



## SUCCESS STORY

### Afghan Pomegranates Take Flight

**The latest ‘wonder fruit’ is being produced in Kandahar, Afghanistan**



USAID/Afghanistan

Workers sorting pomegranate for export in Kandahar Province

*From the fertile orchards of Afghanistan to the bustling markets of Dubai, USAID provides farmers with solutions for growing and marketing Afghan produce*

The pomegranate is widely regarded as a ‘wonder fruit’ because of its scientifically proven health benefits. But to many farmers in Afghanistan’s Kandahar province, the wonders of this fruit are measured by the economic future that it provides.

One such farmer, Mohammad, 50, explained that before pomegranates, he and his thirteen children lived in relative poverty farming grapes and opium poppies.

Then USAID encouraged Hajji to plant a small pomegranate orchard. He joined 263 families working with the Kandahar Orchards Project, received help in selecting, packaging, and shipping his best quality fruit, and was introduced to overseas buyers.

Although the ongoing conflict in southern Afghanistan has made it nearly impossible to send quality produce to major buyers overseas, USAID has helped local farmers gain the international recognition they need to expand their market opportunities.

In the first weeks of the fall 2007 harvest, some 10 tons of pomegranates were flown to eager wholesalers in Dubai. More than 400 additional tons were slated for export before the end of the growing season. Buyers throughout the Middle East stand by Kandahar pomegranates as among the best quality in the world.

“Everybody who knows fruit knows that Kandahar pomegranates are the best,” said Hajji. Already, the Kandahar Orchards Project has marked another 250 orchards for rehabilitation, and more sites are being surveyed daily.

Hajji can see that more overseas sales will improve incomes in his household and village. With this ‘wonder fruit,’ his community will be able to rehabilitate more orchards, improve their farms, and grow even more produce for the markets.