



VAM unit of World Food Program



## Pastoralist Vulnerability Study

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## Introduction

WFP embarked upon an exercise to assess the vulnerability of the pastoralist population of Afghanistan, in recognition of the fact that this group had not received adequate attention in the past. The VAM-unit of WFP conducts the annual countrywide assessment of the rural settled populations, which serves as a baseline for food insecurity in the country for the assessed population group. In addition it carries out rapid food needs assessments at designated times in targeted areas.

To conduct an assessment for the purpose of mapping food security for pastoralists, and to serve as the basis of programming is an exercise that is severely constrained by several factors. The most important factors are the lack of population figures, which are unreliable and fluid, and the mobility of the target group.

In addition to a food security assessment, that has been carried out in pilot areas in two provinces during the summer months, the need was felt to have a better understanding of the factors contributing to vulnerability among pastoralists. In preparation of and alongside the food security assessments carried out, a basic vulnerability analysis was carried out, on the basis of which recommendations for appropriate food or non-food interventions are given. A comprehensive assessment which includes health, education and gender issues is still required to gain a fuller understanding of the pastoralist livelihood, but were not within the scope of this study.

The methods used for this study are literature review, open ended interviews, and semi-structured interviews in various field missions. A survey of tribes has been conducted by following around the Loya Jirga election process in June of 2002; the leaders of sub-tribes reported data on migration routes, number of households, and relative livestock losses.

This study could not have been completed without the hard and enthusiastic work of Barialai and Zuhoor Mehri, and the support of the VAM team. WFP has been requested by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, to second the pastoralist consultant, and author of this report, to the Ministry as a component of an on-going capacity building process of the government by WFP. WFP has willingly conceded to this request.

## **Chapter 1: Background on pastoralists:**

### **1.1 Definition of pastoralists:**

Pastoralism is a social and economic system based on the raising and herding of livestock. Pastoralists migrate to benefit to the maximum of seasonal pasture for the livestock. In addition, the climate serves as a motivating factor for migration, since tents do not provide adequate protection for neither heat nor cold. The pattern of migration is predictable, determined by the availability of pasture, and the climate.

Pastoralists can be either nomadic or semi-nomadic. Nomadic means that they migrate according to seasons and have no fixed dwelling. Semi-nomadic means that they have fixed dwellings in at least one area. Agro-pastoralists combine livestock keeping with agriculture, and are generally semi-nomadic.

The different livelihood types that people can adopt are determined by geographical, social and ethnic, economic and historical factors. Migration patterns differ for the different categories of pastoralists, and one area can house all the types of pastoralists described above at different times of the year.

In the north and the northwest, one can find mostly the semi-settled and the sedentary people. In the east the semi-nomadic predominate, whereas in the south the nomadic people predominate. The seasonal migration along set routes is more appropriately referred to as transhumance. These differences have their root in geography, history and social settings.

The pastoralists in Afghanistan are popularly called 'Kuchi'. The term Kuchi literally means 'to shift', leading directly to the fact that it refers to nomadic people. This term does not apply solely to Pashtun pastoralists, but it can also include other pastoralist communities, like the Beluch.

In this time, after three years of consecutive drought, many pastoralists have lost their livestock. A large proportion of them are therefore no longer migrating. However, they will still consider themselves to be 'Kuchi', since that is how they identify themselves. 'Being Kuchi', specifically for the Pashtun, refers to a code of dress, behaviour and dialect. Even Kuchi who have settled years ago will still consider themselves to be Kuchi, in spite of the fact that they have not migrated with their animals in several years. It is often heard that all Pashtun were once Kuchi, and comparing old literature with the current situation confirms the belief that certain tribes that were once nomadic might have settled now and vice versa.

In certain areas, specifically in the West and the East, there is a tendency over time to sedentarize and renomadize according to circumstances. However, certain people will never cross that boundary to become nomadic, whereas others will, depending on their

specific background<sup>1</sup>. Again, the different livelihood types that people can adopt are determined by geographical, social and ethnic, economic and historical factors. In areas where the migration route is predominantly long range migration, this fluidity between nomadic, semi-nomadic and semi-settled is much less present, mostly due to geographical factors.

## 1.2 Social structure:

Kuchi, both Beluch and Pashtun, are divided into tribes and subtribes. The Pashtun are divided into two main sections, the Ghilzai and the Durrani. In the south the majority of the pastoralists are Ghilzai. Within these sections there are tribes, which are again subdivided into subtribes (*khe*). At each level, there is a recognized leadership. The Beluch are equally divided into tribes and subtribes, like Mengel, Sasuli and others. In the north, there are also other (agro-) pastoralist people, like Tajik, Aimak and Arab.

Pashtun Kuchi stay together in communities, which are more or less concentrated depending on the pasture availability and the time of year. Migration takes place with a few households together, after which the community will meet again in the summer or winter area. This migration is not centrally organized, but depends on the individual household's decision. These communities have a leader (*malik*), who represents their interest in decision making councils. These communities are not fixed entities, but split and join to adjust to the needs of its members. Communities serve as mechanisms for providing security in numbers, providing support and labour opportunities for the poor, and serve as a pool of shared labour.

The Beluch also live in communities, referred to by either the name of the leader or the well they use.

## 1.3 Population figures:

Population figures, which are already problematic for the rural population, are virtually non-existent for Kuchi. The last official census figures stem from 1974, when the total population of Afghanistan was 11.956.753, out of which 1.074.000 were nomads, which constitutes 9.0%. Extrapolating this proportion to the current population of Afghanistan would lead to a figure of 1.85 million nomads (out of a total population of 20.596.265).<sup>2</sup>

AFSU/VAM collected data reported by Kuchi community leaders during the first phase of the election process of the Loya Jirga. Structured interviews were held with Kuchi community leaders to gather baseline data on the different communities, the tribal structure, the number of households, the number of households without livestock and the migration pattern. These figures will certainly not be fully reliable, they are estimates at best, especially since there is a perceived benefit for the community leaders

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<sup>1</sup> Literature: B. Glatzer, *Processes of nomadization in West Afghanistan*, in P. C. Salzman (ed), contemporary nomadic and pastoralist peoples: Asia and the north., 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Source of figures: Central Statistics Office.

to increase their numbers. However, they give an indication on the numbers of households one can expect in certain areas. It must be noted that these data are only covering the south of Afghanistan. The north-western and north-eastern provinces are not included, for reasons of time constraints and fear or excessively raising expectations. It can be estimated from these figures that the total number of (semi-)nomads currently lies between 1.5 and 2.0 million, including those that settled recently and possibly temporarily.

The food security assessment carried out by WFP in the provinces of Ghazni and Zabul in July 2002, included a physical count of the number of households, which can serve as a tool to cross-check the information provided by the community leaders. However, the data are difficult to match and compare, for a number of reasons. There is a variety of names describing a certain community, for instance the location, the name of the leader of the smaller community, or the leader of the larger community or the subtribe; leading to difficulties in tracing the exact communities. The communities are not fixed entities, but undergo changes when individual households adopt different strategies. The migratory pattern has changed due to drought and lack of access to some of the main grazing areas. Therefore the reported pattern does not necessarily correspond with the current pattern. Furthermore the survey did not cover the entire province, but the six most important districts in Ghazni and the 2 most important districts in Zabul province.

For the reasons given above, it is difficult to draw a definite conclusion from this comparison of data produced by the two surveys. However, it can confidently be stated that the initial reported figures are on the higher side. A reduction of 35% of the initial figures seems justified. It also has to be understood that the survey has not captured all the communities even in the areas that it did not survey, and cannot be taken as absolute. The total reported number of households is close to 200.000, which would lead to a corrected figure of around 130.000 families, approximately 780.000 people in the surveyed areas of the south, central and east. Again, the areas of the north have not been surveyed at all. To produce an estimate on the total number of Kuchi in the country is premature on the basis of this information, but should probably not be placed under the 1,5 million people.

With these data, a map has been produced which shows the migration patterns, a rough indication of number of households present, and a representation of the proportion of households without livestock. Ref. Annex 1.

#### **1.4 Migration patterns:**

Pastoralists migrate to benefit to the maximum of seasonal pasture for the livestock. In addition, the climate serves as a motivating factor for migration, since tents do not provide adequate protection for either heat or cold. The pattern of migration is predictable, determined by the availability of pasture, and the climate.

Migration patterns differ for the different types of pastoralists, and can be categorized as follows:

- Long range migration (mostly vertical<sup>3</sup>)
- Short range migration (vertical or horizontal)

The long range pastoralists, those who cover long distances in their search for pasture, are often pure pastoralists and do not own any land. Their migration pattern, which is a transhumance, will follow the general pattern of three months to five months in the winter area, one to three months migration, and three to five months in the summer area, and one to three months migration back to the winter area. A large group of Kuchi migrating from Kandahar to Ghazni fall into this category.

In certain districts of Ghazni and Zabul provinces, notably Awband, Andar, Gairu and Nawa Districts in Ghazni province, and Qalat District in Zabul province, some pastoralists do own land<sup>4</sup>. The distance covered in migration is therefore either shorter, leaving the household enough time to work the land or the household splits, leaving one part of the household to work the land.

A similar situation occurs in the southeastern and eastern parts of the country. A combination of pure pastoralists with long range migration and semi-pastoralists with short-range migration exists. A relatively large proportion of the pastoralists in these areas do own land, but reliable figures are not currently known. Reportedly, it might well be the majority. Migration routes for these groups, of which a high number migrate into Pakistan, can be found on the map in Annex I.

The southwestern parts of the country, including Helmand, Nimroz and Farah, are inhabited by both Beluch and Pashtun Kuchi. Migration patterns are either short range, with summer and winter areas in and around the desert area of the Reg, or long range into the Central Highlands.

Northwest Afghanistan is also inhabited by a combination of long-range and short range pastoralists. Kuchi are Pashtun, Tajik, Arab, Uzbek, and Aimak, and can be semi-sedentary, semi-nomadic or nomadic. The boundaries between the settled population, agro-pastoralists and pure pastoralists are very fluid, with many Kuchi owning land and living in houses part of the year. There is a dynamic flow between the different categories. In present days, the long-range migration has diminished considerably, due to issues relating to access to summer pasture.

The northern areas have been affected particularly badly by the effects of war, through looting of livestock and the interruption of migration routes, due to factional fighting in the time of Mujaheddin. Many pastoralists have settled, and therefore the number of pastoralists has decreased tremendously, when compared to the 1970s. The migration from Kunduz to Badakhshan (Shiwa) seems to still occur, according to reports received, but not to the extent of the past.

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<sup>3</sup> Vertical migration refers to a seasonal change in altitude of the pastures. In general this is the case in Afghanistan, where the migratory routes lead from the plains in the periphery of the country and Pakistan to the Central Highlands of Afghanistan.

<sup>4</sup> The exact figures of the survey carried out by WFP can be found in the paper Food Security Assessment, by the same author.

## 1.5 Historical background of access to the Central Highlands

Summer pasture of the majority of the contemporary pastoralists of Afghanistan lies in the Central Highlands. It is not known how frequently pastoralists had used these areas in the past but actions by Abdur Rahman entrenched pastoral access to these areas. He did this by settling Ghilzai Pashtun into the Northern and central areas, as a means of extending his own control into these areas. It was at this time that these central grazing areas were formally opened up to Pashtun pastoralists and the rights of local Hazara to these lands suppressed.

Rights to pasture were issued through written documents (*ferman*<sup>5</sup>), which were usually given as common rights for the tribe [see Box 1]. The successors of Abdur Rahman Khan continued this practice, with the exception of Amanullah Khan who tried to reform the access to pasture land. Whilst it does not seem that pastoralists who had settled were evicted from the area, pastoral access to the summer grazing was stopped.

Section taken from Mousavi, 1998<sup>6</sup>:

On 11 April 1894, orders were given to confiscate all grazing land in the Hazarajat, with the stipulation that under no circumstances should the Hazara be allowed any longer to use these land for the purpose of grazing their own cattle. These lands were then handed over to the leaders of Afghan nomads [.....] In 1893, a regular route was mapped out by the government for the nomads, through to the Hazarajat [.....] Thus the Afghan nomads were able to gradually bring much of the arable land of the Hazarajat under their grazing domain. [p.133]

The most significant change in this period (1890-1978) was the total destruction of the feudal structure of Hazara society and its replacement by the pastoral nomadic structure of the Pashtun people and tribes. Hazara Mirs were replaced by Pashtun rulers, who represented the government of Kabul. This transfer of power resulted in worsening conditions for the Hazara [.....] They found themselves enslaved by the Pashtun rulers. [p. 94]

With the coming to power of Shah Amanullah (1919-1929) and the advent of the independence of Afghanistan, a new phase began..... Shah Amanullah condemned and abolished slavery throughout the country and treated the Hazaras as equal citizens along with other ethnic groups [.....] The Hazaras began restructuring their society and cultivating once again lands that had been used as grazing grounds by the nomads. [p. 94]

The precise pasture land that nomads could use were specified clearly and written in new land documents (*qabala*<sup>7</sup>), which decreased the nomad's access to pasture, and the Hazara started cultivating their lands again.

<sup>5</sup> The current legal status of these documents requires clarification.

<sup>6</sup> 'The Hazaras of Afghanistan', Mousavi, 1998, Curzon press

<sup>7</sup> The current legal status of these documents requires clarification.

However, Amanullah's efforts were unlasting. The reigns of Nadir Khan (1929-1933) and his son, Zahir Shah (1933-1973) saw Pashtun pastoral interests supported all over the country. They were among the first to receive grants of land in the many new settlement schemes and their right to summer pastures was entrenched. When it was decided to start recording all land ownership in the country, Zahir Shah's government had to make a decision about how pasture land would be regarded. Pastoralists both gained and lost. They gained through the wide definition of pasture land made law; the 1965 Survey and Statistics Law defined pasture as 'any land that had been used for grazing in the past' [Article 63]. In addition, conversion of pasture to agricultural land was not permitted [Art. 64]. [Alden Wily, unpublished]

However, it was also proclaimed that pasture could not be privately owned and its use was to be supervised by Provincial Governments. This had the effect of bringing all summer pastures and other grazing land under the direct control of the state. Provincial Governments were empowered by the law to issue grazing licences. The Law of Pasture Lands 19 Hoot 1349 (1970) elaborated this position, emphasising that 'new rights to use pastures may be acquired through application to provincial administrations' [Art 16]. Once applied for, livestock owners were accordingly taxed. It is unknown how many grazing licences were issued and their legal status today. Alden Wily cites information that pastoralists did not mind paying tax on their animals so long as they could access the pasture [op cit.]. [Alden Wily, unpublished]

During the mid-century period it seems that local Hazara not only endured the loss of their summer pastures to pastoralists but to some extent became their serfs. [Mousevi, 1998].

Hazara resentment was obviously high. During the Russian occupation period, Hazaras gradually retrieved their lands. During the years of the fight of the mujahedin against the Soviets, and the period of civil war that followed, the grazing areas in the Central Highlands were never fully accessible to the nomads, as they had been before. Migration routes were disrupted due to the chequered control of different commanders controlling different areas and 'taxing' the livestock. Many nomads in the north claim to have been looted on numerous occasions, and to have lost their livestock and abandoned the migratory lifestyle in these days, particularly in the north of the country. Local anarchy complicated the necessary migration and created chaos for the nomads as well as for the settled people.

During the Taliban years, the power relations shifted in favour of the Pashtun Kuchi, who to some extent benefited of this situation. The Kuchi are generally perceived to have provided support to the Taliban, which has created tension in the inter-ethnic relations specifically with the Hazaras. Certain groups of nomads were reported as wreaking havoc in the Shomali plains and Ghorband valley by allowing their livestock to graze and destroy vineyards and agricultural lands. Some nomads returned to Hazarajat, where they (had) owned land, and demanded to be paid 'rent' for their land, in the shape of harvest produce, which was in some cases taken by force. However, it must be stated that the Taliban did not provide full support to the nomads and tried to control the situation by reducing access of the nomads deep into Hazarajat. According to the

nomads, they have not received full access to the Hazarajat since the time of the King (Zahir Shah).

In the present days, the traditional system of pasture rights seems in some cases to be replaced by the power of the gun. Local power relations often determine the rights of access. Especially in the last years the disruption of the migration patterns, the looting of livestock, all exacerbated by the effects of prolonged drought, has caused a severe erosion of livelihoods and poverty, not only for the nomads but also for the settled people.

It must be understood that under conditions of competition for resources, agriculturalist – pastoralist relations always come under increasing tension, as is known all over the world. Customary arrangements and symbiotic relations carry less weight when neither settled nor nomadic have any surplus for trade or exchange and even livestock for compensation of conflicts is no longer present. However, customary law still exists and it is usually the case that even when under pressure, settled and pastoral people are able to come to working agreements as to how pasture is used. This seems to have been the case during the Zahir Shah period; many informal agreements were developed which allowed seasonal access to pastures, but which were bound by agreement that should livestock interfere with crops, then the pastoralists would pay full compensation. What these kind of agreements suggest is that there is potential for pastoral and settled people to reconcile their land interests does exist.

## **1.6 Internal and external social relations:**

### **Relation within the pastoralist communities:**

The coping capacity of the community is able to encompass a certain level of destitution in the community. Assistance obtainable within the pastoralist community consists of direct assistance, in terms of distribution of resources (food, cash and livestock, ref Chapter # for details on distribution mechanisms among the pure pastoralists of the south), and in terms of the provision of labour opportunities.

The extent of the community coping capacity depends therefore mostly on two factors:

- The average wealth of the whole community, since that will determine the availability of labour opportunities within the community. The number of livestock held by the total community and specifically by the wealthier group within the Kuchi society gives an indication of the overall wealth of the community. When a whole community is severely drought affected the community capacity will be lowered, and more household are likely to be forced to look for prospects elsewhere.
- The diversity of the livelihoods employed by the members of the community. Those with a more opportunistic and diversified economy are less likely to be affected by shocks occurring to their system. But even on a higher level, these individuals that own businesses or agricultural land are better placed to provide labour opportunities to destitute Kuchi in times of stress. Therefore a community that has a high level of incorporation into businesses or agriculture will have a higher community coping capacity.

The pure pastoralists of the south have a relatively low community coping capacity, due to a low level of diversification of the livelihood, and relatively weak links with the settled population:

### **Relation with settled population:**

The relationship between the settled people and the pastoralist groups is based largely upon the exchange of goods and services. Pastoralists purchase wheat and fodder, either directly from the farmer or via the market. The pastoralists also provide services, in transportation, trade, source of news, and the provision of additional labour in harvest time. Their flocks fertilize the fields post-harvest, when the farmers allow the animals to graze the stubble fields. (Ref text box).

Social relations are dynamic and influenced by the economic and ethno-political context, and have undergone tremendous changes in the last decades. Current relations with settled population vary largely in different regions, depending on:

- Past relations.
- Effects of conflict on polarisation between the different ethnic groups.
- Ethnic composition of the areas which are being migrated through.
- Type of pastoralism (pure pastoralism / agropastoralism)

A distinction must be made between the agro-pastoralists and the pure pastoralists, and also between the summer and the winter areas.

In general it can be stated that the relations with the settled population in the summer areas in the Central Highlands are the most tense (ref \$1.5). Most of these areas in fact are currently inaccessible to the nomads, due to ethno-political tension.

Pastoralists who practice short-range migration and agro-pastoralists stay mostly within the district, and do not migrate into the Central Highlands. Some never entered into Hazarajat, even in the past, whereas others ceased their long range migration, specifically because of these tensions. Their current relations with the settled are again dependent on local power arrangements and ethnic composition of the area. In North West Afghanistan, Pashtun Kuchi have fled in

#### **Nomad – sedentary relations in Western Afghanistan**

Nomads consider close relations with farmers as a precondition for their own survival. [...] Pastoralist nomadism is a specialized occupation, and nomads need a market for their products. Security is as important; they need protection from economic hazards as well as from violence. [...]

Farmers can provide nomads with bread and their animals with fodder if something goes wrong in the steppes. They can protect their nomad friends in their villages if fighting breaks out, and most important, villages are a safe haven for survival if nomads lose their animals and have to quit nomadism. Their farmer friends or relatives would provide them with a piece of land or offer them a modest income for labour until the impoverished nomads can rebuild their herds.

[...] Farmers are less dependent on these relations, they can do without nomads also. As a consequence nomads have to play the more active part in maintaining relations with farmers, they offer them services such as harvesting, transporting the farmers' crops on their camels to the market, fertilizing the fields by grazing their animals in the stubble fields, buying wheat and other agricultural products for cash, particularly straw which nobody else would buy. Thus in ordinary years farmers do appreciate good relations with the nomads, but in times of crisis, when nomads have no money and no goods to offer, nomad-farmer relations come under strain. Then the nomads can only expect help from farmers if they share more than economic interest. The best basis is always kinship plus marriage, or more precisely; Only patrilineal, matrilineal and affinal relations in combination are strong enough to secure assistance from villagers in times of severe need.

Source: *Glatzer, Marriage prestations in Nomad-Farmer relations in West-Afghanistan, Essays on South Asian Society, Culture and Politics, 1995 (data from 1976)*

large numbers from Faryab Province, and some of these have found shelter in Badghis Province, where there is a stronger Pashtun presence among the settled population. In this latter province, the relations between the settled population and the pastoralist groups are stronger. However, generalizations must be avoided, since the situations differ strongly from area to area, depending on their specific characteristics.

Agro-pastoralists in general are more strongly integrated into the settled population than the pure pastoralists, and in some areas the boundaries between the settled, semi-nomadic and nomadic are very fluid. Intermarriage and economic interdependence between sedentary and (semi-) nomadic groups strengthen the ties between the categories. (refer text box).

The type of relationship held with the settled people in the areas, in which pastoralists live is crucial for the understanding of vulnerability. If the relations are good, and the social safety network of the pastoralists does include to some extent the settled population, the vulnerability of the pastoralists decreases considerably. The pastoralists can draw on other resources, that are not available within the pastoralist livelihood. Kuchi that have lost their livestock, may find labour opportunities in the Kuchi society or with the settled, and may even be given land to work. The community coping capacity is greatly enlarged, by incorporating to some extent the settled population in the community.

#### **Relations with urban population:**

The level of connectedness with potential employers outside the pastoralist realm, possible except for those Kuchi involved in trade, is an important factor determining the access to labour opportunities.

A large proportion of the pure pastoralists of the south, consider gaining access to urban labour opportunities crucial but very difficult. Large numbers of Kuchi men can be found at the markets in the cities, offering themselves for labour, and having to leave unsatisfied at the end of the day. However, from literature it is well known that many former pastoralists have shifted livelihood strategies and engaged themselves in trade and transport. It is yet unclear to what extent, and in which areas, this increases the labour opportunities for Kuchi.

## Chapter 2: Pastoralist livelihoods

From the information provided in the last chapters, it can be noted that the pastoralists are not a homogenous group. The main differences between pastoralists revolve around the level of diversification of the livelihood.

Those who can be considered semi-pastoralists, due to the ownership of land and in some cases houses, employ different livelihood strategies than the pure pastoralists.

The author has concentrated on the pure pastoralists of the south in the context of this study, due to the fact that they have been, and continue to be the most affected by the drought. The drought itself is continuing in some parts of the country, with limited pasture availability in both summer and winter areas, but in addition to this pure pastoralists also are more vulnerable to prolonged drought, due to their mono-cultured livelihood.

Issues regarding interventions towards pastoralists are most likely to be targeted at the Kuchi of the south, who are the worst affected, and are forming the majority of the beneficiaries in the IDP camps in the south.

The information provided in the following paragraphs are specific for the pure pastoralists in the south, and can not be extrapolated to the other parts of the country.

### 2.1 Food consumption:

#### *Milk:*

Dairy products form an important component of the diet, and mostly so in the spring. In the spring season, after the parturition of the sheep and goats, milk production starts. The lactation period lasts some 3-4 months for sheep and goats, goats somewhat longer than sheep. The length of the lactation period, and the level of production depends on feed availability and health status of the animals.

Milk can be consumed as fresh milk, or processed into ghee, shlembe (buttermilk), yoghurt and qurut. Qurut is made through processing the milk into a yoghurt, which is churned to separate the ghee and either eaten directly or heated until it becomes dry, and can be stored, when it serves as a source of animal protein in the months when there is no milk production. All the pastoralists interviewed stated that at this time of the year, the milk production of their sheep and goats had almost or entirely dried up, due to the natural end to the lactation period, pushed forward by the lack of adequate pasture.

In a good year, in the spring-time there is an abundance of milk, and more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the milk gets processed into qurut. When livestock numbers, and as a consequence the milk production decreases, less milk is being processed into qurut. The relative wealth of the household is a determining factor in how much of the milk gets consumed directly or kept for storage. This has its impact on the intake of animal protein in the winter months.

In times of scarcity of milk products, it is the children who receive first priority in milk consumption.

**Example contribution of milk to household requirements:**

Kuchi household with 10 members  
60 lactating sheep

Total milk production/sheep/year<sup>8</sup>: 30 kg  
Caloric value of the milk: 1.030 kcal / kg  
All the milk is consumed within the household.

% of annual caloric requirements met by milk: **24%**

The case study given above shows that milk production only covers part of the annual requirements for a household. In times of relative abundance, a proportion of the processed milk products will be sold in the market, and not all consumed by the family members themselves. It is important to note that the protein requirements met by the dairy products is even more important than the caloric contributions.

***Meat:***

These pastoralists do generally only slaughter animals for the purpose of consumption in the winter months. The meat is either shared with the neighbours, on the basis of mutual reciprocity, or dried for prolonged use. One sheep will last from 20 – 30 days, depending on the size of the animal and the number of household members.

An exception is made for animals that are weakened by drought or disease. Instead of allowing them to die, the animals are slaughtered in the halal way before spontaneous death occurs.

When the quantity of meat is not sufficient for all, it is generally stated that the men have first priority in the consumption of meat.

**Example contribution of meat to household requirements:**

Kuchi household with 10 members

6 sheep slaughtered @ 12 kg carcass weight: 72 kg meat  
Caloric value of mutton: 4120 kcal / kg

% of caloric requirements: **4%**

This example shows that the amount of meat consumed in a Kuchi household is relatively low, in terms of its contribution to the caloric requirements. However, it plays an important role in contribution to the protein requirements of the household.

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<sup>8</sup> This figure refers to the amount of milk available for human consumption, which leaves sufficient milk for the newborns.

***Agricultural production:***

A small proportion of pastoralists have access to agricultural land, as owner or tenant.

***Purchased food:***

Purchased food constitutes the largest component of the diet. Purchased food consists mostly of wheat, rice, tea and sugar. Purchased food is a larger component of the diet in winter and autumn than in spring and summer, when milk is readily available. With decreasing livestock numbers, the reliance on purchased food decreases, leading to a lower proportion of animal protein in the diet. The income earned from the sale of livestock is the major source of income for a pastoralist, increasingly complemented with additional income sources, as livestock numbers drop.

The off-spring of the animals are generally sold in April or August. A pastoralist will prefer to sell the male animals only, in an attempt to increase the core herd of female productive animals. Several factors determine the extent to which he can achieve this goal, like availability of pasture, the need for cash, access to credit and the amount of active labour available in the household. The latter largely determines the maximum size of a herd.

***Seasonality of food consumption:***

Milk production starts in spring, after the sheep and goats give birth to their young in February / March. A proportion of the milk is used by the newborn animals, the remaining being consumed by the household members. If milk is available in abundance, a large proportion (around one third) is being processed into qurut, which can be kept and consumed in the winter.

After the milk production ceases, meat and qurut is consumed alongside the purchased food, depending on the availability of these products. The amount of qurut stocked in the spring serves as an indication of availability of livestock products in the winter diet. Unfortunately, there is currently no adequate information available on the actual proportion of dietary requirements met by meat and qurut in the autumn and winter.

In addition to the own production of dairy products and meat, people rely heavily on purchased food, and is therefore affected by the seasonality of cash income. As stated above, the peak periods for selling animals is in April and August, the decision making process determined by the prices on the market and cash needs. Harvesting is seasonal, from March through June, and casual labour less so.

Gaps in cash income in a certain period can be filled in different ways; by diverting some energy to finding casual labour, by selling animals at a less than favourable time, or by entering into debt that can be repaid when animals are being sold. Pastoralists prefer to sell their male animals when they have reached an age of 1 or 2 years, which is the most economic strategy. Those with access to credit can decide to take a more high risk course, and enter into debt, while fattening the animals, whereas others will sell their animals at an earlier stage.

**Examples of actual food consumption:**

Some examples of food consumption are given below:

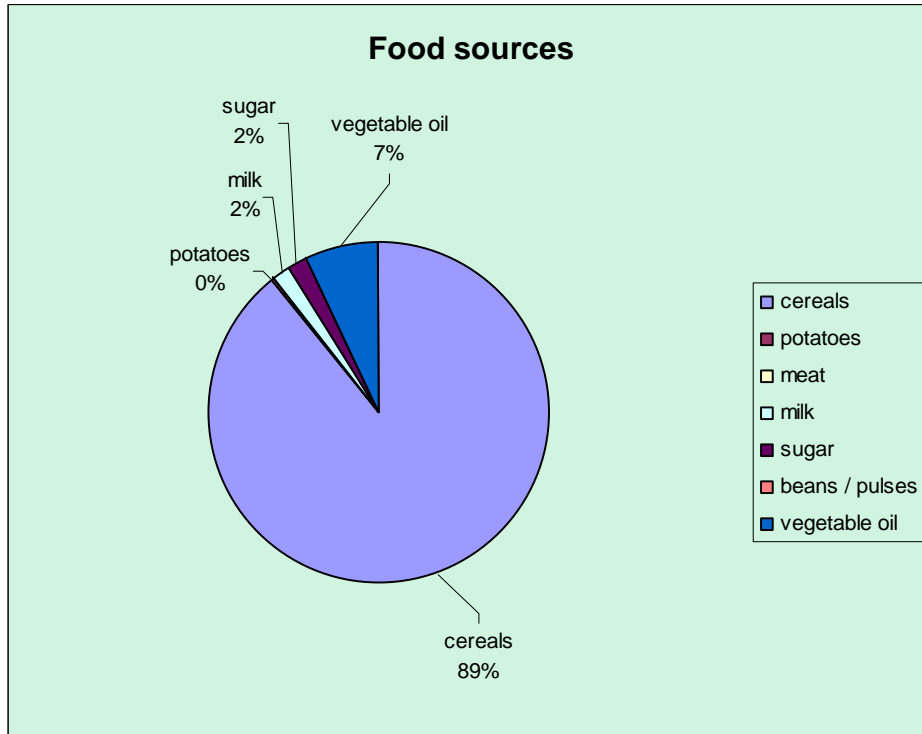


Fig. 1: Food consumption over last month (July), Qara Bagh; 15 shoats, no qurut stocked.

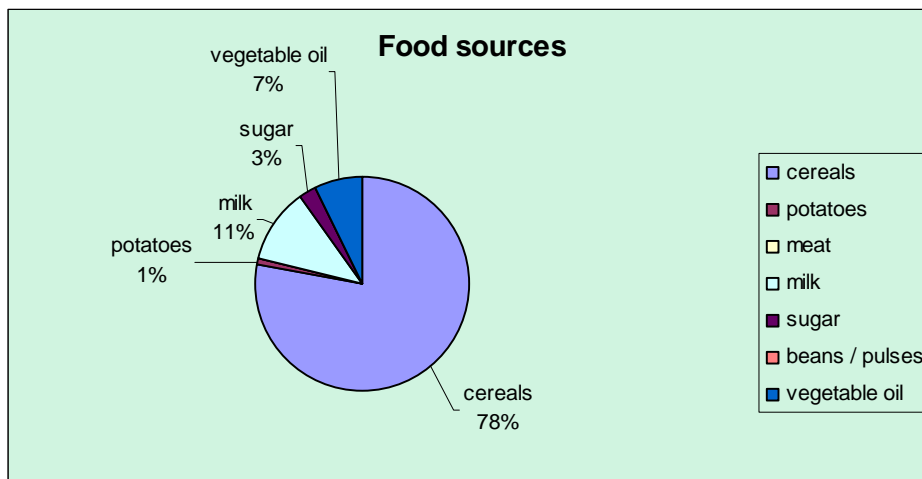


Figure 2: Food consumption over last month (July), Ghazni center; 20 shoats, 7 kg of qurut stocked.

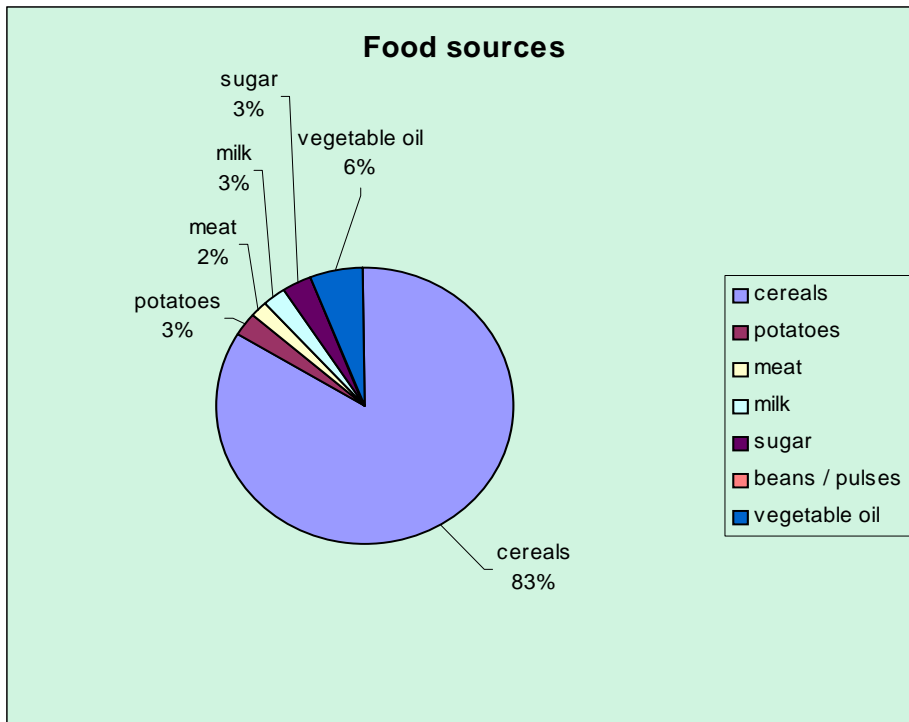


Figure 3: Food consumption over last week (July), Ghazni center; 90 shoats, 15-20 kg of qurut stocked.

## 2.2 Sources of income:

Sources of income for pastoralists in south Afghanistan are largely dependent on the number of livestock owned. Pastoralists with sufficient number of livestock depend mostly on:

- Sale of animals
- Sale of wool, skins, manure, and dairy products (mostly ghee and qurut)

Even in good years, there is a certain wealth stratification, and those at the lower end of the scale depend on additional sources of income, like:

- Agricultural work
- Small-scale livestock trade between the pastoralist communities and the market centre, based on mutual trust (credit).
- Wool trade on credit basis
- Shepherding for other pastoralists, villagers or livestock traders
- Firewood collection and sale
- Sheep dung collection and sale

In times of stress, when livestock numbers fall and dependence on income sources other than livestock sales increases, the urban centres gain in importance in the search for income:

- Labour in the livestock market
  - o Shepherding animals for livestock traders
  - o Trekking animals
- Daily wage labour
  - o Construction of simple houses (transporting stones, wood, mixing sand and mud)
  - o Making bricks
  - o Loading and off-loading of trucks
  - o Digging wells
  - o Any other daily wage labour

Some Kuchi have diversified their economy to a great extent. Certain specialisations have been adopted, and some relatively wealthy Kuchi occupy themselves with trade, particularly but not exclusively livestock trade, or any other business. Especially in the border areas, smuggle is an important source of income for some. These sources of income can act as an additional income, or it can become the main occupation, in which case they can no longer be considered pastoralists. But they may well still live in tents however!

## 2.3 Availability, access and seasonality of labour opportunities:

### Agricultural work:

#### *Availability:*

As a result of the lower water table the agricultural production from irrigated land is reduced compared to last year, leading to reduced labour opportunities in the agricultural sphere.

In few cases Kuchi are being given the opportunity to work the land as sharecroppers. But in times of drought, the opportunities for sharecropping are scarce.

#### *Access:*

Kuchi are cheaper than the village farmers who also present their labour. Since they are not skilled, they obtain only the more simple jobs. An example is shown in the text box:

#### **Daily wage for agricultural work:**

- |                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| - Cleaning of gardens: | Kuchi: 20.000 Afs / day      |
|                        | Villager: 100.000 Afs / day  |
| - Harvesting:          | Kuchi: 1 seer / day          |
|                        | Villager: 1.5 – 2 seer / day |

The lower cost of Kuchi labour increases their comparative advantage in accessing these labour opportunities, be it for a smaller profit. However, some farmers claim that for harvesting

they would prefer not to give the work to a Kuchi, due to the lack of skill.

Access to harvesting opportunities is determined by one's past performance, recommendations from respected people, and in some cases kinship relations.

#### *Seasonality:*

Harvesting takes place from April to July, and differs per area. Pastoralist can actually adapt their migration pattern to fully benefit from harvesting labour opportunities. In literature it has been suggested that pastoralists turn slowly into seasonal harvest labourers (Balland & Kieffer, 1976).

### Trade in livestock or livestock products on credit basis:

*Availability* depends on the number of livestock available, which is currently low.

*Access* to this source of income depends mostly on strong relations of trust with those Kuchi that still own livestock. Specific skills, experience, and past performance are considered by the livestock owners.

*Seasonality* is determined by the preferred times of sales, which peaks in April and August.

## Shepherding:

Shepherding animals for others can take different shapes and forms. A few examples of herding contracts are given in the frames in the text.

### *Availability:*

Before the drought, the labour opportunity for shepherding was best within Kuchi, followed by herding for villagers, and lastly herding for livestock traders. Now the best opportunities are with the traders, followed by the villagers, and lastly among the Kuchi.

Shepherding for the Kuchi is currently hardly available, due to decreased herd sizes even for the better-off Kuchi. The shepherding for villagers is still available this year, but due to the general decline in livestock numbers in the villages, availability is reduced compared to last year.

Also the labour for the livestock traders are less this year; this year there are fewer animals on the market and there is more competition due

### **Shepherding for better-off Kuchi:**

On a yearly basis, the shepherd receives:

- 25% of the wool
- 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the male lambs
- 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the female lambs

If it is a herd that also consists of male lambs (1-year old); there is a bonus for those; the shepherd receiving 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the newborn lambs.

The milk is consumed by the owner, the animals come back every day for milking.

### *Access:*

Kuchi prefer to engage relatives, for seasons of trust and sympathy. Villagers rely on Kuchi that are known to them, via kinship but mostly through recommendation or past performance.

Previous experience in trading and shepherding animals also serves as an advantage to accessing daily wage labour at the livestock market. Relations with traders, through kinship tie or based upon past performance, are crucial.

### **Shepherding for the villagers:**

*A:* The shepherd takes the animals from the villagers to pasture nearby. The shepherd receives 7 kg/wheat/animal for the whole period (usually May to September)

*B:* The shepherd takes the sheep to a distant grazing area, like Nawor. The shepherd receives an allocation of food before he goes, for instance 100 kg wheat / month + 50 kg rice and some ghee. In addition he gets paid 1000 – 1500 Rs / month. The villagers share the cost and assemble a herd. The average size herd would be 50-100 animals.

Consumption of the milk:

- Some owners allow the shepherds to take the milk
- Others do not want the shepherds to use the milk, because it affects the body condition of the animal.

to the higher number of shepherds available. As a consequence, the wages are lower this year at between 40.000 and 100.000 Afs.

### **Shepherding for livestock traders**

*A:* Animals owned by a livestock trader are being taken to pasture for a few days before selling.

Daily wage: 40.000 - 100.000 Afs / day

*B:* Livestock traders take animals to shepherds who herd them for 2 months to fatten them, and the profit is shared.

*C:* Kuchi trek the animals to the new owner's house, for a small fee.

*Seasonality:*

As can be seen from the text boxes, the shepherding for Kuchi is usually for the whole year, and for villagers for the summer period (April – September). The labour opportunities on the livestock market, or relating to trade, depend on the volumes of animals on the market.

**Dung collection:**

One can collect the dung of one's own sheep, or the dung of the animals that have migrated. The owner of the animals can grant permission to someone to collect and sell the dung of his animals, which can be considered as a type of charity.

The dung collected in the livestock market and the transit stables (serai) for animals is being sold by the exploiters of these sites, and are therefore not accessible to individuals.

**Firewood collection:**

Firewood collection is free for all, who can spare the time and effort to go to the areas where firewood can be found.

**General casual labour:**

*Availability:*

In the current situation in Afghanistan, a large proportion of the population is highly reliant on casual labour. The pastoralists have to compete with many other labour searchers from urban or rural settings, who often have stronger relations and ties with the potential labour providers. Due to their relative isolation are they at a negative comparative advantage.

*Access* is partly determined by relations with potential casual labour providers, recommendations from others and past performance. One would assume that the fact that many richer Kuchi have entered into the livestock and transport business, would benefit the poorer Kuchi in search of employment. This study has not yet been available to validate this assumption.

*Seasonality:* The author does not have any information regarding the seasonality of casual labour.

## **2.4 Expenditure:**

The income gained is mostly spent on wheat, tea, sugar, clothing, animal fodder, and some replacement females (and to some extent breeding males)

To establish a good understanding of the pattern of expenditure, it is crucial to follow a household over a long period, to even out seasonality and incidental periods of high or

low expenditure. A case study taken from literature<sup>9</sup> (Glatzer, Casimir; 1983), provides the following example of an annual household budget :

46% cereal  
20% fodder  
18% clothing  
16% replacement livestock

## **2.5 Social Safety networks:**

### **Inter-household distribution mechanisms:**

The tent serves as an independent economic unit; the people living in one tent share the resources; they eat together, share income and expenditure. The livestock belonging to the tent is a common pool, with a few exceptions when livestock is privately owned. One of those exceptions is the livestock owned by the newly wed bride, who receives a gift from her father when she moves to the new tent.

Food is shared with guests that come to the house, and to poor relatives and those in dire need. Food can be lent to neighbours, in times of temporary shortage, or surplus within a household. A sheep killed by a household can be shared with neighbouring households, expecting reciprocity.

Assistance between relatives can also be provided in cash, usually negotiated by the men. Also between different tribes, men can negotiate with leaders of other tribes to be given cash on the basis of reciprocity.

Livestock is mostly being exchanged between households as a component of the bride price, which consists mostly of sheep and cash.

Between near relatives, a number of animals might be given as a gift, for the purpose of assisting the other. Up to 5 sheep, or 1 camel could be given as an one-time gift, the recipient not being expected to return within some 2 years.

In some cases the wealthier Kuchi might give animals to a poor for milking for the duration of the lactation period, after which the animals are returned to the owner.

Livestock loans can be given, as a means of assistance. Reimbursement of the value of the sheep at the time of the loan is expected within 6 to 12 months. There is no interest charged, according to the Kuchi.

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<sup>9</sup> *Glatzer and Casimir, Herds and households among Pashtun pastoral nomads; limits of growth, Ethnology, Vol XXII. No. 4, 1983*

## Charity:

### *Formal safety networks:*

Zakat is a form of Islamic tax, which was compulsory during Taliban time. Zakat consists of 10% of the total yield, of which 50% is which is transferred to the local mullah and 50% to the poor in the community. Zakat for livestock owner is calculated as follows:

<b>Livestock ownership</b>	<b>Zakat (tax)</b>
- 40 sheep:	1 sheep
- 200 sheep:	2 sheep
- 300 sheep:	3 sheep

In current times zakat is voluntary, and is still followed by many. However, due to declining herd sizes, the number of people paying zakat, and the level of zakat paid by the Kuchi is very low. Interestingly, farmers do also give part of their zakat to Kuchi, as was witnessed in one particular case.

### *Begging:*

Begging within the tribe is considered as shameful among Kuchi nomads, which drives them to the villages and towns. They beg at the door of houses, with the shopkeepers and alongside the road, which is being done with a general feeling of shame.

## Chapter 3: Vulnerability analysis

### Pastoralist livelihood in Afghanistan:

The information provided below is a summary from the full text of this paper, and simplifications have been made for the sake of clarity. The reader is encouraged to refer to the respective chapters for more specific information on some of these topics.

#### Livelihoods assets:

##### Physical capital:

- Livestock
- A small proportion own agricultural land

##### Social capital:

- Relations with settled population vary largely in different regions, depending on:
  - o Past relations
  - o Effects of conflict on polarisation between the different ethnic groups
  - o Ethnic composition of the areas which are being migrated through
- Strong relations within pastoralist tribes, leading to possible labour opportunities with better-off pastoralists.
- Low level of connections with relations with potential employers outside the pastoralist realm, possible except for those Kuchi involved in trade:

##### Human capital:

- Low average level of education
- High level of knowledge in livestock keeping, including indigenous veterinary knowledge
- Low level of skills, other than livestock keeping
- Quantity and quality of labour available in the household

##### Financial capital:

- Access to credit

##### Natural capital:

- Availability of pasture
- Access to pasture

The mobility of pastoralists make them a particularly opportunistic group, that can move to where opportunities are greatest. However, the general low level of skills of pastoralists reduces the potential benefits of this mobility.

#### Vulnerability context:

- Trends:** more intensive utilisation of land for agriculture, leading to a decrease in pasture land availability, decrease in availability of pasture due to prolonged drought
- Shocks:** reduced access to pasture due to political changes, drought, change in livestock / cereal terms of trade, interrupted migration routes due to conflict, livestock disease
- Seasonality:** dependency on seasonal availability of pasture: quantity and quality of pasture is less in winter, seasonality in labour opportunities

### **Transforming structures and processes:**

- The Kuchi were given 25 seats for the Loya Jirga, creating some representation at government level.
- Currently there is no effective legislation in Afghanistan regarding access to pasture:
  - o Documents from the old times are still kept by the owners, but the value of these documents is unclarified.
  - o Traditional pasture rights agreements have been eroded due to the effects of civil war.
  - o Access to pasture is currently under partial control of the district authorities.
  - o Access to pasture is also partly regulated by people's attitudes towards each other, attitudes altered by the political sides taken during the conflict.
- The pastoralists are organized in tribes, sub-tribes and communities, that each have an extent of leadership. The leaders represent their people in local shura and other decision making bodies.

### **Activities:**

#### **Income generating activities:**

- Sale of animals.
- Sale of wool, skins, manure, and dairy products (mostly ghee and qurut).
- Agricultural work.
- Small-scale livestock trade between the pastoralist communities and the market centre, based on mutual trust (credit).
- Wool trade on credit basis.
- Shepherding for other pastoralists, villagers or livestock traders.
- Firewood collection and sale.
- Sheep dung collection and sale.
- Labour in the livestock market.
- Daily wage labour.

#### **Household food distribution:**

- Milk consumed as fresh milk, buttermilk, or dried buttermilk.
- Meat consumed rarely, as fresh meat or dried meat.
- Food consumption has a seasonal aspect, with higher reliance on dairy products in spring, and on dried meat in the winter.
- The large majority of the food intake stems from purchased food, bread being the staple
- Milk is generally consumed by children as the first priority.
- Meat is generally consumed by men as the first priority.

#### **Health-related activities:**

- Low access to health facilities, due to distance and purchasing power
- Currently there is no information available on child-caring practices, attitudes towards health care

The current status of the pastoralist livelihood is determined by all the factors mentioned above. The specific outcome at this point in time can be described by the following parameters:

- reduced availability and access to pasture
- reduced herd sizes, and large proportion of households without livestock

- strong competition on the labour market
- high degree of food insecurity in the pastoralist population, due to low own production in combination with low purchasing power.

Within this particular context, the particular combination of assets held by a household determines the livelihood strategy employed, which in the case of a nomadic population also determines the geographical location to some extent.

**Livelihoods assets at household level:**

**Physical capital:**

- Number of livestock left
- Amount of agricultural land owned
- Amount of agricultural land worked

**Social capital:**

- Access to labour opportunities depends on:
  - o Relations with potential employers:
    - Livestock traders
    - Better-off Kuchi
    - Villagers
    - Casual labour providers
- Access to pasture depends on:
  - Relation with villagers
  - Relations with local authorities

**Human capital:**

- Skills available
  - o in agriculture
  - o in trade
  - o in particular daily wage labour (construction etc)
- Quantity and quality of labour available in the household

**Financial capital:**

- Access to credit
- Cash to pay for transportation costs

**Natural capital:**

- Availability of pasture in the traditional grazing area
- Access to pasture in the traditional grazing area

Access to IDP camp? (the basis of gaining access to IDP camps is not well understood)

There are particular combination of assets that lead to the employment of different strategies. These strategies can be categorized, keeping in mind that the boundaries between the categories are fluid.

<b>Livelihood strategy</b>	<b>Main assets held</b>	<b>Main income source</b>	<b>Geographical location</b>
Strategy aimed at keeping livestock alive. Low risk.	Livestock	Sales of animals	In the grazing area
Strategy aimed at keeping livestock alive. High risk.	Livestock Access to debt	Credit Sales of animals	In the grazing area
Strategy aimed at accessing labour opportunities within Kuchi livelihood	Good relations with livestock owning Kuchi Specific skills available Labour available in household	Trade, firewood,	In the grazing area
Strategy aimed at accessing labour in the cities / villages	Good relations with potential employers Specific experience and skills available (harvest, trade, etc) Labour available in household	Casual labour	Near the city
Strategy aimed at maximizing assistance, or reliance on begging	Good relations with own community, or a particular village where assistance might be available	Charity	Near a village, within the community, or in IDP camp.
Strategy of reliance on begging	No assets left	Begging	Anywhere, near roads, near cities.
Strategy aimed at accessing assistance from humanitarian aid	? No assets left ?	Humanitarian Assistance	IDP camp

It is currently not clearly understood what mechanisms and decision-making processes are at play, that result in some households ending up in IDP camps, whereas others continue to migrate. Transport costs to reach the IDP camps is one of the limiting factors mentioned, which point in the direction that it might not be the most vulnerable people residing in the camps.

This categorization links closely with the current geographical locations of Kuchi:

- In IDP camps.
- Scattered around villages and towns.
- In the grazing areas.

## Chapter 4: Matrix for assistance to the pastoralists according to categories of vulnerability

Livelihood strategy	Main assets held	Main income source	Geographical location	Short term intervention	Medium term intervention	Long term intervention
Strategy aimed at keeping livestock alive. Low risk.	Livestock	Sales of animals	In the grazing area	Emergency supplementary feeding of the remaining livestock  Food or cash assistance for those that do not meet their food requirements. Food assessments have to be conducted to assess the food security status	strengthening physical assets: - supplementary feeding for livestock - basic veterinary measures, anti ecto- and endo-parasites, and vaccination improving social capital: - Joint sedentary-nomadic community projects improving access to pasture; - influence policy making on sustainable resource management (water and pasture) - conflict resolution	strengthening physical assets: - mobile veterinary care - community based restocking strengthening long lasting solutions to sustainable resource management, mobile education
Strategy aimed at keeping livestock alive. High risk.	Livestock Access to debt	Credit Sales of animals (at the most economical time)	In the grazing area	Emergency supplementary feeding of the remaining livestock  Improving access to credit  Food or cash assistance for those that do not meet their food requirements. Food assessments have to be conducted to assess the food security status	strengthening physical assets: - supplementary feeding for livestock - basic veterinary measures, anti ecto- and endo-parasites. improving social capital: - Joint sedentary-nomadic community projects improving access to credit improving access to pasture; - influence policy making on sustainable resource management (water and pasture) - conflict resolution	Idem
Strategy aimed at accessing labour opportunities within Kuchi livelihood	No livestock Good relations with livestock owning Kuchi Specific skills available Labour available in household	Trade, firewood, dung collection	In the grazing area	Food or cash for work programs in or near the grazing areas.	Rebuilding physical assets - land or livestock * Improving social capital: strengthen relations with other populations, to increase access to pasture improving access to pasture; - influence policy making on sustainable resource management (water and pasture) - conflict resolution	Idem

Strategy aimed at accessing labour in the cities / villages	Good relations with potential employers Specific experience and skills available (harvest, trade, etc) Labour available in household	Casual labour	Near the city	Food or cash for work programs in or near the grazing areas, or near the cities.	Rebuilding physical assets - land or livestock * - Training in business skills Improving social capital: - Joint sedentary-nomadic community projects. Improving access to pasture; - influence policy making on sustainable resource management (water and pasture) - Conflict resolution	Idem
No access to labour opportunities in cities and villages. Strategy aimed at accessing labour opportunities within Kuchi livelihood.	Labour available in household Good relations with livestock owning Kuchi	Firewood, dung collection	In the grazing area	Food or cash for work programs in or near the grazing areas, or near the cities.	Rebuilding physical assets - land or livestock * - Training in business skills Improving social capital: - Joint sedentary-nomadic community projects. Improving access to pasture; - influence policy making on sustainable resource management (water and pasture) - Conflict resolution	Idem. An increased community coping capacity will benefit this group
Strategy aimed at maximizing assistance	Good relations within pastoralist community No labour available in household	charity	Near a village, within the community	Free food or cash distribution	Free food or cash distribution Improving social capital: - Joint sedentary-nomadic community projects.	Idem. An increased community coping capacity will benefit this group
Strategy of reliance on begging	No labour available in household No assets left	begging	Anywhere, near roads, near cities.	Free food or cash distribution	Free food or cash distribution Improving social capital: - Joint sedentary-nomadic community projects.	Idem. An increased community coping capacity will benefit this particularly vulnerable group
Strategy aimed at accessing assistance from humanitarian aid	? No assets ?	Humanitarian Assistance	IDP camp	Free food or cash distribution	Rebuilding physical assets - land or livestock * - Training in business skills Improving social capital: - Joint sedentary-nomadic community projects. Improving access to pasture; - Influence policy making on sustainable resource management (water and pasture) - Conflict resolution	

As can be seen from the matrix provided above; the recommended interventions vary slightly for the different categories of vulnerability. The main difference lies in the availability of labour in the household and the presence of livestock. These differences have to be kept in mind, although for practical reasons, it will not always be possible to target each of these groups separately. Also for practical and ethical reasons it will not be possible to provide free food for those with livestock that stay in the grazing areas, and food for work to those without livestock that stay in the grazing areas, even though it might make sense from the perspective of the most appropriate use of the labour. A middle ground has to be found, that is both appropriate and practical.

At this point it is important to step back for one minute. The long-term consequences of any of these interventions might be far-reaching, and might have an impact beyond the immediate humanitarian needs of this group. Some of these issues are discussed in the text boxes below. The issue of re-establishing livelihoods has to be treated as a matter of strategic importance, and it has to be viewed as an issue that is enormous, both in scope as in complexity, which no single actor can deal with alone. A discussion has to be opened on the way forward, and expertise should be brought in from different angles, starting with the government.

The interventions recommended by the author are given below, which can serve as the basis for developing a joint strategy:

#### **4.1 Short term interventions**

Those with livestock are at danger of still losing their animals due to the low quantity and quality of pasture, especially in the winter areas. Providing supplementary feeding to these pastoralists, preferably in combination with parasite-control to increase the resistance against disease, and improve the utilization of the available feed.

Those without labour will need to be provided with free food or cash assistance, whereas those households with available labour can be assisted with cash or food for work programs. The different options for short term assistance, and their specific advantages and disadvantages are presented in the separate paper on food security assessments.

##### **A. The IDP Kuchi in the camps are the tip of the iceberg.**

- According to figures reported by the Kuchi community leaders 58% of the migrating Kuchi have very few or no livestock left. They are reliant on casual labour, and other income generating activities like dung and firewood collection. In the south there are some estimated 85.000 Kuchi households in Ghazni, Zabul, Paktika, Uruzgan, Helmand, Nimroz, Kandahar and southern Ghor, of which some 50 to 70 % have lost all their livestock.
- There is a number of Kuchi, that are not inside the camp, but are also not migrating. They live in spontaneous settlements, in or around villages (in an area that does not correspond with their normal migration pattern) or cities. Figures are not known, but some indication might be derived from the UNOCHA IDP-census. (assuming that approximately 60% of the IDPs are Kuchi)

For every intervention for the Kuchi IDP, it has to be considered whether it will have a pulling effect on these other people as well.

These people should also not be forgotten, just because they do not currently form a political and social problem to the Transitional Authority and UNHCR.

Cash for work and food for work both serve the purpose of creating labour opportunities. Since the food economy is mostly dependent on purchased food, the household is highly reliant on cash income. Therefore cash for work might be more appropriate, thereby cutting down on overhead costs of food distribution. However, there is a likelihood that cash decreases the control of women over the expenditure of the cash.

**B. There is a flow of people from between the migrating Kuchi and the IDP camp Kuchi.**

More research is required to assess:

- Who
- Why
- Under which circumstances
- When

To some extent an IDP camp can be a strategy for some families. Are families splitting, whereas one brother moves to the IDP camp, and another brother herds the livestock? Initial research on this topic does not seem to point into that direction, for the following reasons:

- Households are relatively isolated economic units, and sharing livestock as a shared pool, when not actually staying together is not part of the culture.
- Families do prefer to stay together, and not split into smaller units if avoidable. Reasons are mostly joint caring for the children, sharing of labour tasks, and security in numbers. The sharing of the household assets can cause conflict.

However, all these reasons can become valueless under changing circumstances. Whether this is the case is yet to be assessed.

This question is particularly important, since it could show that for some Kuchi the distinction between living inside the camp and with the migrating Kuchi is not absolute, and movement between the two is a strategy. This could imply that assisting the IDPs in the camps might mean a continuous flow of Kuchi from the migratory life to the camps. On the other hand, it also means that Kuchi currently in the camps might also move back to the migratory life, if assistance is provided there.

## 4.2 Medium term interventions

In the medium-term, those that still have livestock need to be assisted in strengthening their livelihood, by securing access to pasture, and by strengthening the herd via veterinary measures and possibly the introduction of improved breeds. Community resource management and joint community projects should be implemented that improve the cooperation between the sedentary and the nomadic, to reinstate the trust and cooperation that was once prevalent.

Those without livestock or land require their asset base to be rebuilt. There are many different options available, and the specific skills and assets held by the pastoralists can determine which is the most appropriate for these people. The author would recommend the interventions to be based upon individual choice of the pastoralists involved, within the boundaries of what is possible.

- Resettlement on agricultural land is preferred by many pastoralists (see textbox). The available arable land and water in Afghanistan at this time is not sufficient for all pastoralists that have lost their animals. For those without agricultural skills, which is the majority, a substantial amount of training will be required. Care must be taken that the amount of land is sufficient to establish a sustainable livelihood, and that good neighbouring relations with the resident population is established and continuously

reconfirmed, by extending benefits and services to the resident population and by encouraging community based resource management, incorporating the resident and the newly settled people.

- Full restocking: A minimum number has to be provided of around 60 sheep and few transport animals, which will make it an expensive exercise. The animals are not currently present in Afghanistan, due to the impact of the drought on the livestock.

Importing animals from across the border is an option, be it an expensive one. Local breeds are adapted to local conditions, which might not be the case for imported animals. However, Kuchi interviewed generally regard the introduction of improved breeds as a priority. In that case, issues like drought resistance and resistance for certain diseases have to be taken into account, as well as veterinary precautionary measures, due to the dangers involved in gathering animals from different origins.

- Partial restocking: Restocking households with a core breeding herd of sheep and a few transport animals (donkeys or camels). Provided the households' basic needs can be met through food aid, food for work, or cash for work, then recovery of the herds can take place at its natural pace. A restocking program will have to include some basic food assistance, to prevent the pastoralists from selling their animals, due to the need for cash.

- Restocking on loan basis. The time of repayment will depend on several factors, like number of animals received, availability of labour in the household, labour opportunities on the labour market or cash for work programs and others. A period of 2 to 3 year can be considered.

- A rotational restocking scheme is also possible, where one restocked family will restock another family in the next spring. Feasibility will depend on the availability of implementing partners to manage such a scheme.

- Assistance in meeting basic needs, so that any additional income gained can be invested in livestock, can open spontaneous ways of recovery. Only those households that have active labour within the household can benefit.

- Promote an alternative livelihood. Since the nomadic livelihood has always been strongly associated with trade, there are opportunities for promoting small business enterprise.

#### **4.3 Long term interventions:**

In the long term, the pastoralist livelihood needs to be strengthened. The coping mechanisms need to be strengthened by;

- Strengthening the physical assets:

#### **Why do pastoralists prefer agricultural land?**

The recent drought has caused a tremendous amount of suffering, which they do not want to go through again. Education is considered to be very important, for their children to learn how to cope better with these events. Education being one reason, also the migratory lifestyle is being perceived as stressful. However, what also has to be kept in mind here is that Kuchi will always prefer to own agricultural land, to broaden the basis of their livelihood.

Agriculture has been described as 'the golden peg of pastoralism'.

- Mobile veterinary care
  - Improved breeds
- Increasing the access to pasture:
  - sustainable resource management,
- Strengthening the human capital
  - Mobile education
  - Mobile human health care
- Strengthening the social capital
  - Joint community projects, with the sedentary population
- Diversification of the livelihood:
  - By implementing agricultural cash for work programs, to increase the practical skills
  - Small business development

**C. The importance of the Kuchi IDP lies not only on the humanitarian terrain, it has an economic aspect.**

The Kuchi occupy a range of lands that are not easily made productive in another way. Extensive livestock grazing is the most economical way to make these lands productive.

In the current setting in Afghanistan, livestock is also kept around villages, which are limited in the extent of which they can expand their herd sizes. Limitations are mostly shaped by the lack of grazing land near to the village, and the lack of herding labour and herding skill in the village. Those who want to increase the herds, is obliged to send the animals further way, with a shepherd. Kuchi are the preferred shepherds, due to their specific expertise and resources. This provides opportunities for Kuchi with few animals to increase their animals, since the herding contracts usually involve payment in livestock, often supplemented by food. Expansion of the herds of the villagers will then depend on the availability of these shepherds.

This shows that for expansion of the livestock herd sizes, in present Afghanistan will require the presence of Kuchi herdsmen, regardless of whether the animals are owned by villagers or Kuchi.

Livestock has in the past played an important role in the economy of Afghanistan, and should be able to do that again in the future. An economist might be able to provide some more information regarding the future potential of livestock as a contributing factor to the national economy.

If pressure on resources continues to increase, and more pastureland is being taken into agricultural production, there will be a corresponding decrease in pastureland. In these days of conflict over access to certain important pasture areas, mostly in Hazarajat, there is less pasture available than before.

Therefore it is partly a political and economical decision whether attempts should be made to keep the Kuchi in business. A reduction in livestock dependent, migrating Kuchi will be unavoidable, for two reasons:

- Inability of some Kuchi to rebuild their herds
- Decrease in pasture availability limiting the supporting capacity of the land for pastoralists.

The question might have to be turned around. Not 'how do we rebuild a livelihood for these Kuchi?', but instead; 'How do we ensure that we keep a sufficient number of Kuchi in the pastoralist occupation?'

#### **D. The pastoralist production system as a dynamic and opportunistic system.**

The literature on Afghanistan's nomads shows several interesting examples of a dynamic flow of households from the agricultural to the pastoralist domain. It also shows that the particular dynamics are rather different in different areas, determined by geographical, socio-political and economic factors. Most of the examples of this dynamic flow are from the Western regions of Afghanistan, where the boundaries between the pastoralists and agriculturalists are ill defined.

Does the same apply to the pastoralists of the south? Most of the IDPs for instance, in Spin Boldak camps are Pashtun Kuchi, that had their summer area in Ghazni, and wintered in Kandahar. The survey in Ghazni and Zabul showed that respectively 6 and 14% of these Kuchi own land. Few of these tribes of Kuchi have kinship relations with the villagers, at least not to the extent of the West and the East. Most Kuchi without livestock that are still migrating are not staying with villagers, are not occupying themselves with agriculture (except for harvesting, which is considered unskilled labour), and obtain most of their income either from selling dung and firewood, from small scale livestock trade, and from the cities. Relations with the settled population are not generally considered as an important factor determining the access to labour opportunities.

There are cases among this southern group of pastoralists of a flow between a sedentary and migratory livelihood. One case in Awband is a typical example, where part of the family used to migrate, and the other part remained in Awband, where they had their houses and land. At the onset of the drought, the family changed its strategy, and settled permanently. A small proportion of this community migrates up to recent days, in spite of heavy livestock losses. This seems to be the exception however. When asked, the old people, remembering the last severe drought, claim that they do not know of any Kuchi of their or related communities had switched to agriculture and settled during or after the last drought.

A large number of IDPs Kuchi are also Beluch, from the Reg desert. There is even less known about this group, and their opportunistic strategies towards sedentarisation and renomadisation and agricultural expertise.

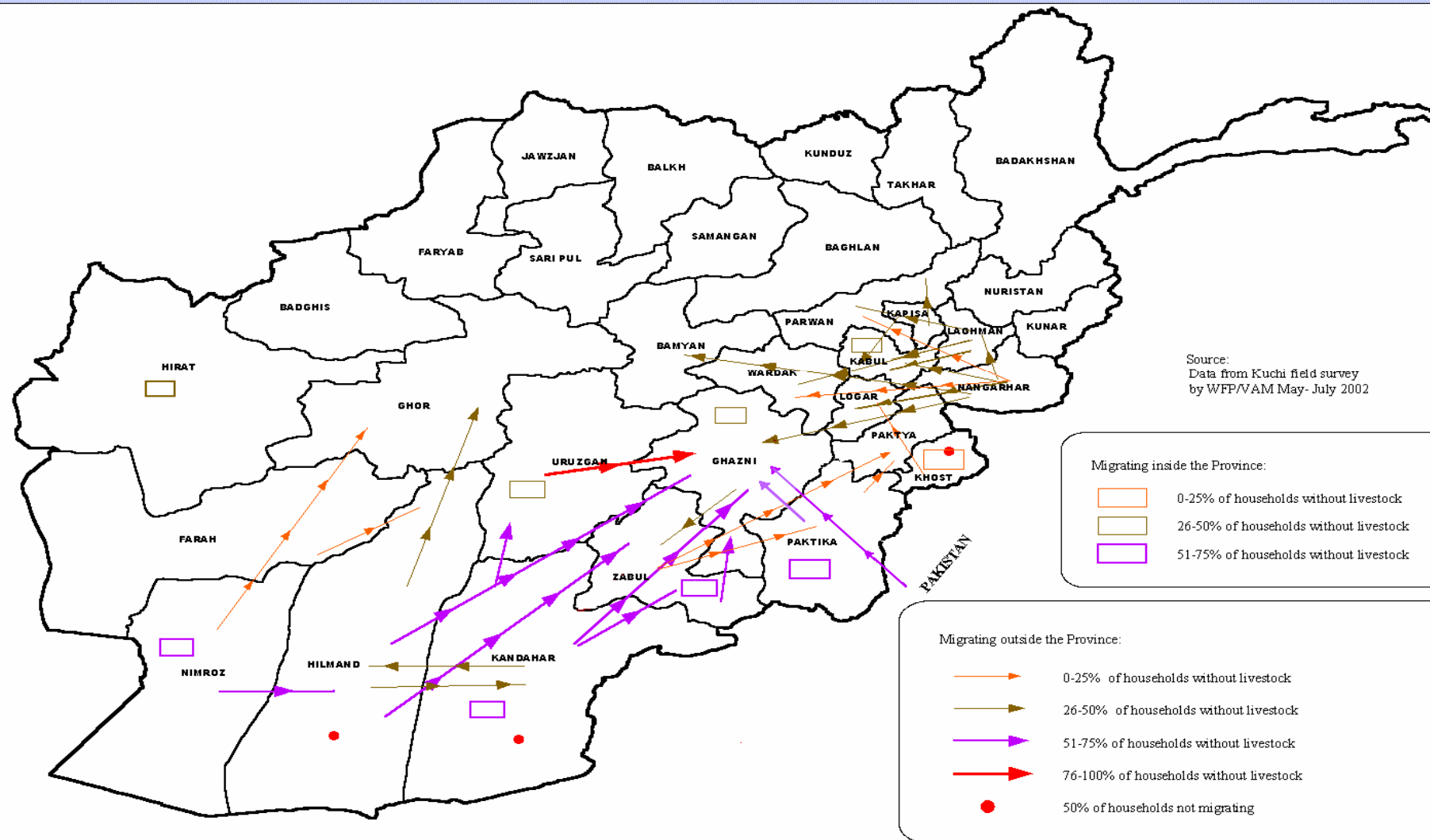
This raises interesting issues. We do not currently have a proper understanding of what sedentarisation of these Kuchi of the south means for the future, will they remain settled, or will they start migrating again? And does it matter?

Also, the fact that most of the Kuchi from the south have not had much exposure to agriculture, and are generally regarded by villagers as 'unskilled', raises concerns regarding the amount of knowledge transfer that is required before these Kuchi become successful farmers.

# AFGHANISTAN

Spring Migration Pattern/Relative Livestock loss  
Central, East & South

World Food Programme



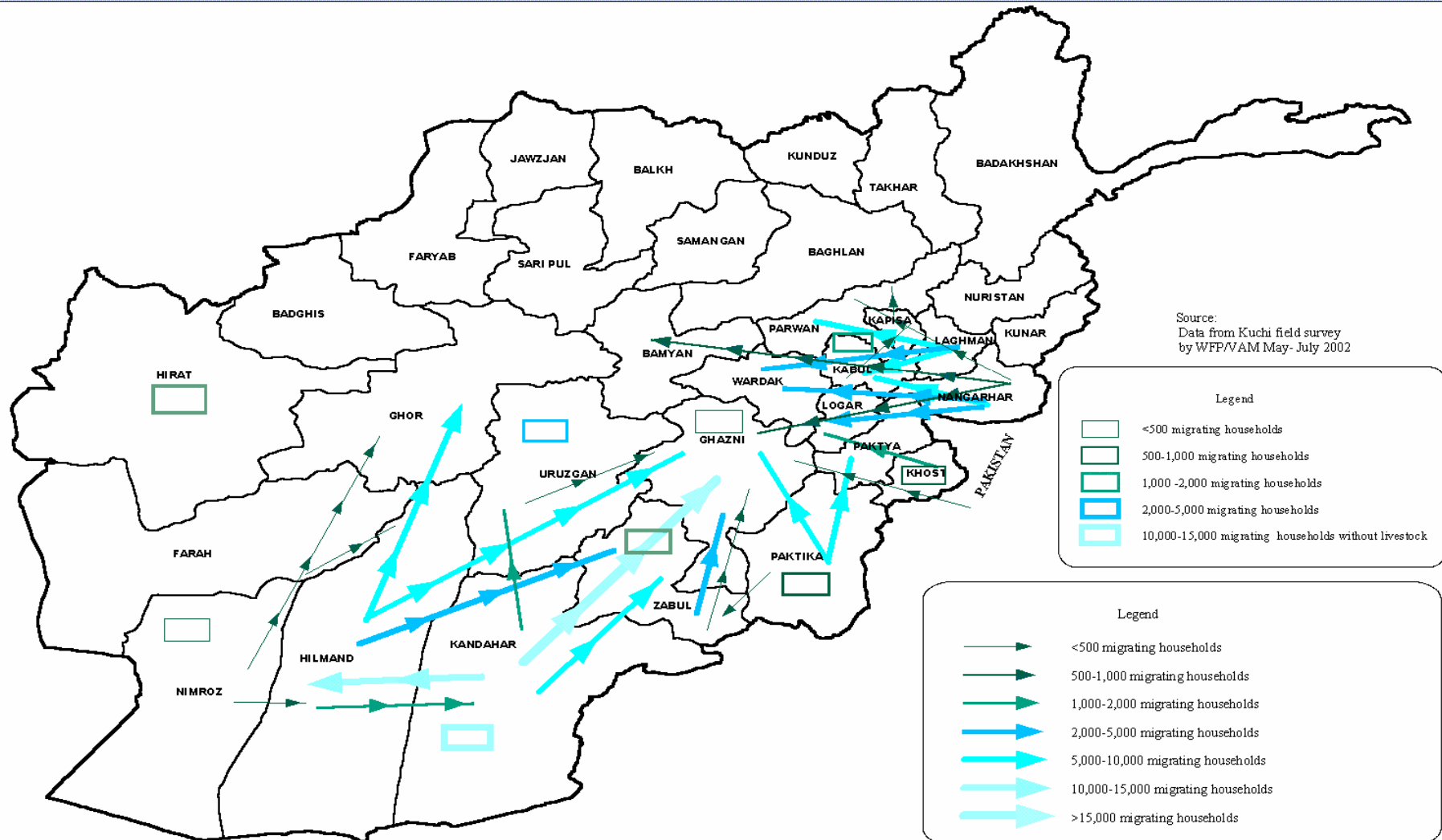
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NOTE: From the south-eastern and eastern provinces of Khost, Nangarhar and particularly Paktika there is a considerable movement across the border into Pakistan.

# AFGHANISTAN

## Spring Migration Pattern/Number of Household Central, East & South

World Food Programme



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