

Viva News

Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance
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December 2022

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Volunteers in Irish
Veterinary Assistance

Member of  VSF INTERNATIONAL
VÉTÉRINAIRES
SANS FRONTIÈRES



Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance

2022 – Back to normal

Dear Supporter,

First of all, thanks for all your support in 2022. Here you can read up on all our fundraisers like our annual “Bike ‘n Hike” which this year was based in Sligo for the first time. Our “Heifer Draw” went ahead again with generous support from Duggan Veterinary in Thurles. We also had donations from Clinical Societies and our regular Standing Order supporters.

Our current projects in Uganda (a joint project with VSF Belgium) and Malawi have been completed but we're exploring further options in relation to those two projects and, also, a possible new livestock project in Asia. We have highlighted the work of our partners in the *Vétérinaires Sans Frontières*

International (VSF) on the back page and you can read the network's annual report at www.vsf-international.org/project/annual-report-2021

So this year we are asking all our supporters to consider donating to our Christmas Appeal so that we can end 2022 on a high note. You can donate online at www.viva.ie/donate or send us a cheque in the enclosed Business Reply envelope.

In the meantime, here's wishing you Happy Christmas and a brighter 2023.

Ciaran Gobl (VIVA Chairperson) & Mike Burke (VIVA CEO)

Brendan Mimmagh retires

This year, our founder, Brendan Mimmagh, retired from the Board ending a 30-year involvement in livestock projects in the Developing World. Having been brought up on a small, mixed farm in Co. Longford, and from his work as a rural vet, Brendan had a life-long interest in sustainable livestock agriculture and its ability to transform the lives of the rural poor in Ireland and beyond. Back in the nineties, after hearing an item on the radio about *Bóthar*, he volunteered for the organisation and he began to travel overseas supervising their livestock airlifts in addition to monitoring projects and training farmers. In 1999, he founded VIVA to harness the goodwill of the Irish veterinary sector to support small-scale livestock farmers in the Developing World. Twenty-three years later it still survives, its' voluntary efforts having raised hundreds of thousands

of euros for overseas projects. VIVA would like to wish him all the best in his retirement. On a sad note, Brendan's brother, Seamus passed away in October. Seamus was a loyal VIVA supporter regularly supporting our Christmas Appeal and Heifer Draws – ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.



VSF Belgium & VIVA in Karamoja

Our collaboration with VSF Belgium in the Karamoja region in north-east Uganda finished in 2022. VIVA was funding the animal health elements (which involves the training and support of Community Animal Health Workers – CAHWs) and the breed improvement activities of this large development project which is working with local pastoralists communities. The breed improvement aspect involved the introduction of Sahiwal cattle, a dual breed, from the Punjab region on the borders of Pakistan and India, which is tick-resistant, heat tolerant and an excellent milker. In addition, Galla goats have been introduced due to their ability to withstand tough conditions, like extended periods of drought, while giving higher milk yields.

In Karamojong communities, livestock rearing contributes to more than 50% of the livelihoods of pastoralists. However, livestock provides more than just economic benefits to the pastoralists and plays an important role both socially and culturally, while increasing the resilience of households. The different benefits of livestock to the pastoralist communities are immense, though not always easily measurable.

In 2021 / 2022 the project continued to implement actions towards improving resilience and protecting the livelihoods of the livestock farmers and pastoralists. Actions included providing information to farmers on disease control and prevention, supporting the CAHWs, organising spraying for ticks and other ectoparasites, vaccination campaigns and goat distribution to vulnerable families.



Cattle being gathered for spraying and vaccination

COVID had a huge impact on the project work as livestock sales were massively affected due to closure of livestock markets for a total period of nine months. In addition, the security situation deteriorated with cattle raids becoming more common. This led to farmers keeping their livestock together in protected kraals (fenced enclosures) which leads to higher risks of disease and parasitic infestation.

Heavy rains in the spring led to increased levels of tick-borne disease which necessitated the spraying campaigns which helped to reduce mortality due to these conditions. The vaccination campaigns concentrated on the goats with almost 900 goats being vaccinated against Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP) and Enterotoxaemia.

The breed improvement aspect of the programme concluded with the distribution of 100 goats to twenty five farmers with priority being given to female farmers.



Goats being distributed to beneficiaries

Hilary Lorot – a Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) on the Project.

I am called Hilary Lorot, a community animal health worker (CAHW) based in Lobele village, Kawalakol sub-county in Kaabong district. I got my first training as a CAHW in 2005. Back then we had several challenges, but the most pressing challenge was access to veterinary drugs and equipment. The only outlet was in Kaabong district, 45 km away from Kawalakol. Later, even this outlet closed and the only access to vet drugs that we had was Kotido central vet care which was 115 km from Kawalakol. Because of the above challenge we majorly concentrated on vaccination campaigns when called upon by the district veterinary authorities. Since 2017, VSF-B provided refresher training for CAHWs in Kawalakol sub-county.

Subsequently the refreshed CAHWs were encouraged to form an association. Initially, we were only five members, but the number has grown to twenty-two members to date. The increased membership for CAHWs in the association was encouraged when a vet outlet was constructed and equipped by VSF-B. For five years we have operated the outlet successfully

and increased our capital from approximately €425 granted to €3,000 to date. As a CAHW, I provide treatments to livestock in my village but also move in the entire sub-county when called upon by farmers. I provide diverse services including treatments against common diseases like East Coast Fever (ECF), Anaplasmosis and Babesiosis. I also conduct herd health measures like de-worming and spraying, and castrations.

On average I reach five farmers in a week and twenty (20) farmers in a month. Through my work my average earnings in a week reach approx. €19. I use the earnings to replenish my vet drugs stock, while for the profits, I use them to cater for household needs and also to save in the CAHW's Village, Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) that was formed by VSF-B for CAHWs in Kawalakol sub-county. Our work as CAHWs has been recognised by several stakeholders in Kaabong district including NGOs and veterinary authorities.



Hilary Lorot at work in his veterinary outlet

VIVA's Brucellosis Surveillance Project in Malawi

This year saw the end of the first phase of the bovine brucellosis project VIVA have been running with SHMPA, a dairy co-operative in the Southern Region of Malawi. The aim of the project was to gain a better understanding of the prevalence of this zoonotic disease among dairy cattle owned by small-scale farmers. In sub-Saharan Africa, brucellosis in humans is often misdiagnosed or under reported. In cattle, there is little or no understanding of its epidemiology, poor reproductive performances in dairy cattle are not investigated and the risk of disease transmission from cattle to humans in Southern Malawi, has until now, not been assessed.

In this project, a cross-sectional study, a pen-side lateral flow kit was used together with the traditional Rose Bengal method to detect the presence of *Brucella* spp. in serum samples from dairy cows. Dairy farmers were interviewed with a knowledge attitudes and practices (KAP) questionnaire regarding farming practices, specifically around calving, general husbandry and biosecurity, as well as knowledge regarding zoonoses and transmission routes. Our results so far have been an eye opener. We have found 22% prevalence of *Brucella* spp. among the cows sampled. We interviewed 431 farmers, these farmers had never heard of brucellosis, its signs in cattle or humans or its transmission pathways. All farmers interviewed



consumed milk produced on the farm with 35% consuming raw milk, a highly risky behaviour for pathogen transmission from animal to human hosts. Of the 95 seropositive cows, 75% of these have had farmer-assisted calvings meaning these farmers have been directly exposed to *Brucella* spp. shed during calving.



A farmer being interviewed for the project

Now that the project has identified seroprevalence and farming practices which increase the risk of transmission of this pathogen from cattle to human, the next phase of the project will involve trying to work with these farmers to change current practices and encourage action to mitigate transmission pathways. Results from the study so far have been shared with the wider scientific community at the Global Alliance for Sustainable Livestock Conference which was held in Dublin in October of this year. Future steps will need the involvement of other stakeholders working in areas such as education and human psychology to try and design educational packages to modify farmer behaviour around moments of high risk such as calvings, abortions, artificial insemination and milk consumption. The roll out of a brucellosis vaccination campaign as a possible action plan requires further research but could be a potential option to reduce shedding of this pathogen which has such negative impacts on cattle health and indeed on human health.



A cow being blood-sampled on the project

Altamira Kate & the power of livestock aid

We haven't had a winner of the 'Heifer Draw' actually take a heifer since 2016 when Altamira Kate was won by Stephen Harrison, Riverstick, Co. Cork. Altamira Kate is now being looked after by his uncle Sean Coffey in Newport, Co. Tipperary (who sold Stephen the winning ticket). Sean is a vet in Mulcair Vets. Well Altamira Kate is the gift that keeps on giving! She has now given birth to four calves – Bó, Rascal, Scout and in 2022, Tarbh. Kate is, in fact, now a grannie, as her second calf, Rascal, has given birth this year

to a bull calf, Tinder. This budding Limousin herd is actually a lovely example of how the reproductive capacity of livestock can transform a rural family's prospects in the Developing World.

Heifer International, the large American livestock aid charity, with whom VIVA has partnered in the past has a 'Passing on the Gift' mechanism build into all its projects. This means that recipients of livestock donations become donors themselves when they pass on the first female offspring, be it a heifer calf or a goat kid to another trained farmer in the project. But for Heifer International, so much more happens at that handoff than just passing on the animal. People share their knowledge, their values and their principles. They generously share their belief that they are their brother's—and sister's—keeper, and that passing on their gifts is not just checking off a Heifer project requirement, it's demonstrating their humanity, their desire and ability to help raise another family, to do what they can to help lift their entire community out of poverty.



a livestock handover on a VIVA / Heifer International project in Uganda in 2017



Supporting livestock farmers in the Developing World

The VIVA Wheelers

The VIVA Wheelers are a group of cyclists of all ages and abilities who have raised €317,000 for VIVA's projects worldwide since 2005 with fundraising cycles and hikes in Vietnam (2005), Morocco (2007), the Burren (2009), Bantry (2010), Westport (2011), Dungarvan (2012), the Glen of Aherlow (2013), Leitrim (2014), Westport (2015), Kilkenny (2016), the Burren (2017), the Slieve Bloom mountains (2018), Mallorca (2019), Ballyhoura country (2021) and Sligo (2022)

This year, it was the turn of Yeats Country to host the VIVA Wheelers annual 'Bike 'n Hike' event. Sligo, with its dramatic mountain scenery and stunning beaches, is often forgotten in the rush for places like Kerry and Donegal but on a beautiful sunny day in September, it showed itself at its' best.

Guided by Barry Hannigan from Northwest Adventure Tours (highly recommended) the hikers took on Ben Bulben, Sligo's iconic table-top mountain and with clear skies were rewarded with amazing views stretching from Streedagh beach up to the Sliabh League cliffs in Donegal.

The cyclists tackled the An Post Tour of Sligo routes which take in a circuit of the Coolera peninsula and a climb up the Dartry mountains via the Ladies Brae followed by a spin home around Lough Gill.

A special mention to James Madden for helping out with making the route for the cyclists, John Henry for producing a set of stencils for marking

the road and Cathy Waddell, Karen Mulherin and Syd Nagle for photography. There aren't many photos of the cyclists cycling as they took most of their photos in Stanford's pub in Dromahair (which dates back to 1732). The long sojourn here was blamed on Laura, the barmaid, who recounted the long, long history of the pub whilst serving up pint after pint to the parched cyclists.

The Zoetis sponsorship of €2,500 this year brings their total sponsorship since 2011 to €22,500. A special mention also to Paddy O'Donoghue (Veterinary Instruments Ltd – VIL) who sponsor the lunch every year and whose sponsorship this year brought their total support to over €4,500.

The day ended with a meal in the Sligo Park Hotel total, almost €9,000 was raised for VIVA.



Karen Mulherin conquers Ben Bulben



zoetis

The hikers with Ben Bulben in the background



Eamonn O'Sullivan



Rehydration is a beautiful thing!

The crush at the door as everyone rushes back to the bikes

L-R: Donal Connolly, Pat Kirwan, Conor Sheridan, Syd Nagle, Mike Burke, Robert Fabby, Orla Doherty, Tom Mullany





Orla Doherty certainly enjoyed herself!



Cathy Waddell, only 25km to go!



Conor Sheridan & Tom Fabby make it back to Sligo in time to spectate at the Cannonball Run as it rolled into Sligo that evening.



In memory of the Unknown Cyclist

Mid-West Clinical Society donates €5,000 to VIVA

This year the Mid-West Clinical Society donated €5,000 to VIVA's projects as a result of a surplus in their funds. VIVA would like to acknowledge this very generous

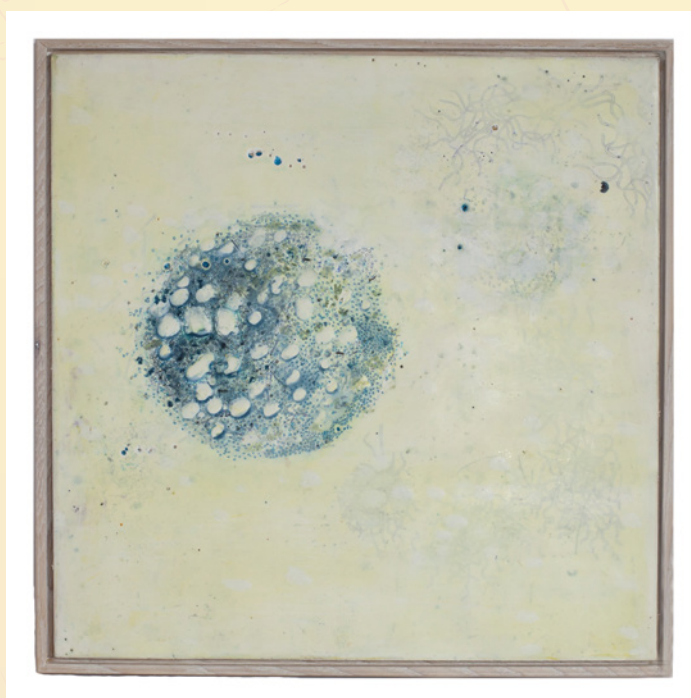
donation and thank the Society for their efforts. This brings to almost €15,000 the funds donated by this Clinical Society over the years to VIVA's projects.

Bill Carmody (Mid-West Clinical Society) makes a presentation to Mike Burke (VIVA)



VIVA's first art donation

Northern Irish visual artist and retired veterinary surgeon, Michael Geddis, recently generously donated the proceeds of an artwork that he collaborated on with Wicklow artist Joanna Kidney. The work forms part of a collaborative drawing project by Michael and Joanna Kidney called mergeemerge (2016- 2021). For more information have a look at www.michaelgeddisart.co.uk/michael and www.joannakidney.com/mergeemerge.



The Heifer Draw

The "Heifer Draw" this year raised almost €8,000, our best ever total.. VIVA would like to acknowledge the support of our sponsor, Duggan Veterinary Supplies in Thurles who generously sponsored all the prizes. The draw was held in Duggan Veterinary's, purpose-built premises in Thurles which includes a new education and advanced practical training facility which offers comfortable lecture facilities and a wet lab on site. Call in, they'd love to show you around!

Heifer Draw Winners 2022

The results of the Heifer Draw are in!

The results of the Heifer Draw are in!

- The Heifer goes to John O'Roarke, Co. Roscommon. (Seller – Jim Higgins).
- Second prize of a Weekend Away Hotel Voucher goes to Darragh McHugh, Dromod, Co. Leitrim (Seller – Jim Higgins – again!)
- Third prize of €500 to Gerry Mannion, Hudson Bay, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. (Seller – Dónal Flynn).
- And lastly, fourth prize of €250 to Yvonne Wylde, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin. (Seller – herself!)

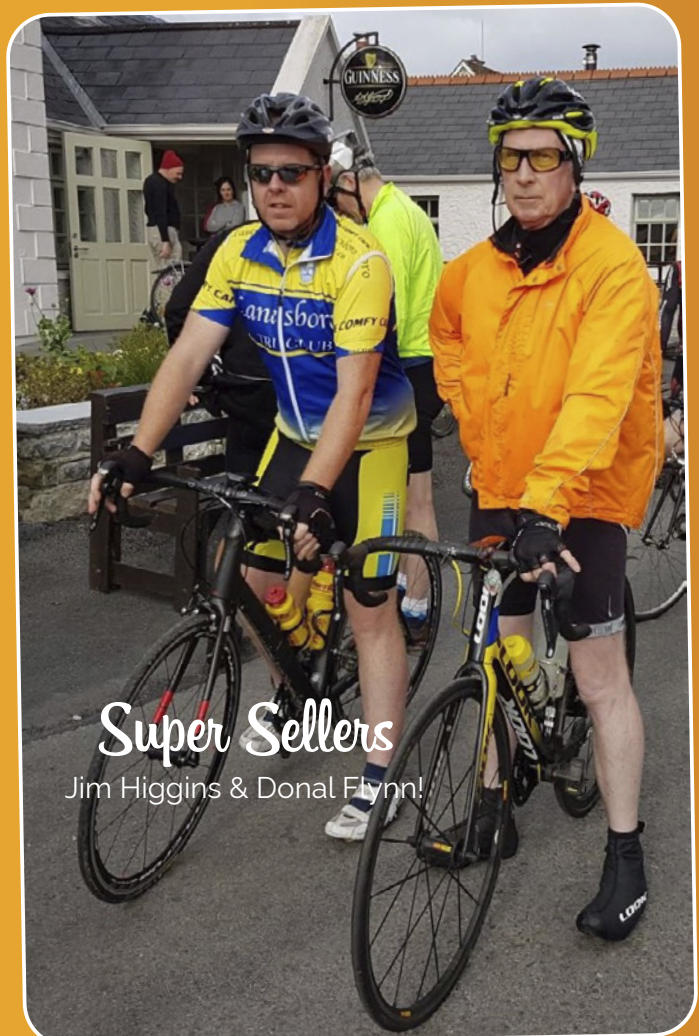
The concentration of winning tickets in Roscommon is due to the stellar efforts of two of our long-standing ticket sellers, Jim Higgins and Donal Flynn. Thanks to everyone who bought and sold a ticket. Your support is much appreciated. A special mention to our other top performing ticket sellers – Mary Coen, Cathy Waddell and Brendan Leslie.

DUGGAN

VETERINARY DVS GROUP



Donal Duggan (Duggan Veterinary) & Mike Burke (VIVA) with the winning ticket.



Super Sellers
Jim Higgins & Donal Flynn!

Donal Flynn & Jim Higgins on the starting line of the VIVA Wheelers Burren Cycle in 2017

A look at the work in 2021 of Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International (VSI), of which VIVA is a member.



2021 IN NUMBERS

40
country programmes

€ 56.5
MILLION
total income

2.02
MILLION
direct beneficiary households

775
staff worldwide
90% in the field
10% at HQ

38 600
animals distributed
to recover from emergency
or as income-generating
activity

4 787
animal health professionals supported
including
3 515
Community Animal Health Workers

23.9
MILLION
animals treated

80
awareness raising events
targeting European and
Canadian youth

795 000
livestock keepers
gained access
to animal health services

880 200
people improved their professional
and/or life skills
thanks to empowerment, capacity building
or income generation activities