had enough fruit to sell in the markets in the nearby city of Mazar-e-Sharif, say that strawberry sales made them more profit even this first year than other high value crops such as safflower.



Discover Afghanistan

The Afghan hound was called "the dog of Noah's Ark" by tribesmen hunters of Afghanistan. It is one of the most ancient breeds and its history goes back some 8000 years. Long-haired greyhound dogs were described in Egypt as early as 4000 B.C. In his native land, Afghanistan, the Afghan hound excelled as a hunter where he was used against a variety of wild game, such as the antelope, gazelle and snow leopard.

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