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PRESS RELEASE

Afghan Traders Score More than $2 Million during Gulfood Exhibition in Dubai

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN–Afghan tradersinked $2.38 million in deals and are negotiating potential deals of about $10 million for Afghanistan's agricultural products as a result of their participation in the renowned Gulfood show Exhibition in Dubai, which was held February 21 to 25.

Gulfood is the world's largest annual food and hospitality event,where buyers cansee high-quality products from all over the world.The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)supported Afghanistan's participation in 2015 Gulfood, thereby allowing thousands of international buyers to learn about Afghanistan's agricultural bounty, including pomegranates, saffron, apples, apricots, melons, grapes, nuts, and raisins.

The Afghan traders said they are expecting several more million dollars in deals in the coming months as they finalize contracts with the buyers they met at the event.

Mahmood, the marketing director of Afghan Red Pomegranate,signed the largest contract in his company's history to export Kandahar pomegranates toSouth Korea. Sumaria Rahamati of Herat Saffron confirmed a deal of $700,000 from a Saudi buyer and she expects to execute it within two months.

"More and more international buyers are seeing the quality of Afghan produce. New and profitable markets are opening for the country every year as a result of events like this – and as a result of the superior taste of the country's fruit and nuts," said Hanif Sufizada,private sector director of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock.

Mustafa Sadiq,ofthe Omid Bahar Fruit Processing Company (which was established with USAID support), said that Gulfood provided a great platform for Afghan producers and processors to introduce their agricultural products in international markets and to expand their business.

With USAID's support, Afghanistan has participated in Gulfood since 2011. Traders have signed millions of dollars in deals at these events, they have expanded their reach in markets such as Pakistan and India, and they have gained access to new markets in the Middle East, Europe, and North America.

USAID's Afghanistan Trade and Revenue Project, Commercial Horticultural and Agricultural Marketing Program, and Regional Agricultural Development Program-SouthsupportedAfghanistan's participationin Gulfood this year.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years."