



MONGOL MONITOR

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February Mission News

Happy Tsagaan Sar! Tsagaan Sar, or White Month, is one of Mongolia's most important holidays. The start of the Mongolian Lunar New Year, Tsagaan Sar is not only an ancient holiday marking the end of winter, but is also a time for unification and reinforcing social bonds. During Mongolia's Communist period, the government banned Tsagaan Sar and tried to replace it with a holiday called "Collective Herder's Day", but the holiday reemerged after the 1990 Democratic Revolution. Mongolia ushered in this year's New Year on February 22nd.

The USAID Mission Director, along with USAID and Embassy staff, visited Lake Hovsgol in early February. The trip was an opportunity to assess winter conditions, environmental challenges, and climate change issues, as well as talk to local citizens about community dynamics and needs. Hovsgol National Park officials warmly welcomed the delegation and provided a wealth of information about the park and its management. The Director, staff, and rangers displayed a remarkable passion for environmental preservation and expressed deep concern about the vulnerability of their unique environs. While local community members were optimistic about their economic situation and the potential for growth in the area, they, too were keenly aware of the timeliness of environmental protection in Mongolia, noting in particular the effects of climate change. A stunningly beautiful region, Lake Hovsgol National Park is a true treasure – and, with continued efforts, one that future generations will experience and enjoy as well.



Lake Huvsgul in frozen state

The USAID/Mongolia team also traveled to the town of Zuunharaa in Selenge Province, approximately 180 km north of Ulaanbaatar, to visit

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several Enabling Market Integration Through Rural Group Empowerment (EMIRGE) projects. EMIRGE improves incomes of small-scale farmers by enabling agricultural producer groups to pursue market-driven practices. Working in cooperative groups formed through EMIRGE, members (overwhelmingly female) have made great strides in improving their business acumen and are actively sharing information and best practices. These participants spoke with pride about increased incomes and animal health, due to the training they received on making fodder and establishing winter shelters. These innovations have led to a 50% increase in milk production in a region that supplies 60% of the milk consumed in Ulaanbaatar. Careful evaluation and possible replication of these approaches could have significant impact on Mongolia's dairy industry.



Jargaltsetseg, a USAID project beneficiary, is the leader of Dairy Group #1 in the little town of Zuunharaa.

PRIVATE SECTOR-LED ECONOMIC GROWTH

Business Plus Initiative Project (BPI) Chemonics

March 2012 Ceremony Planned for Quality Assurance Participants

BPI plans to hold an official ceremony in March 2012 for those earning certification in "HACCP: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points," training. Forty-four participants have already been trained and certified under BPI's foundation level course on "Hygiene: Food Safety for Manufacturing". Additional trainings in these areas are foreseen to satisfy local private sector demand, with projected 150-200 trainees passing through the program by June 2012.

BPI held a training and discussion session for the Economic Journalism Club (EJC) members on "Quality and its role in spurring competitive advantage in

Mongolia" in February 2012. Over twenty journalists attended the event and received first-hand information on quality assurance and its importance in competitiveness from industry expert Barry Evans.

Training Series on Compulsory Drivers' Liability Insurance

BPI insurance consultant, Kirsten Armstrong, conducted series of trainings and meetings for insurance market stakeholders, including the Financial Regulatory Commission (FRC), insurance companies, the Auto Transportation Authority, and members of the Economic Journalist Club (EJC). BPI is assisting FRC in enforcement of the law on compulsory drivers' insurance by reviewing existing insurance regulations, data collection requirements by the Association of Mandatory Insurers, and actuarial advice on premium rates. Following the enforcement of the new law, effective January 1, 2012, citizens often react negatively and misunderstand the new procedures. During her presentations, Ms. Armstrong explained international practices on compulsory insurance, emphasizing that such legislation reduces death and injury from road accidents and provides compensation to victims.

USAID CENTRALLY AND REGIONALLY FUNDED PROJECTS

Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority EcoSystems (SCAPES) Project -- USAID Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Steps taken to add "Steppes of the Dauria" in the Listing of UNESCO World Heritage Sites

At a UNESCO World Heritage meeting held February 14-18, 2012, in Chita, Russia, a delegation from the Mongolian Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism (MNET) petitioned to add the Mongol Daguur Strictly Protected Area (SPA) to the UNESCO World Heritage List of "natural sites" considered as having outstanding universal value. The Mongolian delegation worked with the delegation from the Russian Federation to present their joint proposal of "Steppes of the Dauria" combining Mongol Daguur SPA of Mongolia with the Daurian State Biosphere Reserve for designation as a transboundary UNESCO World Heritage site. Mongolian Presidential decree No. 203 established a working committee to prepare the materials needed for the formal UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination file which include documentation of the unique features of the site, a short film and a 10-year conservation plan. The materials are due September 30, 2012, and a final decision on the designation of the site is expected in 2014. The Dauria International Protected Area has been protected by

a trilateral agreement among Mongolia, Russia, and China since 1994.

National and Local Decisions Extend Hunting Bans in the Daurian Steppe Region

Former Minister of Nature, Environment and Tourism, Mr. L. Gansukh, signed an order (Minister's Order A-06) on January 3, 2012, placing a 2-year nationwide ban on the hunting of red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and corsac fox (*Vulpes corsac*). The same order extends the ban on hunting Siberian marmot (*Marmota sibirica*) across 11 provinces in Mongolia, including the eastern Daurian Steppe provinces, for another 2 years. The order also bans the hunting of the grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) in 12 soums of Dornod, Khentii, and Sukhbaatar aimags in the Eastern Steppe region. The Minister's order was issued due to concerns over continuing declines in the populations of these species due to exploitation, primarily hunting for trade. In February, the Dornod Aimag Citizens Khural also passed resolutions which set the household hunting quota for Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*) at 0 and banned commercial fishing.

Mongolian National Consensus Building Program (NCB) - USAID International Republican institute (IRI)

Parliament Training Well-Received

From February 14-16, IRI held a joint three-day training on improving publicity practices with the Parliament Secretariat for the staff of the Parliament Publicity Centers from across Mongolia.. A total of 30 Mongolian Parliament Publicity Center and Parliament Secretariat Public Relations Division staffers were in attendance of the seminar which was held at the Parliament House and "Ikh Tenger" government compound. Detailed presentations by professors from the National University of Mongolia and Academy of Management, who specialize in the Mongolian budget process, public relations and information management, were well-received by participants;



Mongolian Parliament Publicity center staff group photo taken at IRI training at Parliament House, February 15, 2012.

experts from the Parliament Secretariat and Parliament standing committees also made presentations; Seminar participants enjoyed a visit to Tuv Province to learn about the work of the Tuv Parliament Publicity Center and the Citizen's Hall.

Fostering an Inclusive Environment for the Disabled Project 2 (FIELD-2) Mercy Corps

Psychological Training of Trainers (ToT) for Ulaanbaatar based Disabled People's Organization members

People with disabilities often suffer from post-traumatic stress. In response, several DPOs requested the FIELD 2 project team to provide training for their members and leaders on how to assist people in distress. The "Center to Support Family Development" conducted ToT to 15 people, improving their basic understanding about psychology and counseling techniques. During the course, a draft standard for facilities for this type of counselling was provided (there is no approved standard in Mongolia).As a direct result of this course, one organizations, the Independent Living Center, is planning the first Peer Counseling project in Mongolia.

Enabling Market Integration through Rural Group Empowerment (EMIRGE) CHF International

February Monitoring Results

Four dairy groups collectively prepared 37 tones silage by oats, barley, and corn in the last year; 37% of group members were able to develop homemade silage during the winter months. In addition to healthier animals, feeding cows silage increased milk yields to 3250 liters, resulting in incomes raised by 2.6 million tugrugs.

Learning and Dissemination

CHF has developed a guide book on creating savings accounts for members of farming cooperative groups. This program will be piloted with farmer groups and CHF is currently a learning exchange program with the view to increasing activities among groups. This exchange methodology will enable members understand how the group activity can be profitable.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FUNDED
PROJECTS MANAGED BY USAID/MONGOLIA**

immediately hired by local private veterinary clinics.

**Rural Agribusiness Support Program (RASP)-
USDA
Mercy Corps**

**Grants for Value Added Business Expansion and
Food Product Package Improvement**

Mercy Corps issued a call for proposals in January for value added business expansions and food product package improvements and received 181 and 64 applications respectively. After an initial screening, 33 applications for value added business expansion and 27 applications for food product package improvement projects are now in progress. Grants will be on the basis of reimbursement after proven investment with a cost share requirement of at least 50%. The expansion grants are limited to \$5,000 and the food product package grants are for \$1,000 each. Last year total planned business expansion investment was \$56,459 with beneficiary cost share of 52%. Impressively, beneficiaries increased their investment to \$624,338 and covered 78% of total investment costs.

Camel Milk Trade Fair-2012 in Umnugobi Province

In collaboration with the Governor, provincial Agriculture and Small and Medium Enterprise Departments, RASP organized the "Camel milk trade fair-2012" in Umnugobi Province between February 2nd -3rd. This annual event promotes Mongolia's camel dairy products to local producers, processors, and consumers. 65 businesses from 15 different districts of Arhangai, Umnugobi and Uvurhangai Provinces displayed 25 kinds of product such as camel milk, fermented milk, camel dry and wet curds, camel milk ice-cream and other dairy products enriched by camel milk. Direct sales generated a total of \$64,500 during this event--5 times higher than last year's take. Camel polo, camel racing competition, selection of elite breeding camels and a meeting of camel milk producers kept the 2500 visitors entertained.

**Veterinary Technician Trainees Receive Training
Support and Immediate Employment by District
Veterinarians**

In collaboration with the School of Veterinary Science and Biotechnology (SVSB), Mercy Corps organized a 30-day training in Uvurhangai, Umnugobi, Dundgobi and Suhbaatar Provinces between January 5th and February 9th. Training costs were shared between Mercy Corps and the participants (usually covered by the a District private vet clinic). In total, 84 unemployed people participated. After completing the veterinary technician training, all participants received a professional certificate and 67 (80%) of them were

February in pictures

