

During the 2009-2010 dzud 8576 herder households lost all of their animals and 32756 herder households lost half of their animals. After the dzud about 1400 herders who were deprived of their livelihood source migrated to urban areas. As a consequence of the dzud 8,143,300 animals died and only 36.9% of off springs survived. This severely hit the lives of herders. During that difficult winter season, the Swiss government rendered a grant of 500,000 francs for implementation of the dzud relief and prevention project. The project which has been implemented by “Green Gold” Pasture Ecosystem Management Programme Unit captured the most dzud affected sums or lh Tamir soum in Arkhangai aimag, Bulgan soum in Bayan-Ulgii aimag, Altai and Biger soums in Govi-Altai aimag and 17 soums in Zavkhan aimag.

Instead of conventional approach of direct delivery of in-kind grants, the project delivered the relief assistance to herders from Pasture User Groups (PAGs) after they discussed and made decision together as to what measures to be taken. A task force consisting of local administration staff and bag governors and led by head of the soum pasture user unions were established in a total of 21 soums. Cash for PUGs were allocated on the basis of recommendations in the project implementation manual. The project undertook two phases of **implementation:**

1. Humanitarian relief and assistance,
2. Support to herders' collective efforts for preparedness of next winter.

Of the total project fund, 50 percent were spent on humanitarian relief and assistance and the remaining 50 percent went to implementation of the herders' collective activities for preparedness of next winter. The project successfully completed its activities by December 30.

Out of 235,529,000 tugriks spent on humanitarian relief and assistance covering 9174 households from 21 soums, 93% or 218,946,000 tugriks were given in cash to households and 4% or 9,433,000 tugriks were spent to purchase flour, vegetable oil and medicaments for 306 households on the basis of decisions taken by pasture user groups in Tsetsen Uul in Zavkhan aimag and Biger soum in Govi-Altai aimag. Humanitarian relief and assistance targeted, first of all, very poor and vulnerable people. Among herder households who benefited from humanitarian relief and assistance, 16% were households with single male or female head (534 single male and 954 single female headed households).

The commitment and accountability of task force members and herders from PUGs had much role in targeting and delivery of humanitarian relief and assistance to the right beneficiaries. Active participation of herders in PUG meetings enabled to make the distribution of relief and assistance fair and equitable.

The implementation of this relief and assistance project has not only provided direct support to herders but also laid ground for herders of PUGs to engage in collective discussions and decision making and improve their institutionalization. Furthermore, the project paved a road to closer cooperation between soum and local administration and soum pasture user union NGO.

Soum governors and administration staff participated in the meetings of PUGs and heard herders' views and suggestions. They collaborated with the project in removal of animal carcasses and welcomed the approach and method of relief and assistance distribution.

Last year dzud taught a strong lesson for herders. They looked back how they were prepared for the winter, what skills they had for herding, how well they managed pasture lands and what quality their animals was. The Dzud relief and prevention project enabled herders to start preparing for next winters taking the lessons of the previous winter. Herders from PUGs discussed at the meetings on preparedness for next winter and produced action plans. The project fund was allocated to carry out the following activities:

- Purchase of hays and fodder– 292.5 tons for 3170 households from 70 PUGs in 10 soums ,
- Fencing and yielding natural hay fields– 98 PUGs from 13 soums fenced 481 ha of lands, 4557 herder households from 104 PUGs in 14 soums harvested 1276 ton of natural hay.
- Planting legumes in large fields and in small fields near winter camps– 1579 herder households from 41 PUGs in 11 soums planted legumes in the common field and 6 PUGs in 2 soums planted legumes in small fields near their winter camps.
- Establishing animal washing lot wherein animals can be injected to prevent parasite diseases – 110 households from 3 PUGs in 2 oums established 2 washing lots,
- Building wells to enable collective movement to otor pastures – 335 herder households from 13 pUGs in 6 soums built 10 manual wells and 1 underground well and repaired 3 manual wells.
- Renovating livestock fences– 31 households from 2 PUGs in Zavkhanmandal soum renovated livestock fences.
- Joint preparation of mineral salt for undernourished animals– Over 270 herder households from 24 PUGs in 2 soums prepared with an average of 131 kg per household.
- Repairing pasture roads and reutilizing abandoned pastures in few soums- 307 herder households from 6 PUGs in 2 soums benefited from this action.
- Vegetable growing by herders who lost all or most of their animals – 1563 herder households from 37 PUGs in 10 soums planted and harvested 148 tons of vegetables. Herders from 7 PUGs reserved potato seeds for next year plantation.
- Low interest rate credits are given from savings funds of PUGs and the interest rates are paid back into the funds – 2075 herder households from 48 PUGs in 6 soums established savings funds. Each household contributed 15000-24000 tugriks.

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