

Abdul Ghani Baloch's livestock herd multiplies as does his prosperity



"They are like a part of family to me. Every day I wake up at dawn, give fodder to my goats and walk them sometimes late in the afternoon. It brings great joy to me." says Abdul Ghani Baloch as he proudly displays his increasing herd of 7 female goats in his house. Abdul Ghani is one of several livestock farmers benefitting from OSDI's Livestock Development Project where livestock is provided through affordable loans along with training and consultation by experts appointed on best farming practices.

Abdul Ghani Baloch has been a beneficiary of OSDI's Livestock Development Project for over 3 years. He bought 2 oxen and a female goat in his first year under the Livestock Assistance Program, 3 oxen and a female goat in the second year, and 3 oxen and a female goat in the current year. Rearing and selling of the oxen have made a huge impact on his livelihood. In the first phase he sold his 2 oxen for Rs 41,500 while in the second phase he earned for Rs 55,000 for 3 oxen. The most recent phase has proven to be the most profitable with him making Rs 90,000 from the sale of his 3 oxen. The 3 female goats have increased to 7 providing him and his family with essential nutrition of milk and its related products such as yogurt and *lassi* among other things.

Before tending to livestock animals he used to work as a mason. Even the back-breaking toil of masonry work was barely enough to make ends meet. *"Not even the local shopkeeper would give me credit for food items because he knew I did not have any money to pay it off,"* he recounts. Things have changed for the better since he started farming 2 years back. To date he has sold seven oxen that he purchased under the program for a hefty profit that have made a huge impact on his finances.

With OSDI's training and consultation he has also been able to take better care of his livestock than he otherwise would have. The animal shed facilitated by OSDI under the project have helped keep his goats in better health: *"In the rainy season with no cover for them my goats used to get wet and would get fever frequently"*. Aside from that, timely vaccination drives initiated by OSDI have also helped decreased number of early deaths of livestock animals for farmers.

Abdul Ghani's new found prosperity has enabled him to send his nephews to school: *"the income I made from being a mason did not allow me to send them to school, I had no choice but to keep them out of school to help me with work"*. His nephews' education is already paying dividends. He smiles when speaking of his nephew helping him tally the monthly expenses from the local shopkeeper and correcting his billing.

The success with livestock animals gave him the courage to start cultivating wheat on a profit-sharing basis with the local *wadera*. *"If all goes well, after selling some of my produce I would have my own food supply,"* he says.

He says the most important thing for him is earning his means with dignity as he recalls the difficulties he had to face when he was weighed down by the burden of usurious debt. *"I am very happy that I don't owe anyone anything,"* he gleams with pride.