

HERAT

Located in the western half of Afghanistan, Herat province shares international borders with the Islamic Republic of Iran to the west and Turkmenistan to the northwest. Within Afghanistan, it borders Farah province to the south and Badghis and Ghor provinces to the east.

Herat's economy is based on agriculture and industry. 70% of its agricultural activity is concentrated in the northern and central districts, which are fed by the Harirod River watershed. Livestock are most commonly raised in the mountainous terrain of the northern, eastern and southern districts.

Herat is best known for producing grapes, pistachios, cashmere, and wool, and more recently saffron, which is now being cultivated throughout the province.

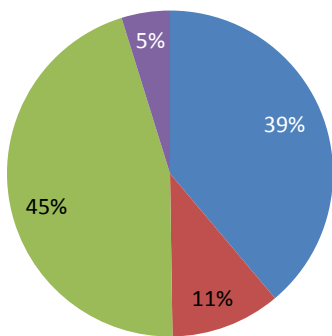
Herat in a Nutshell

- *Surface area:* 55,000 sq. km
- *Capital:* Herat City
- *Districts:* 15 – Adraskan, Chishti Sharif, Enjil, Fersee, Ghouryan, Gulran, Guzara, Herat Centre, Karukh, Kushk Rubat Shangi, Kushk Kohna, , Obey, Pashtun Zarghoon, Shindand, Zendajan
- *Main markets:* Herat, Enjil, Ghouryan, Guzara
- *Population:* 1.7 million inhabitants (72% in rural areas)
- *Most populated districts:* Herat City, Enjil, Shindand, Guzara, Kushk Rubat Shangi
- *Ethnic Groups:* Mainly Tajiks followed by Pashtuns and minority groups of Hazaras, Turkmens, and Baluchs.
- *Main languages:* Dari
- *Kuchi Migration:* Winter, 50-100,000 people; Summer, 100-200,000 people
- *Returnees, IDPs:* Herat is the 7th main destination for 3.4% of the total returnee population (roughly 156,000 individuals), and the 2nd main hosting province for IDPs (15% of the IDP population, nearly 65,000 individuals)

HORTICULTURE

KEY CROPS

Total production (2008): 723,589 metric tons



- Grains: Wheat, Pea, Mung bean, Barley
- Vegetables: Tomato, Cucumber
- Vegetables: Grape, Watermelon, Apricot, Peach, Pistachio
- Fodder & industrial: Alfalfa, Sesame

DIVISION OF LABOUR BY GENDER

Production:

Cultivation is mainly conducted by men in Herat Province. Women are involved in vegetable cultivation to a greater degree than other crop categories, although it is still considered a mainly male activity. Harvesting is done by both men and women for all crop categories.

Processing:

Both men and women are involved in drying fruit and shelling nuts in Herat.

Sale & Trade of Goods:

Men handle a large majority of the selling and trading of horticulture goods.

INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN (AGE 14 AND UNDER)

Children are typically not involved in cultivation, except in the case of orchards. They are, however, actively involved in harvesting. They also assist in drying fruits and shelling nuts.

IMPROVED PRACTICES

Use of fertilizer (% of farming households):

- Field crops: 95%, Garden plots: 1%
- Both field and garden plots: 4%

Other improved practices: According to key informants, there has been an increase in the use of tractors, notably threshers, improved seed, greenhouses, and drip irrigation in the past three years.

LIVESTOCK

KEY ANIMALS

Main Animals	District Concentration	Total Heads
Sheep	Gulran and Kushk-e-Rubat Shangi	1,200,000
Goats	(>53% of livestock in Herat province)	740,000
Poultry	Alfalfa, Sesame	430,000

INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN (UNDER 15)

Children share the responsibility of raising livestock and poultry with their older family members in Herat. They are very involved in producing dairy products. While they are typically not involved in the sale of livestock, it is very common for them to sell eggs and milk. They also sell dairy products, albeit to a lesser extent.

DIVISION OF LABOUR BY GENDER

Animal husbandry:

Both women and men are active in raising goats, sheep and cows, although men appear to take a greater role with goats in Herat. Poultry are mainly raised by women.

Processing:

Men conduct most of the butchering and shearing of animals. Women are in charge of producing dairy products.

Sale & Trade of Goods:

- Livestock & Poultry: Men sell and trade most livestock and poultry. Both men and women are involved in selling eggs, although women tend to be more active in this sector.
- Dairy: Both men and women sell milk in Herat, with men taking a more active role. Men also sell a majority of dairy products.
- Commodities: Trading of commodities is handled solely by men

IMPROVED PRACTICES

According to key informants, there has been an increase in the use of milk pumps by dairy farmers and artificial insemination of livestock has grown more prevalent.

ECONOMIC FACTORS AND PROVINCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

LIVELIHOODS AND INCOME SOURCES

Nearly half (48%) of rural households rely on agriculture as their major source of revenue; the other half of rural households derives their income from nonfarm related labour. Livestock contributes nearly a quarter of rural households' income.

Key Income Sources

Poor: Agricultural labour, livestock and products sales
Better-off: Livestock and product sales, crop sales, trade

ACCESS TO CREDIT

Access for men and women

Men who need to borrow money or buy goods on credit in Herat mainly go to their family or neighbours as well as shopkeepers or suppliers that sell items on credit. They do seek loans from banks, but to a lesser extent.

More than half of interviewees in Herat said women are not able to borrow money or buy goods on credits. For those who declare that women have access to credit, the main sources they identify are mainly informal, such as family and neighbours, suppliers or storekeepers that sell items on credit. Women in Herat have some access to banks and informal savings groups, but these do not appear to be the main sources of credit.

Microfinance Institutions

The implementing partners of MISFA present in the province are BRAC and FMFB:

All Programs	Ag and Livestock Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active clients: 23,532 Active borrowers: 14,142 # of loans disbursed: 83,700 Amount of loans disbursed: 59,617,693 Afs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active clients: 2,634 Active borrowers: 1,580 # of loans disbursed: 7,343 Amount of loans disbursed: 3,780,232 Afs.

Land Ownership: Average plot size

Category of owners	Plot size	% of landowners
Small landowners	1-5 Jeribs	30-40%
Medium landowners	6-30 Jeribs	40-50%
Large landowners	>30 Jeribs	20%

LAND TENURE

In 2007, 42% of the households in Herat owned land or farmed land based on renting, sharecropping or mortgaging arrangements. According to our interviews, commercial farmers primarily lease or own their land (both sole or shared ownership), while subsistence farmers mainly lease or have sole ownership of their land.

Interviewees claim that livestock producers in the province are mainly sedentary. Their main challenges with regards to access to land are the conversion of pastures into cropland and the expansion of residential housing.

IRRIGATION

In 2007, a majority of households (67%) in Herat had access to irrigated land. According to our interviews in the province, the proportion of farmers using irrigated land has increased somewhat over the past three years. Irrigated land is concentrated in the central and eastern districts, whereas the northern districts are mainly rain-fed.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS TO MARKETS

The transport infrastructure was already reasonably developed in 2007, at which point 55% of roads could handle car traffic in all seasons, and 35% could take car traffic in some seasons. Interviewed stakeholders in Herat perceive the quality of roads linking rural areas to markets to have improved in the past three years. Despite this perceived improvement, interviews in Herat identified poor road quality as the number one limitation to market access for rural farmers, followed by a lack of transportation and seasonal flooding.

SOCIAL FACTORS

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Poverty rate: 38.7%
Per Capita monthly total consumption: 1,547 Afs

LITERACY

Literacy rate: 25.1%
The Kuchi population in Herat has particularly low levels; 2% of men are able to read and write.

FOOD SECURITY

Problem satisfying food need of the household during the year (households %):	Calorie deficiency (% consuming less than 2100 calories per day):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never: 23%, Rarely (1-3 times): 27%, Sometimes (3-6 times): 35%, Often (few times a month): 6%, Mostly (happens a lot): 9% 	24.7%

CHILD LABOUR AND SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Child labour: 21.2%
School Enrolment: 52.1%

Very few Kuchi children (1% of boys and 2% of girls) attend school in Herat during the winter months, and no Kuchi children attend school during summer.

SECURITY

Perceived level of security: ↑
According to the interviews, the security situation has improved greatly over the past year and most roads that link rural areas with the provincial markets are perceived as safe.

STATUS OF WOMEN *Female literacy rate:* 16.4%; *Female share in active population:* 27.9%

Access to markets / female mobility: According to our interviews, more than half of the women in the provincial centre are able go to the local market to buy goods. Half of these women are accompanied by a male relative when they do so. Women outside of the provincial centre are less likely to go to the local bazaar to buy goods and more likely to be accompanied by a male relative. In both the provincial centre and the surrounding rural areas, women rarely go to the local market to sell goods.