



# V.I.V.A. NEWS

## Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance

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Bringing New Life to people and their animals

DECEMBER 2003

### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

There is something really satisfying about getting to the end of year two, writing our third newsletter and being able to look back on the tremendous progress VIVA has made since its initiation. Since I last wrote we have made excellent advances in our five existing development projects and agreed to take on two new ones, which will be formally launched in 2004. Membership has grown for the third year running and VIVA is gaining local as well as international recognition for its veterinary work in the developing world.

In March of this year I was in Serbia, monitoring progress on the funding we are providing to train local veterinary helpers and improve productivity amongst small-holders. I was very pleased with the outcome and you can read more in the following pages about how we plan to develop this project.

We also received news from the India Super Cyclone project we launched last year. VIVA has become an integral part of the regional aid package by providing training in animal healthcare to those affected by the cyclone of 1999. And in Malawi, the latest reports indicate that famine has started to show some signs of abating and the families which received the gift of livestock are doing really well in their animal healthcare training courses.

As for new departures, it is very clear that Training is becoming the cornerstone of everything we do and we have been invited to participate in several exciting new projects. The first, in Zambia, sees the beginning of what I expect to be a much longer-term commitment in association with Heifer Project International. The second is an extension of the Orissa India project, in which VIVA will work with traditional goat-herders in Kashmir, the territory contested by India and Pakistan.

VIVA's membership has continued to grow over the past year and we're keen to do even better in 2004. Please help us to spread the word. Any new ideas for fundraising are always welcome. We'd like to communicate the effectiveness of veterinary support to as wide an audience as possible.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has worked with and for us in the past twelve months. You are making an enormous difference and I look forward to receiving your e-mails and calls over the coming year, so we can continue at this pace.

We would also like to wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2004.

Brendan Mimmagh, Secretary, VIVA and Fr. Michael Maher, Chairman, VIVA

## Training becomes VIVA's cornerstone

It may seem like an obvious thing but not all rural development projects have in the past included a training element. Whether in agriculture, healthcare or environmental development, many organisations have only recently begun to train local people and help ensure the long-term sustainability of their projects. For VIVA, training is a vital element of everything we do. Not only does it guarantee basic standards of livestock care, but it also provides people with the skills to manage communities for themselves, without outside help.

To date, VIVA has been able to offer veterinary expertise to villagers in Malawi, Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, India, and Kenya. Training covers all aspects of animal health and welfare including; disease control, Artificial Insemination and animal reproduction.



Johnny Flynn, Progressive Genetics training A.I technicians in Kosovo.

Drawing on the life-long skills of various agricultural and veterinary specialists in Ireland, VIVA is uniquely positioned to offer the highest level of specialised training. Irish involvement to date includes A.I. stations, like Dovea in Co. Tipperary, Progressive Genetics in Enfield, Co Meath and bodies such as Teagasc, Veterinary Ireland and the Irish Department of Agriculture.



Noel Ryan, Dovea AI station training AI technicians in Malawi.

Looking after the basic daily needs of the animal is our priority. VIVA's target groups are farmers, local volunteers, veterinarians and community leaders. Women play a vital role in all these training projects, often being the primary carers of both family and livestock.



Sean O'Laoide, Veterinary Ireland with Mrs Tiwonge Mumba and her Irish heifer in Muzuzu, Malawi.

Initial reports from existing projects indicate that this commitment to providing new skills at the initial stages of any rural development project ensure a more favourable long term benefit to the community.



Noel Ryan, Sean O'Laoide and James Gwonde, Lilongwe in classroom session in Malawi.

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### COMING UP IN 2004...

## Breaking New Ground in Zambia

Zambia is known to many Irish people as the home to a substantial number of Irish Missionaries, a country torn apart by famine, aids, flooding and drought over a long period of time. In 2004, however, VIVA will be getting involved in some very exciting new rural development work across the country which is expected to affect the lives of thousands of people in the long term.

Agriculture is a leading sector in the Zambian economy employing half the country's labour force. Nearly half the land in Zambia is deemed suitable for the production of livestock and crops but to date this potential has never been realised, currently only 10-15% is being used.

The Eastern Province in Zambia is where most livestock farming is concentrated but a combination of East Coast Fever, drought, poor drinking water for animals and a lack of good veterinary services has resulted in substantial under performance.

VIVA's involvement next year will consist of training farmers to improve and sustain livestock productivity. This will happen in conjunction with Heifer Project International, which currently hosts projects in four of the nine provinces of Zambia reaching approximately 2,000 poor families. The organisation's local team, led by country Director Dr Kwacha Chisiza, has worked with communities both to deliver animals and raise nutritional and economic standards for many years. Our participation will initially be centred around The Monze, Chongwe and Sinde districts. VIVA training courses will cover Artificial Insemination, livestock fertility and general animal healthcare. We hope that many of those involved will go on to become trainers themselves, passing on their new skills and knowledge to their communities over the course of time.

It's a really exciting opportunity for VIVA to take part in a project on a nation-wide scale. We are really looking forward to getting back the first reports from this endeavour and are confident that it will make a great difference to the farming families involved.

If you are interested in supporting the new Zambian project please contact VIVA personnel for details.

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 " This course is a first for Malawi and it was most successful and it is hoped that the information learnt will reach the poor farmers and change their

lives permanently." Dr C.B.Chizonda, Malawi Department of Agriculture at the end of the VIVA workshop.

# INDIA - Orissa news and Kashmir goat scheme

A very good example of how VIVA's training schemes work is demonstrated in Orissa, India. Farm animals are being donated by H.P.I and many other organisations worldwide to families affected by the super-cyclone which hit the state in 1999. Beforehand, all H.P.I's Extension Workers and project partners are required to participate in a course entitled "Improved Animal Management". Each course is supervised by VIVA and incorporates technical training by Veterinary doctors, HPI officials and one



VIVA Community Animal Health Worker Sushant Jena training villagers.



VIVA Community Animal Health Worker Usarani Behera with villagers.

local resource person. Two people from each village are also selected to receive a more basic level of training as CAHW's or Community Animal Health Workers. These are employed to provide a basic veterinary service where no Veterinary service exists. These people live in their community and are always available in times of crisis. The aim is that they will be entirely self sufficient by the time their 'gift' of an animal arrives assisting the goal of long term employment in the area.

## Kashmir

Another H.P.I India project is based in the frequent flash-point of Kashmir, some 15,000 feet above sea level between India and Pakistan. There, goat-herders have survived for generations from the production and sale of wool from their prized (Cashmere) Kashmir goats. The wool is still in very high demand internationally but farmers are still very poor, lack local veterinary support and are poorly skilled in basic methods of modern animal healthcare. VIVA has been invited to help farmers increase their productivity through training and veterinary support. This will start later in 2004 and I hope to have a full report in our next newsletter.



Sabi Pradan with her Cashmere Goat.

## SERBIA/ MONTENEGRO PROJECT UPDATE

When a country is torn apart by war, farmers suffer. In some cases rural development can be set back decades as was the case with Kosovo. Following the end of the NATO bombing campaign in Kosovo in 1999, as the Albanian refugees returned to Kosovo, over 200,000 mostly Serbs and Roma, fled to Serbia and Montenegro. Many of these IDP's (Internally Displaced People) settled in the municipality of Kurshmlija near the Kosovo border. It now seems likely that most of these IDP's will not return to Kosovo. The IDP are mostly from small farming backgrounds.

Following on from the training programme VIVA undertook in Albania and Kosovo earlier this year, we are now participating in a 3 year programme in rural parts of Serbia and Montenegro. As part of this commitment, VIVA Director,

Brendan Mimmagh, travelled with a team of experts to the municipality of Kursumljia near the border with Kosovo last March. His study, of an existing animal project, assessed the problems faced by the local farming community. It concluded with practical suggestions of ways in which local farmers could improve productivity.

VIVA found that although there was a strong tradition of livestock farming in the area, it was small scale and based on very traditional farming methods. Most alarmingly, however, was the clear lack of trained livestock staff or veterinary support. It was also found that this vital skills gap was not currently acknowledged by the community.

VIVA's main recommendation was that a Project Coordinator be appointed in the

first instance. He or she needs to have a background in agriculture but will receive further specialised training from VIVA, if necessary in Ireland. Their role will extend to cover all aspects of the community's animal welfare needs. In this way, as soon as each family in Kursumljia is considered properly trained it will receive a donation of a dairy animal through project partners Bother and Trocaire.

The goal is to improve the villagers' farming practices and consequently the quality and quantity of their produce. Based on the findings of this study, an initial commitment of three years has now been agreed now by all parties involved. VIVA's partners on this project are Bothar, Trocaire, Caritas Belgrade and the Serbian Orthodox Church.



## THE VOLUNTEERS THAT MAKE THE WHEELS TURN



Tony Mc Manus, Longford DVO, on duty on the day.

### Golfing for Good

A huge thanks to the team from the Department of Agriculture in Longford which organised the VIVA Golf Classic in Tullamore Co. Offaly in May 2003. The competition was a resounding success. The event organiser was the former Roscommon and GAA All-star Tony McManus, ably assisted by Anthony Sweeney, James Linnane and Valarie Kells. A special thanks to Dr Leonard Dolan for his help on the day. The fantastic sum of Euro 6,000 was raised when 100 golfers trailed the course and later spent a most enjoyable evening in the clubhouse in Tullamore. The kindness of local business people who donated prizes as well as the persistence of our supporters in putting together an extremely well organised event was really impressive.

Of course this just sets the standard high for the 2004 VIVA Golf Classic which has already started receiving subscriptions. Anyone wishing to get involved or thinking of organising a similar event in their local club should contact Tony or Valarie at 043 -45932 or vivaaid@eircom.net.

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# DESTINATION 5 - Professor Rob Lee's book is launched

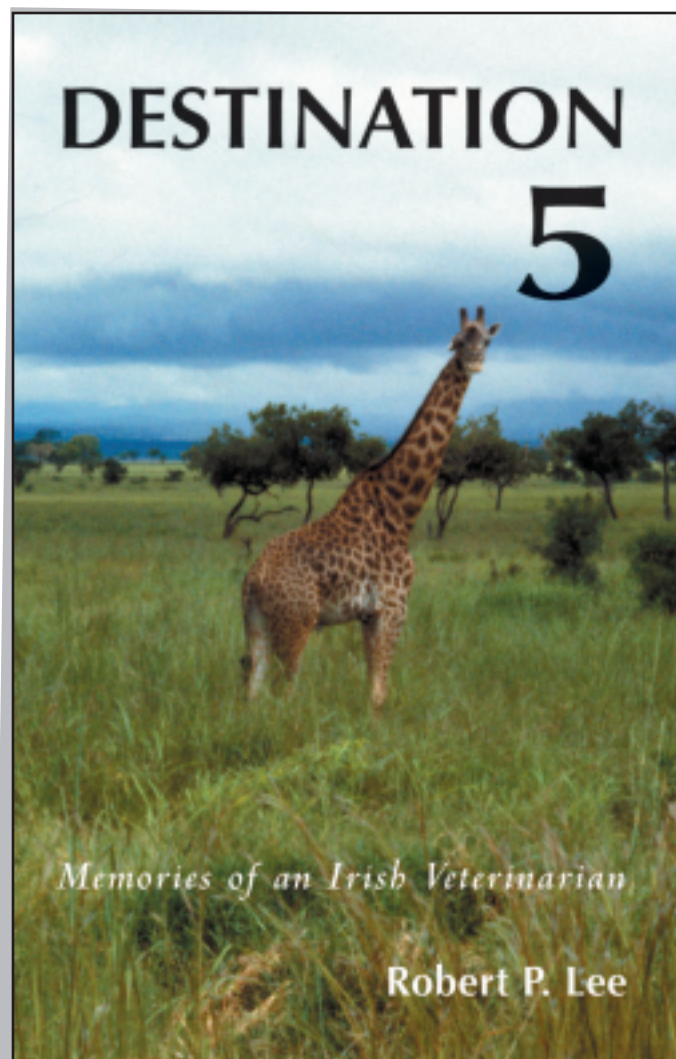
An account of the fifth overseas posting held by VIVA Board Member/ Projects Consultant, Professor Robert Lee, is set in Tanzania and makes an excellent read for anyone with an interest in agriculture and development. Professor Lee is well known in VIVA and Bothar circles having shared his extensive knowledge of veterinary practice in Africa with both organisations since their inception. Formerly Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Dublin's Trinity College for seven years and inaugural Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine University of Zambia, Rob's work took him to several exciting destinations including Nigeria and Tanzania.

The book chronicles his experiences from working as a young newly qualified vet through to the era in which he revisited Africa as a consultant on development projects. This highly personal account is full of humour and sensitivity as well as an account of the challenges the environment posed an outsider.

Commenting on the book recently, Isolde Moylan (Consul General (Boston), Embassy of Ireland, USA, formerly Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Ireland, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) wrote: "I have enjoyed every word. It is a delightful story, full of humour and sensitivity and with an amazing recall of things long past. Rob Lee's love of the wonderful country and people of Tanzania comes through on every page as does his devotion to his chosen veterinary calling, even in the most difficult conditions."

**DESTINATION 5**, published by Morrigan in September 2003, is available in bookshops or directly from the publishers at Euro 22, (including P&P). By arrangement with the author and publisher, the sum of Euro10 from its purchase will be donated to VIVA for every book purchased by VIVA members. To facilitate this donation, please mention VIVA in your order and send the full amount of E 22 to Morrigan Books, Killala, Co. Mayo.

*We would like to congratulate Professor Lee on his publication and thank him for his untiring support for VIVA's work.*



## How you can help in 2004?

Is there a local community group near you that would show the VIVA video to learn more about what we do?

Do you work in a company which assigns money to charity? Can we send an information pack to the Directors?

Donations to VIVA now qualify for tax relief - our charity ref. no. CHY 13510. Have you an idea for a fundraiser?

Just send us an e-mail and we will be delighted to follow up and support any ideas you have.

### Website & Video

Remember we have copies of the VIVA promotional video available for anyone or any organisation wishing to show it as both as a fundraising and education tool.



# SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT NEW LIFE TO FARMS AROUND THE WORLD THIS YEAR

## Vets have a Ball

Almost a year ago, on January 18th, the Annual Veterinary College Ball took place in Jury's Hotel in Ballsbridge, Dublin. Students and staff of the college took the opportunity to do some fundraising for VIVA by running a raffle held on the night. They managed to raise an impressive Euro 1263 for the charity's Malawi Project.

In Malawi, where one if four people die before reaching the age of five and life expectancy is just 37 years, VIVA has been involved in training and veterinary support for livestock farmers for the past year. The Vet College students chose this project because of the obvious link to their studies and would like to extend their sincere thanks to Jury's Hotel, Chanelle, Norbrook and Acravet who kindly sponsored the prizes and event.



Susan Griffin, who qualified as a vet in June 2003 presenting a cheque to VIVA Secretary Brendan Mimmagh.

**Many Thanks to the many businesses and Golf clubs who donated an impressive array of prizes and sponsorship on the day:-**

Michael Oates, Eight 'till Late Roscommon.  
Michael McSharry, Fourmile House.  
Barry Donnelly.  
John P Higgins.VI.  
Sean Wilson Ltd.  
Eithne O'Leary.  
Pat Flanagan.SSVI  
Ned Duignan, MRCVS, Roscommon.  
Interchem Ltd.  
Gregan McGuinness (Life& Pensions Ltd.)  
Veterinary Ireland.  
C+M Vetlink Ltd.  
Intervet Ltd.  
Coyle Veterinary Ltd.  
Killarney Golf & Fishing Club.  
Castle Hume Golf & Leisure , Enniskillen.  
Mount Juliet Golf Club.  
County Sligo Golf Club Rosses Point.  
Glasson Golf & Country Club.  
Tullamore Golf Club.

**A very special thanks to all who travelled and played on the day.**

The supply of Artificial Insemination straws and equipment and personnel have been invaluable to our development work overseas, Our profound gratitude must go to Dermot Cahill, Dovea AI station, Thurles, Co.Tipperary and Bernard Eivers, Progressive Genetics, Enfield, Co Meath for their support.



THE WINNING TEAM: Gay Sheeran, Mick Hannon, Pat King, Gerry Emmett.



Michael Greaney, Progressive Genetics presenting Brendan Mimmagh with a flask containing 6000 straws bovine semen for Kosovo.

CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE SENT TO ....



## VOLUNTEERS IN IRISH VETERINARY ASSISTANCE

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