

# HELMAND

Located in southwestern Afghanistan, Helmand is bordered by Paktya, Ghor, Daikundi, and Uruzgan in the northeast, Kandahar in the east, Nimroz in the West, and Farah in the North-West. It also has a southern border with Pakistan.

Very rich in natural resources, the province economy is agriculture-based with also important commercial activities related to animal husbandry transport companies for import and export as well as the production and trafficking of narcotics: Helmand is the province with the highest level of opium cultivation in the country and opium remains a major source of income for many farmers.

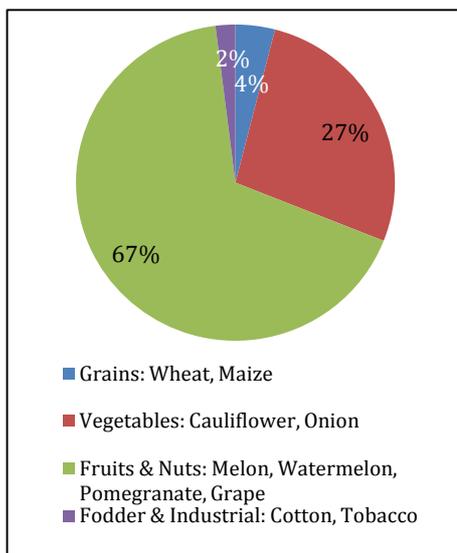
Helmand is often referred to as the breadbasket of Afghanistan. The north of the province is renowned for its almond, grapes, and pomegranate orchards.

## Helmand in a Nutshell

- **Surface area:** 57,000 sq. km
- **Capital:** Lashkargah
- **Districts:** 13 – Baghran, Dishu, Garm Ser, Kajaki, Lashkargah, Musa Qala, Nad Ali, Nahr-i-Saraj, Nawa-i-Barikzayi, Nawzad, Reg-i-khan Nishin, Sangin Qala and Washeer
- **Main markets:** Lashkargah, Kandahar, Herat, Delorram, Chaghcharan, Zaranj
- **Population:** 0.9 million inhabitants (94% in rural areas)
- **Most populated districts:** Nad Ali, Lashkargah, Nahr-i-Saraj, Musa Qala, Baghran
- **Ethnic Groups:** Mainly Pashtuns and minority groups of Baluchs, Hazaras, Tajiks, and Sikhs
- **Main languages:** Pashtu
- **Kuchi Migrations:** Winter, 100-200,000 individuals; Summer, none
- **Returnees, IDPs:** Helmand is the destination of 1.7% (roughly 78,000 individuals) of the total returnee population. It is also the 4<sup>th</sup> largest hosting province for IDPs (nearly 54,000 individuals)

## HORTICULTURE

### KEY CROPS



**Other Improved Practices:** According to key informants, there has been an introduction of tractors, notably threshers.

### DIVISION OF LABOUR BY GENDER

#### Production:

Vegetables and orchards are cultivated primarily by men in Helmand. Both men and women cultivate fodder and industrial crops as well as cereals and grains, although men are still generally more involved in this 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, although women are more heavily involved in these activities.

#### Sale & Trade of Goods:

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

### INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN (UNDER 15)

Children under 15 in Helmand are involved in the cultivation and harvesting of all crop types. Children participate in drying fruit and shelling nuts. They also assist in the selling of all crop types in this province.

### IMPROVED PRACTICES

#### Use of fertilizer (% of farming households):

- Field crops: 91%
- Garden plots: 2%
- Both field and garden plots: 7%

## LIVESTOCK

### KEY ANIMALS

Most farmers have livestock. Sheep, camels and goats are the main animals raised.

### IMPROVED PRACTICES

According to key informants, there have been no improvements recently in livestock practices.

### INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN (AGE 14 AND UNDER)

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

### DIVISION OF LABOUR BY GENDER

#### Animal husbandry:

Both men and women care for livestock and poultry in Helmand

#### Processing:

Men perform most of the butchering. Both men and women participate in the shearing of animals. Women are in charge of producing dairy products and processing wool into yarn.

#### Sale & Trade of Goods:

- **Livestock & Poultry:** Men sell and trade most livestock and poultry. Both men and women sell eggs.
- **Dairy:** Both men and women sell milk and dairy products.
- **Commodities:** Trading of commodities is handled solely by men

## ECONOMIC FACTORS AND PROVINCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

### LIVELIHOODS AND INCOME SOURCES

Majority (70%) of rural households rely on agriculture as their major source of revenue; more than one quarter of households (26%) in rural areas derive income from trade and services. A fifth of households (20%) earn some income through non-farm related labor. Livestock accounts for income for a quarter of rural households (25%)

#### Key Income Sources

*Poor:* Livestock product, sales, agricultural labor, labor migration  
*Better-off:* Crop sales, livestock & product sales, self-employment, trade and smuggling

### ACCESS TO CREDIT

#### Access for men and women

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

All interviewees in Helmand said that women are not able to borrow money or buy goods on credit.

#### Microfinance Institutions

*BRAC is the only implementing partner of MISFA present in the province:*

All Programs:	Ag and Livestock Programs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active clients: 389</li> <li>• Active borrowers: 342</li> <li>• # loans disbursed: 774</li> <li>• Amount of loans disbursed: 1,912,881 Afs.</li> </ul>	There is no clients or borrowers in the agriculture and livestock sector.

### LAND TENURE

In 2007, 81% of the households in Helmand owned land or farmed land based on renting, sharecropping or mortgaging arrangements. According to our interviews, commercial farmers primarily lease or own their land (shared ownership), while subsistence farmers mainly have shared ownership of their land.

Interviewees claim that livestock producers in the province are both sedentary and nomadic. Their main challenges with regards to access to land are the fees for accessing pasture; overgrazing of pastures.

### IRRIGATION

In 2007, On average 97% of households in the province have access to irrigated land, and 5% of households have access to rain-fed land. According to our interviews in the province, most farmers in Helmand cultivate irrigated land. The proportion has remained stable over the past 3 years.

### ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE & ACCESS TO MARKETS

The transport infrastructure in the province was reasonably well developed in 2007, at which point 62% of roads could handle car traffic in all seasons, and 32.5% could take car traffic in some seasons. In 5% of the province, there were no roads at all. Quality of roads was described as poor and the main challenges identified in accessing markets from rural areas were lack of roads / poor quality roads; distance from markets; Lack of transportation

## SOCIAL FACTORS

### POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

*Poverty rate:* 8.9%  
*Per capita monthly total consumption:* 1,989 Afs

### LITERACY

*Literacy rate:* 12.0%  
 The Kuchi population in the province has particularly low levels of literacy with just 0.1% of men and no women able to read and write.

### SECURITY

Level of security in Helmand: →  
 According to interviews in the province, the security situation has remained stable over the past year. They also perceive most roads that link rural areas with the provincial markets to be somewhat unsafe.

### FOOD SECURITY

Problem satisfying food need of the household during the year (households %):	Calorie deficiency (% consuming less than 2100 calories per day): 19.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never: 39%</li> <li>• Rarely (1-3 times): 31%,</li> <li>• Sometimes (3-6 times): 25%,</li> <li>• Often (few times a month): 5%,</li> <li>• Mostly (happens a lot): 1%</li> </ul>	

### CHILD LABOUR AND SCHOOL ENROLMENT

*Child labour:* 14.2%  
*School Enrolment:* 4.0%  
 Amongst the Kuchi population in Helmand, no boys or girls attend school during the summer or winter months

**STATUS OF WOMEN** *Female literacy rate:* 1.4%; *Female share in active population:* 32.7%

**Access to markets / female mobility:** According to our interviews, few women in the provincial centre go to the local bazaar to buy goods. Most that do are accompanied by a male relative when they do so. Very few go to sell items. 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.