



Updates from NEI

eradicating malnutrition in afghanistan.

Notes from the Field

As you know, beyond just planting and harvesting soybeans, NEI is working with local Afghans to create a soy food culture in a land that has never had soy in its diet. To achieve this dietary shift, we have been working with everyone from farmers to housewives to bakers to find creative, nutritious and delicious ways to integrate soy into the Afghan diet. One example of this campaign is a study we recently wrapped up with members of the Kabul Baker's Union.

For several days in September, representatives from the Kabul Baker's Union – a union that represents 1,200 bakers in Kabul – joined NEI in a campaign to popularize soy naan among their customers. By adding soy flour to wheat flour, we have found that we can increase the absorbable proteins in the naan by 110%; but none of that matters if Afghans themselves do not enjoy the bread's taste and texture. Conducting a taste trial during Ramadan – a time when naan must maintain its softness for longer periods of time due to restrictions on when Muslims can eat – we were eager to hear reports of how the soy naan was received. Here's some of the feedback we received from KBU representatives:

*"Thanks NEI for assisting the people of Afghanistan. **When we mixed the soy flour with the wheat flour, it was soft and kept its warmth.** People were very happy and nobody complained about soy naan. We made more profits because the naan did not burn. Customers who bought it the first day came back everyday to buy more."* –Haji Salman

*"People are purchasing more [naan] **because of the softness and it keeps warm longer.**"* –Mohammad Agha

"All the bakery staff are happy because the naan cooks very easily. Soy naan does not drop down while cooking, its color is very good, and it doesn't burn. We hope soy flour is distributed to more bakeries." –Afshar Darulaman

We are excited to hear about such successful reception in these test bakeries in Kabul. We are especially pleased to hear that, due to the protein functionality of soy naan, the bread stays fresh and soft longer as protein keeps moisture from evaporating. Yet another amazing benefit of the nutritious soy-wheat mixture! Knowing that Afghans genuinely enjoy soy naan, we are confident we can introduce this kind of nutritional intervention throughout the nation and continue to push back against malnutrition in Afghanistan.

Other News

- Farmers are finished harvesting the soybeans planted this past spring and are harvesting the soybeans planted this past summer.
- Seed growers recruited by NEI to grow domestic seed for next year's distribution are harvesting as we speak. By next year we will be able to provide domestically grown soybean seeds to farmers, taking the next step towards independent sustainability.



Representatives from the Kabul's Baker Union taking part in the soy naan marketing study



Soy Naan – Nutritious & Delicious!



Naan is a staple to the Afghan diet, often purchased and consumed multiple times a day



Bakers like Mohammad Faqir are integral to rapid nutritional intervention