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Update to Alarming Fast Deterioration in Drought - Status:

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● In summary

Having just walked the northern and western districts of Dubte Woreda, Zone 1 giving house – to house measles vaccination and vitamin A supplement, APDA's primary health team has direct experience of the drought – now little less than a continuum of poor and failed rainy seasons since 1999. As is evident in walking through districts, the main rains of July to September 2005 were not universal and some districts have had no rains for 3 years. The prevailing effects are the result of extraordinary and daily worsening thirst and deteriorating animal health. People are walking in camel caravans up to 28 hours to collect water and goats, particularly the young kids are beginning to die in significant numbers. The districts visited had almost no cattle.

● Prevailing situation

■ The prevailing season

The December winter rains having failed, the region now awaits the next rainy season from mid-March to April. Already, the cool winter winds are giving way to temperatures closing in on 40 degrees and above.

■ Water and pasture conditions



For an estimated 35,000 people in a belt extending some 300 kilometers south west to north east in the remote sectors of Dubte Woreda that border to Awra and Teeru in Zone 4, there now remains only 3 water sources: Malkay in Daaba bordering to Mabay in Teeru, Taasuli bordering to Eli Daar Woreda in northern Dubte Woreda and Bargaale in central eastern Dubte woreda. The latter is a retention dam APDA constructed in 2000 that was repaired and extended in 2004. This dam has only days before it will totally dry up. The other 2 sources are traditional wells in a

river – bed and a natural water catchment respectively. To reach these 3 points, the community is moving from 2 to 28 hours to collect water. The community and the pack – animals are chronically exhausted and the fear of thirst is never averted for those left waiting for water to reach the household. For almost 2 months, no more than minimal water intake is afforded: water for prayer and other washing is now un-thought of.

● Pasture

Goats herds are now moved long distances to satisfy their grazing needs. Shrub – grazing has a partially – formed leaf and grass is totally dry.

■ Animal diseases

Currently, the main reported sicknesses are in goats and sheep. Pasteuriosis and other viral – type infections are noted. Particularly in mules, Dubte woreda animals are dying at an extra-ordinary rate.

■ Human sickness and nutrition status

Having just completed a thorough coverage of hard - to – reach districts, APDA is confident that the raging measles outbreak will be contained. However, whooping cough is appearing and diarrheal diseases from contaminated water are prevalent.

There is no obvious child malnutrition to date but the main diet is almost exclusively grain. Therefore micro – malnutrition is inevitable.

● Appeal for immediate relief

APDA assesses that the Eli Daar Woreda requires 3 tankers and Dubte Woreda 3 tankers over a 2 months period, flexible to assessment. The regional government verifies this.