



## SUCCESS STORY

### FROM TRADITION TO TRANSFORMATION: Ms. Oghul Safar's Journey of Empowerment and Growth

Ms. Oghul Safar, a capable and determined woman, lives with her large family in the village of Qara Turkmen of Kunduz province. For years, she and her family were engaged in raising native cows and processing dairy products using traditional methods. Despite their hard work, they often faced significant challenges, including insufficient knowledge of disease management, standard dairy practices, and modern livestock techniques. These challenges led to livestock losses, hindering their progress and economic stability.

Fearing the loss of her cows to diseases, Ms. Oghul Safar avoided investing in improved cow breeds and continued using outdated milk processing methods. Lacking motivation and confidence, she hesitated to step out of her comfort zone. Reflecting on her initial experience, she shared, *“In reality, at first, I did not even dare to speak during the classes because my family and I speak Turkmeni, and I also lacked basic accounting skills.”*



**Figure 1:** Ms. Oghul Safar is using gloves while milking the cow to maintain hygiene

Everything changed when Ms. Oghul Safar became a beneficiary of the AWARE project under the Women’s Action for Better Communities (WABC) group. Through this initiative, she actively participated in a variety of social and technical training programs covering animal husbandry, disease recognition, modern milk processing techniques, financial literacy, business and marketing, and family well-being. These comprehensive trainings empowered her with the knowledge and skills needed to transform her livelihood.

Participation in the Women’s Self-Help Group (WSHG) further introduced her to a culture of savings and mutual support, inspiring collective growth among the 22 group members. Together, they pooled their savings to open a fertilizer shop with an investment of 38,000 Afghanis, demonstrating the power of collaboration.

With support from the project, Ms. Oghul Safar embraced the opportunity to acquire two improved cow breeds. This decision marked a turning point in her life. She significantly increased milk production, now selling 80 liters of pure milk daily at 25 Afghanis per liter. She also diversified her offerings by preparing cream, butter, curd, and seasonal products, attracting more customers and boosting her income.

Ms. Oghul Safar's success extended beyond her household. Along with her family, she established a Milk Collection Center, creating a family-run enterprise where every member contributes. Each morning, her sons and husband collect milk from local farmers at 4 AM, bringing it home for processing. Ms. Oghul Safar personally oversees quality control, testing the purity of each batch and purchasing milk at fair prices based on quality and quantity. By 6 AM, the milk is packaged and ready for transport. Her family supplies 2,000 liters of milk daily to Kunduz, fulfilling contracts with several dairy unions. During the hot season, increased demand for milk from ice cream shops has boosted their daily earnings to 4,000-5,000 Afghanis.

To address the challenge of milk spoilage during transport in the heat, Ms. Oghul Safar turns spoiled milk into curd and cheese, ensuring minimal waste and additional revenue. She no longer fears losing livestock, as the project provided vaccinations, medicines, cow feed, and essential equipment, alongside training in modern livestock care. The family's economic growth has allowed them to branch out into beekeeping and honey processing. With 25 hives, they produced 120 kilograms of honey in just four months, which they successfully sold in the market.

Ms. Oghul Safar's transformation has become a beacon of inspiration for women in Qara Turkmen and surrounding villages. Her journey demonstrates that with access to training, resources, and a supportive community, individuals can overcome challenges, improve living conditions, and achieve economic independence.

Today, Ms. Oghul Safar is not only a successful livestock farmer but also a role model for women aspiring to create positive change in their lives. She credits the New Way Social & Development Organization (NSDO) and the AWARE team for their unwavering support, which has brought about significant economic and social growth for her family while reducing their struggles.

***“This project has truly transformed our lives,” says Ms. Oghul Safar. “Thanks to the AWARE project, I am now empowered, capable, and confident in my ability to build a better future for my family.”***

Ms. Oghul Safar's story serves as a powerful testament to the impact of development interventions, showcasing the potential for transformative change when resources and training are combined with resilience and determination. Her success highlights the importance of continued support and investment in such initiatives to empower more individuals and communities in need.



**Figure 2:** Ms. Oghul Safar with her family members collecting, processing and packing milk.



**Figure 3:** Ms. Oghul Safar's family carrying the milk to the market.