



SNAPSHOT

Farmers Expand Technical Knowledge

USAID encourages farmers to learn management skills and share new knowledge with the community



Shavqat Juraev, above left, and Ayub Yakhyokhojaev at the demonstration greenhouse in Isfara.

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Through a USAID-sponsored trip to Portland, Oregon, 48-year-old Shavqat Juraev observed how agribusinesses are managed in the United States. He returned home to Isfara in Tajikistan eager to share his experience with community members and professionals.

"Sharing my knowledge and skills with local farmers to improve their work and lives is [now a] passion [of mine]," said Juraev, who has more than 20 years of experience working in agriculture. Juraev serves as an agricultural consultant at Consulting and Information Center "Navid," which supports farmers and representatives of small and medium size enterprises with legal matters and in agricultural production.

Within two months of his return, Juraev submitted a project proposal to the U.S. Embassy Alumni Grant Program to conduct a two-day training workshop on greenhouse gardening to 20 farmers from Isfara. Local initiatives like this support the development of agricultural enterprises in Tajikistan by increasing knowledge among local farmers and promoting active and innovative approaches to producing, marketing, processing and storing agricultural products in rural areas. In April 2010, Juraev received a grant and led his training. The interactive workshop taught modern technologies for greenhouse growing. Participants also learned about greenhouse construction and costs, irrigation systems, vegetable varieties and hybrids, and heating systems.

Four months later, Juraev launched another education project to teach 20 local farmers U.S. growing methods, in collaboration with local producers' and processors' associations.

"I really enjoyed working with these groups, as they are eager to apply the new approaches I shared with them. These practical workshops enable local farmers to start thinking differently and look for opportunities to expand their knowledge and business," said Juraev. As a result, of his efforts, two greenhouses have been opened in the towns of Navgulem and Kulkent.

To promote economic stability, USAID offers home-stay-based and three-week practical training opportunities in the United States. Participants observe how small and medium size agribusinesses are successfully managed, and learn about private-sector led industry standards, such as the benefits of branding, calibration, processing, packaging and storing; determining pricing policies; identifying potential export markets; and cooperation, including lobbying interests through legislators.