

## NEW JUICE FACTORY ADVANCES AFGHAN AGRICULTURE

**The new facility exports juice concentrate and fresh produce, creating jobs and boosting the economy.**

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With a sip of fresh juice squeezed from Afghanistan's sweet pomegranates, the Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock inaugurated Kabul's new state-of-the-art agribusiness facility on October 15, 2009. The Omaid Bahar Fruit Processing Company established the modern facility with the support of USAID. The facility will produce and export juice concentrate and fresh fruit to countries in North America, Asia, and Europe. "This is not just a juice machine, it is also a time machine," said Minister Mohammad Asif Rahimi. "It has taken us a few years into the future of Afghanistan."

The facility will use Afghanistan's produce to compete in world markets through two products. First, the juice concentrate processing division of the facility will process Afghanistan's pomegranates, apples, melons, apricots, and peaches for sale as juice concentrate that meets international quality standards. In addition, the fresh fruit packaging division will sort, grade, and package fresh produce for export to international markets like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

The facility will increase exports, create jobs, and improve livelihoods throughout Afghanistan. Omaid Bahar will buy fruit from 50,000 Afghan farmers from provinces including Kandahar, Hilmand, Wardak, Ghazni, Paktya, Farah, and Kapisa. The facility will create 200 jobs, with Afghan women comprising approximately 35 percent of the staff.

Omaid Bahar already has agreements to export fresh pomegranates and apples to buyers in the United Kingdom, Canada, United Arab Emirates, India, and Canada. The facility will export to well-known supermarkets like Spinneys in the United Arab Emirates and Walmart in India. Omaid Bahar is also negotiating with some of the biggest juice producers in the world for sale of its juice concentrate – including companies like Nestlé, Dabur India Ltd., Del Monte, and Rauch.

"Thirty years ago, Afghanistan exported 20 percent of the world's raisins," Minister Rahimi said. "Today is not just the start of a factory, it is the rebirth of Afghanistan in the global economy."



**Afghan women sort pomegranates before they are processed into juice concentrate. Afghanistan's new facility will create 200 jobs and benefit an estimated 50,000 farmers.**

*USAID/ASAP*