



SIXTH SIX-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT FOR PROJECT

REPORT COVER PAGE

Participating UN Organization:

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN

Cluster: A

Agriculture, Food Security, Environment and Natural Resources Management

Project No. and Project Title: A5 - 10

Restoration and development of essential livestock services in Iraq
(OSRO/IRQ/407/UDG)

Report Number:

6

Reporting Period:

1 January to 30 June 2007

Project Budget:

US\$8 545 735

List Implementing Partners:

- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
- General Company of Animal Production

Project Coverage/Scope:

National coverage

Abbreviations and acronyms:

MoA – Ministry of Agriculture
AUSAID – Australian Agency for International Development
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
AI – Artificial Insemination

Project Duration/Closed Project:

2 years (and extension under request)



I. Purpose

1.1 Main objectives, outcomes and outputs of the project

The main objective is to restore essential state services in the livestock sector. For cattle, this is achieved through rehabilitation of the Artificial Insemination (AI) facilities so as to restore the nation-wide distribution of semen to cattle producers. Small ruminant production is to be enhanced by re-establishing the national sheep and goat breeding and genetic improvement programs. All livestock sectors need a resumption of feed and feed additive quality and safety control systems. In addition to supplying the required equipment, the project aims at providing refresher technical training to re-establish the capabilities of management and technical staff at both AI and feed quality control facilities. Outdated information on the animal production sector makes effective sectoral planning difficult. Surveys and review studies are therefore planned so as to quantify the production base and its productive efficiency, and identify constraints on marketing and input supply.

Expected outcomes are:

- Central facilities and regional artificial insemination centres in operation; the production of quality semen based on the supply of equipment breeding bulls and technical staff training.
- A functioning national, central laboratory for feed analysis supporting the feed industry and the livestock sector as a whole, through the supply of up-to-date equipment and training for technical and management staff.
- Sheep and goat breeding programs through the supply of breeding stock of indigenous breeds serving as nucleus flocks for multiplication and distribution.
- Livestock extension personnel able to provide appropriate extension support for the livestock sector.
- Surveys and review studies leading to the formulation of long-term national strategies and policies for the development of the livestock sector.

Expected outputs are:

- Procurement of breeding stock and other inputs for supply to central and regional AI facilities.
- Equipment installation and maintenance services for the central feed laboratory.
- Equipment installation and maintenance services for the liquid nitrogen plant.
- Establishment of local contracts for the installation and maintenance of the equipment for the central feed laboratory.
- Training abroad of senior technical staff to:
 - implement codes of practices in feed quality and safety according to the recent and internationally recognized standards and regulations;
 - manage the facilities;
 - act as a training resource upon returning to Iraq.
- Procurement of bulls, sheep and goats and arranging delivery and quarantine upon arrival



of the animals in Iraq.

- Conduct workshops in Amman with Iraqi government personnel to design and implement a national livestock survey and sub-sector studies using Animal Production and Planning Department staff for the survey work at governorate and central levels.
- Assist in organizing a series of workshops in Iraq on extension programming for extension staff.

1.2 Reference to how the programme/project relates to the UN Assistance Strategy for Iraq, UN Millennium Development Goals, Joint Needs Assessment, Iraqi National Development Strategy

FAO will ensure project activities are integrated into the overall UN strategy for Iraq. This supports the Iraqi National Development Strategy while contributing to the Millennium Development Goals. The project is designed to achieve:

- Enhanced and sustainable long-term food production and natural resource management;
- Rehabilitation and reconstruction of infrastructure;
- Strengthened institutional development and capacity building;
- Support to legislation, policy and strategy formulation;
- Enhanced employment and income-generation;
- Enhanced environmental restoration and conservation.

1.3 Main international and national implementing partners involved, their specific roles and responsibilities in project implementation and their interaction with the agency

The main implementing partners are the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture in general, and the Department of Animal Production and the General Company for Livestock Services in particular. These are directly responsible for all the animal production issues and activities inside Iraq and are the main counterparts of FAO for this project. The project directly targets, supports and collaborates with the senior management staff of these institutions as well as with their animal production personnel in the field.

FAO has also sought collaboration with a variety of international expert institutions for institutional development and technical training. This includes Wageningen University in the Netherlands, the Royal Agricultural College in England, the Desert Research Centre (DRC) in Cairo, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid zones and Dry lands (ACSAD) in Syria and The National School of Agriculture (ENA) in Morocco.

II. Resources

Financial Resources



2.1 Original approved budget: US\$ 8,545,735

Total funds provided: US\$ 8,545,727

Total commitments: US\$ 7,365,858

Total disbursement: US\$ 7,097,014

2.2 The approved project budget amounts to US\$8.5 million. However, as per UNDG ITF guidance (communication 24/08/05 between Bisrat Aklilu, Executive Coordinator UNDG ITF, and Henri Carsalade, Assistant Director-General Technical Cooperation Department FAO) allowing for full flexibility in project budget management, US\$1.7 million was temporarily transferred to the project C5-08 Restoration of Veterinary Services. This transfer of funds was necessary and urgent since the latter project received only US\$5 million out of the totally approved budget of US\$10.5 million was received, and the Avian Influenza outbreak in Iraq required emergency assistance from the Veterinary project to the Ministry of Agriculture for which otherwise no funding would be available. However, since the remaining funds for the Veterinary project did not arrive as quickly as foreseen and the temporarily transferred funds could therefore not be returned to the Livestock project, the latter project had to be slowed down and at some stage some activities had to be halted or postponed.

Only on 24/07/06, a much appreciated US\$1.8 million contribution towards the Veterinary project was received from the Government of Australia through UNDG ITF, which enabled FAO to return US\$1.3 million (of the US\$1.7 million) to the Livestock project. This somewhat relieved the implementation constraints, but certain activities still had to be kept pending.

On 19/03/07, another contribution of US\$1.9 million towards the Veterinary project was received from the Government of Australia through UNDG ITF. Of this amount, the last remaining US\$0.4 million was returned to the Livestock project, finally allowing for the full implementation of the total project.

Obviously, this phased funding and consequently phased implementation caused significant delays in the implementation, for which now an extension until the end of 2007 is being requested.

2.3 Programme Project expenditures

PERSONNEL	\$367,655
CONTRACTS	\$0
TRAINING OF COUNTERPART	\$291,367
TRANSPORT	\$0
SUPPLIES AND COMMODITIES	\$5,190
EQUIPMENT +TRANSPORT	\$40,629
TRAVEL	\$40,675
SECURITY	\$15,075
MISCELLANEOUS	\$5,338



INDIRECT SUPPORT COST	\$28,190
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$794,119

2.4 *Other funding sources:* None

2.5 *Approved budget revisions:* A budget revision is currently under request.

2.6 *Project expenditures for the 1 July to 31 December 2007:* US\$ 1 100 000

Human Resources

2.7 National staff

2 FAO national coordinators, in Baghdad (for Centre/South Iraq) and in Erbil (for KRG governorates), are following the project implementation in relation with MoA department of Animal Production and the General Company for Livestock Services.

2.8 International staff

1 International consultant acting as Chief Technical Advisor for the Project is based in Amman (FAO/Iraq Office relocated in Amman). Other management and administrative staff are co shared with other UNDG ITF projects.

III. Methods of Operating

3.1 Implementation mechanisms

This project is executed by FAO and co-implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture. FAO ensures a timely recruitment of project personnel, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, including the National Project Coordinators (NPC) to coordinate project activities from Baghdad and Erbil with MoA counterparts (livestock services). The International Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) based in Amman is in constant contact with the NPCs and FAO Headquarters. Besides this distant technical as well as operational management, intensive face-to-face meetings in Amman (and occasionally at FAO Headquarters in Rome) with the Ministry of Agriculture interlocutors plus the many training courses and workshops in Amman or overseas, make a good and effective implementation possible though sometimes challenging.

3.2 Procurement procedures

Already in August 2004, FAO, in a written agreement with its key counterpart ministries, has opted for a strong involvement of the ministries in the procurement process, which includes the following elements and which is being applied to date:

- Identification of inputs or services required undertaken jointly by FAO/Iraqi Line Ministry;
- Preparation of detailed specifications, bill of quantities, drawings, delivery time and destination by FAO/Iraqi Line Ministry and endorsed by the latter;



- List of local potential suppliers provided by Iraqi Line Ministry, to be included by FAO in its invitations to bid;
- Tenders launched by FAO inviting local and international potential suppliers;
- Technical review of the offers received and preparation of recommendation carried out jointly by FAO/Iraqi Line Ministry and endorsed by the latter;
- Purchase Orders or Contracts issued by FAO.

3.3 Monitoring system

Cornerstone of the monitoring system for this 'remote control' project implementation, are the monthly reports prepared by the CTA on the basis of input from the NPCs in Erbil and Baghdad. Furthermore, intensive e-mail and telephone contact between FAO headquarters, the CTA and the NPCs as well as periodic visits to Amman by the NPC and the counterparts an adequate monitoring of the project implementation.

IV. Results

4.1 Summary of project progress

Supply and delivery of the essential equipment, goods and materials has been completed at 90% and goes according to schedule. This has improved the operative capacity of the laboratories and field services.

The various training courses have been extremely useful, with trainees showing an evident improvement in knowledge, skill and attitude.

4.2 Progress on outcomes

- Liquid nitrogen equipment worth US\$940 000 arrived to Baghdad on 28 February 2006 already. The construction of the required building by the MoA started late April 2006 and was finished by the end of December 2006. The equipment came into production in February 2007 as one out of two liquid nitrogen plants is currently working. Due to the prevailing security situation in Abu Ghraieb where the livestock centre is located, MoA has decided to install the second liquid nitrogen unit in Mossoul or Basrah. A final decision on this has still to be taken though.
- Central Feed Analysis Laboratory: Due to security reasons, the MoA changed the location of the laboratory from Abu Ghraieb to the Baghdad city centre where a construction of a new laboratory building was started in February 2006 in a properly secured area. At the time of writing, the construction by the MoA is now 90% completed and the remaining 10% requires another 30 days more, according to the construction company. Before the installation of all the equipment already delivered but temporarily stored, additional equipment, worth US\$247,000 has been identified, for which technical specifications were prepared, and, upon endorsement by MoA, for which tendering is in progress.
- Embryo transfer equipment: A tender was issued and at the time of writing, goods are about to be delivered to the State Board of Agriculture Research (SBAR).



- GPS equipment for national livestock survey: A local order for the equipment to be used during the forthcoming national livestock survey was issued.
- Computers for national livestock survey: A fair number of notebooks and desktops together with all necessary auxiliary equipment were tendered for.
- Livestock breeding programme: Out of the 30 Holstein Friesian bulls imported from Australia during previous reporting periods, by now three bulls have died due to an acute Enterotoxaemia, but the remaining animals in have started semen production for the artificial insemination programme.

The Awassi sheep, also procured earlier already, started the breeding season in August 2006 and the mating programme was carried out successfully, completing a successful lambing during the reporting period. The first year performances are as follows: Adult mortality 2% ; Twinning 22% ; Fertility 70% ; Lambing 92% ; Lambs mortality 10%.

Likewise, the Shami goats also successfully completed their first kidding. Their first year performances are as follows: Adult mortality 5% ; Twinning 50% ; Fertility 65% ; Kidding 90% ; Kids mortality 8%. For the breeding programme, a very serious constraint is the extremely unsafe situation around Abu Graieb where the AI project and all its facilities are located.

- Livestock extension personnel training of trainers: Two linked training of trainer courses took place in Syria and Morocco for a group of 20 Iraqi livestock extension specialists from all over the country. The training of training courses were to update the trainees' knowledge and skills in specific technical areas of livestock production disciplines and in extension planning and delivery. The first course was delivered by the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) in Damascus, Syria from 27 January to 11 February 2007, immediately followed by a course from 14 to 27 February 2007 with the National School of Agriculture (ENA) in Meknes, Morocco.

During the forthcoming reporting period, in-country training workshops will be organized and conducted by the above 20 trained staff members, to train participants from all 18 governorates and who in turn will train and guide the farmers in their provinces.

- Embryo transfer techniques training course: A 3.5 week specialist training course on bovine embryo transfer technologies and applications in genetic improvement was delivered to three Iraqi veterinarian specialists. The course took place from 14 March to 7 April 2007, with the Animal Sciences Group, Wageningen University in Lelystad, the Netherlands. The course covered theoretical parts of embryo transfer but focussed on practical training, for which various locations, model farms and fellow specialist training centres were included in the course programme.

- Preparations for a national livestock survey: Since long time, the organization of a national livestock survey is a first priority for the Livestock Department, necessary a basis on which to make strategic choices and formulate a national livestock policy. It was agreed that the MoA itself will do the actual survey, but that FAO will assist in preparatory planning, training and supply of necessary equipment. Besides the procurement of required computer equipment, a livestock survey planning workshop was held from 7 to 9 January 2007 in Amman. The workshop concluded that the following two capacity building activities were to be organized prior to the survey:



- A technical working group meeting (5 Iraqi participants from MoA and MoP and 2 FAO International Consultants) in order to help designing the sampling frame for the survey, based on the computerized database available at the MoP;
- The above technical meeting to be followed by a training workshop for 20 Iraqi survey supervisors/coordinators from all over Iraq, which will be responsible for coordination of the survey in their respective governorates.

Unfortunately, due to administrative problems regarding the establishment of the contract between FAO and the Lead International Consultant, this training workshop as well as the technical working group meeting had to be postponed from June till a later date this year.

4.3 Key outputs

Supply and delivery of the essential equipment, goods and materials has been completed at 90% and goes according to schedule. This has improved the operative capacity of the laboratories and field services considerably.

The training courses abroad and the workshop for livestock survey planning have been extremely useful, with trainees showing an evident improvement in knowledge, skill and motivation. The project during the subject reporting period has especially enhanced the national livestock services capacity to provide appropriate extension support for the livestock sector.

4.4 Main constraints

- The security situation makes the provision of technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture in Iraq difficult. The security situation will necessitate a close review of the feasibility of the MoA conducting a nation-wide livestock survey and extension training programme.
- Security issues prevent on-site project management and implementation is necessarily conducted by remote control and through third parties.
- Most of the Livestock Department's facilities (such as the central warehouse, the artificial insemination programme, the livestock breeding programme and the feed analysis laboratories) are in very unsafe and often inaccessible area of Abu Graieb, Baghdad. This obviously seriously complicates and slows down the Department's activities and our project implementation. MoA's efforts to mitigate this, for example by building a new feed analysis laboratory inside Baghdad, are to be commended, but since they require time to take effect, on the short term serious delays are can not be avoided.
- The process of approving and clearing individuals nominated by MOA to ensure their backgrounds and professional history matches training programs and study tours, is slow.
- There are real problems when dealing with Embassies regarding visa processing for overseas training due to the many time consuming requirements.

Lessons learned and actions taken

- Identifying training needs and suitable specialist trainers require the coordination of a number of organizations and is not always easy.



- The planning of training activities and the nomination of trainees has to be initiated well in advance of the activity as the latter appears to be very time consuming.
- Be as creative and ingenuous as possible in implementing, managing and monitoring activities on the ground.
- Training courses outside Iraq, albeit in the region, are giving an extra and valuable added dimension as they allow for learning from more technically advanced and diversified countries whose livestock systems are well developed.
- Although approved and encouraged by UNDG ITF, temporary ‘borrowing’ of funds from one project until (partial) ITF contributions to another project materialize, has appeared to be very risky and cumbersome and will not be done any more.

4.5 Key partnerships and collaborations

The project is operated in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, specifically the Department of Animal Production and the General Company of Livestock Services. This partnership has proven essential in identifying needs, finalizing input specifications, implementing the training programs and distributing inputs.

Furthermore, FAO cooperates closely with the main development agencies involved in rehabilitating livestock infrastructure and in providing technical support to the animal production sector. These agencies include USAID, AUSAID and other members of the international community.

Future Work Plan

- Technical meetings and workshops to be organized in preparation of MoA’s nation-wide livestock survey.
- Stimulate and assist in the implementation of the Ministry’s in-country extension training programme.
- Finalize the procurement, delivery and installation of the remaining feed laboratory equipment which is currently under tender.

