

Viva News

Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance
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- VIVA's work in Nepal & Malawi
- VIVA Wheelers head to Mallorca for the sun
- Heifer Draw results



Volunteers in Irish
Veterinary Assistance

Member of  VSF INTERNATIONAL
VÉTÉRINAIRES
SANS FRONTIÈRES



Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance

2023 – A new beginning in Nepal

Dear Supporter,

First of all, thanks for all your support in 2023. Here you can read up on all our fundraisers like our annual "Bike 'n Hike" which this year migrated to Mallorca for the second time. Our "Heifer Draw" went ahead again with generous support from Duggan Veterinary in Thurles. We also had significant donations from Clinical Societies and our regular Standing Order supporters.

Our newsletter has been delayed to the New Year this year as we wanted to feature our new project in Nepal which kicked off over Christmas. This project will focus on goat keepers in the central Kaski district and

will focus on increasing the productivity and health of these smallholder herds.

So this year we are asking all our supporters to consider donating to our Annual Appeal so that we can begin 2024 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 a peaceful and prosperous 2024.

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

VIVA raises over €1 million euro in 25 years

This year, VIVA surpassed the €1 million mark in the amount of donations logged in its database since its inception in 1999. Considering our small volunteer and subscriber base this is a fantastic achievement so anyone who's ever cycled, hiked, played golf, made a donation or set up a standing order should take a bow today. These funds have funded initiatives in Kosovo, Albania, Serbia, Romania, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Pakistan and Nepal with the ripple effects from these projects still reverberating today. Here's to the next million!

The "Class of 92"

This year, VIVA would like to pay tribute to the UCD Veterinary College "Class of 92" which has provided many of our most loyal supporters. These vets have raised **over €70,000** for our projects through their participation in our fundraisers, in particular our cycling events. In addition to their fundraising they have brought much enthusiasm and good humour to the cause!



*Donagh McDonnell
Joe Karanagh
John O'Rearke
Fergus Smith
Michael Sexton
Andrew Doona
John McConville
Liam Burke
Conor O'Scanail
Tom Fabby
Des Groome
Tadhg Murphy*

The Heifer Draw

The "Heifer Draw" this year raised almost €6,500. 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 2023

The results of the Heifer Draw are in!

- **The Heifer** goes to David Heaslip, Killeshandra, Co. Cavan. (Seller – Mairead Kelly).
- **Second prize** of a Weekend Away Hotel Voucher (Monk's, Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare) goes to Ann Marie Sugrue, Caherciveen, Co. Kerry (Seller – Ann Marie herself, who's being doing a stellar job selling our tickets in "O'Leary, Collins & Associates" vet practice in Cahirciveen)

DUGGAN
VETERINARY DVS GROUP



DUGGAN
VETERINARY DVS GROUP

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

- **Third prize** of €500 to Mary McGovern, Carrigallen, Co. Leitrim. (Seller – Mairead Kelly again!).
- And lastly, **fourth prize** of €250 to Pat Talty, Tulla, Co. Clare. (Seller – himself!)

Thanks to everyone who bought and sold a ticket. Your support is much appreciated. A special mention to our other top performing ticket sellers –Cathy Waddell and Rachel Burgess.

VIVA and Mid-West Veterinary Clinical Society (MWVCS) collaborate on new project in Nepal

Our new project in Nepal has just kicked off. Our Community Livestock Production Strengthening Project (CLPSP) in conjunction with a local NGO, Animal Health Training and Consultancy Service (AHTCS), will run for three years and we have committed €75,000 over that period to fund it. VIVA has a long association with AHTCS with our Chairperson, Ciaran Gobl, spending a year working with them back in 2008. In a unique initiative, the MWVCS have come on board with a grant of €10,000 towards the cost of the project.



The project will work with goat keepers in the Kaski district in central Nepal. Many marginalized farmers in Nepal are attracted to goat farming because it serves as a readily liquidable asset. Most goat keepers in Nepal are small holders with an average of 4.5 goats per holding. Women are responsible for most of the work in livestock raising. Due to the very small size of their holdings and socio-economic constraints, farmers often do not have adequate information and resources for improved management practices including fodder management, nutrition, breeding and housing. In addition to this, they also lack access to proper veterinary services, mostly due to a lack of veterinarians or paravets (Community Animal Health Workers). This lack of basic information and services results in a huge loss of potential income.

The main objectives of the project are as follows:

- Improving the growth rate, with goats attaining a weight of 35-40 Kg in a year, through improved genetics and nutrition.
- Reducing the mortality rate of kids and goats, with adult mortality not exceeding 2-3% per annum and less than 5% for kid goats below 4 months.
- Increasing the prices farmers receive for their goats (surplus goats are sold to urban areas for meat) by setting up a goat market in collaboration with farmers cooperatives and local government.
- Resourcing and training local paravets to identify, diagnose and treat goat-related diseases and management issues

The main activities of the project will include:

- Conducting training for local farmers
- Organizing tours to existing well-managed commercial farms
- Distributing improved bucks (male goats) bred to selected farmers, who will then also provide a breeding service for their locality
- These farmers will then donate one goat bred from these bucks for distribution to other farmers in the project
- Providing seed and sapling from improved fodder plants, along with information on their cultivation practices to improve the nutritional status of the goats
- Collaborating with local farmers cooperatives, local government, and traders to establish a market near the project area

Project Inception Meeting



VIVA's Brucellosis Surveillance Project in Malawi



Over the last few years we have been working with the Shire Highlands Milk Producing Association (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 (a disease that can be passed from animals to humans) 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.

The results so far have been an eye opener. We have found a 22% prevalence of *Brucella* spp. among the cows sampled. Over 400 farmers were surveyed and none of them had ever heard of brucellosis, its signs in cattle or humans or its transmission pathways. Worryingly, all farmers interviewed consumed milk produced on the farm with 35% consuming raw milk, a highly risky behavior for transmission of Brucellosis from animal to human hosts.

Milk produced by SHMPA cows provides 95 % of all the consumed in the peri-urban area of Blantyre, a city of over one million people so understanding what zoonotic diseases are prevalent in the SHMPA herd is crucial if the risk to public health is to be mitigated. The surveillance work carried out so far must be expanded and rolled out to cover all cows within the SHMPA herd, ideally on a continuous basis, not just as a cross-sectional sampling which was done initially with the first cohort of 500 cows.

The next phase of the project will focus on a number of interventions:

Education:

Teams will be mobilized to improve farmer education regarding zoonotic diseases, with a special emphasis on the clinical signs of brucellosis in both animals and humans. The education teams will consist of SHMPA Project Officers, veterinary personnel and community mobilizer (who will be a SHMPA farmer). The educators will also cooperate with members of the local human medical teams so that disease reporting among the local SHMPA herd can be fed back to the local health centres.

Vaccination:

Culling infected animals to eliminate herd infections is not feasible in a country like Malawi which does not have the resources to compensate farmers so a vaccination strategy will be explored. However, widespread screening of all SHMPA cows is necessary before the implementation of a vaccination campaign.

Monitoring:

Ongoing monitoring will be used to ensure that control measures become established in the farming communities. Seminars will be held covering topics such as evaluating new animals before introducing them into the herd, immunization techniques, seeking care for illnesses in both animals and people, and hygiene measures for handling livestock (especially around calving time when handlers are at risk of picking up brucellosis). There will be ongoing blood sampling of the cattle herds for brucellosis and vaccination boosters will be delivered to all negative tested animals.



Blood sampling a cow (using the tail vein) for brucellosis



A typical khola (cattle enclosure) on one of the dairy farms



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 €325,000 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), Sligo (2022) and Mallorca (2023)

This year, for their 16th trip the VIVA Wheelers opted for sunnier climes and headed to Mallorca for the second time. With its three hundred days of sunshine every year and the variety of cycling routes on offer, Mallorca has become a cycling mecca attracting around 150,000 cyclists every year.

Basing themselves in Port d'Alcudia in the north-east of the island and guided by Paddy O'Donoghue and Kevin Hanrahan of the Burren Cycling Club the cyclists explored the best of what Mallorca has to offer from the iconic Sa Colabra climb to the incredibly scenic Cap de Formentor lighthouse route.

The Wheelers were also privileged to be joined on one of their spins by the legendary Sean Kelly who graciously offered to cycle with us on his day off from leading another group of cyclists on the island. To thank him VIVA presented him with a print of one of Sean's appearances in the Vuelta a España (kindly donated to VIVA by Annette Kelly – check out GrandTourArt on Etsy).

The Zoetis sponsorship of €2,500 this year brings their total sponsorship since 2011 to €25,000. A special mention also to Paddy O'Donoghue (Burren Cycling Club) for organising a lot of the logistics for the trip and for 'booking' Sean Kelly for the day. In total, €7,400 was raised for VIVA.

zoetis



Liam Burke conquers
Cap Formentor



L to R: Conor O'Scanaill, Ollie Dillon, Mike Burke, Eamonn O'Sullivan, Tadgh Murphy, Joe Collins, Paddy O'Donoghue



Kay Smith, Geraldine Doona and Lucy Fabby



Geraldine Doona taking a beach break



Mike Burke & Frank Conway get ready for the off



Conor Sheridan, James Madden, Mike Burke, Sean Kelly & Tadgh Murphy discuss Tour tactics



Sean Kelly & Fergus Smith



L to R: Eamonn O'Sullivan, Fergus Smith, Ollie Dillon & Matt Corcoran have a coffee after conquering the Lluc climb

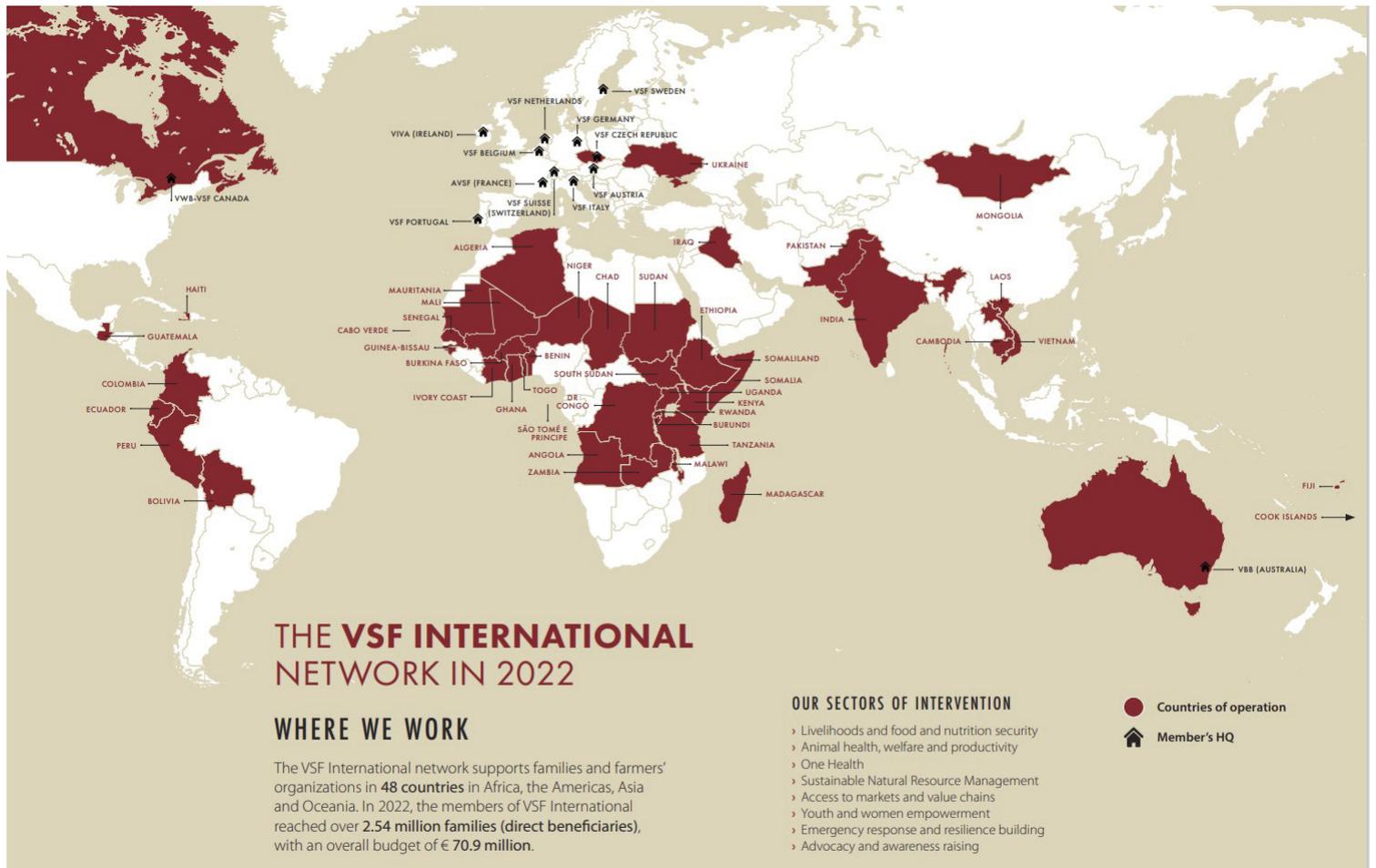


Geraldine Doona, Kay Smith, Tadgh Murphy, Conor O'Scanail, Tom Fabby, Fergus Smith, Lucy Fabby, Mary McNally.



Paddy O'Donoghue makes a presentation to Sean Kelly

A look at the work in 2022 of Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International (VSF), of which VIVA is a member.



2022 IN NUMBERS

48
countries of operation

€70.9
MILLION
total income

944
staff worldwide
91% in the field
9% at HQ

2.54
MILLION
households direct beneficiary

35.08
MILLION
animals treated

7 152
animal health professionals supported
(including
5 302
Community-based Animal Health Workers)

1.08
MILLION
livestock keepers gained access to animal health services

106 945
animals distributed in emergency response programmes or as income-generating assets

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

133
awareness raising events targeting youth in Europe and Canada