

Mike O'Leary Memorial Trust

The Mike O'Leary Memorial Trust was well and truly launched on August 21 in Chairciveen. A memorial mass was followed by a celebrity Gaelic Football match with a UCD team playing the local team, St. Mary's, Cahirciveen.

The local team featured a centerfield pairing of Jack O'Shea and Maurice Fitzgerald. The visitors had many inter-county players, and the veterinarians were represented by Andy Healy and Peadar O Scanail. Sean McGovern was also available for duty.

Padraig Nolan displayed typical Kildare composure and accuracy when opening the scoring for UCD. Points were exchanged before the home side were awarded a penalty. Jack O'Shea stepped up and imitated David Beckham with goalkeeper Tom Ashe taking full credit for distracting him.

Veterinary Ireland President Peadar O Scanail raised the green flag by somehow getting on a Tony MacMahon cross. His celebrations were muted by a subsequent yellow card from the referee, who obviously never forgave the Dubs for deeds of old.

Jack O'Shea and Maurice Fitzgerald exchanged passes in the move of the match, which culminated in Jack crashing the ball to the roof of the net. The game ended in a hard-fought draw. As Frank O'Leary said: "a game like that demands a reply".

Next day, many old warriors vowed 'never again' thought their cries will be ignored. Whether the replay is on the pitch or the golf course is still to be decided, but volunteers will be sought. The day raised in excess of €10,000. All proceeds will go toward cardiomyopathy research, GOAL and VIVA.

For more information on the Trust or if you wish to make a contribution please contact: Donald Collins 087 9373402; Willie Dunne 087 6810246; or Valerie Hyde 086 8525452

GOOD MORNING VIETNAM!



Join VIVA's Vietnam Cycle Challenge in November

VIVA is delighted to announce a major fundraising event for 2005 - a Cycle Challenge in one of Asia's most unique locations. The adventure begins in Hanoi and then moves to the north west region, an area of spectacular mountain scenery which is populated by the ethnic hill tribes that make up 10% of Vietnam's population. The ride will take in some of the most stunning scenery Vietnam has to offer, visit sites of historical significance as well as giving participants a chance to meet rural Vietnamese living a way of life that has hardly changed for centuries.

The date for this unique event is November 14th to 24th 2005. Anyone interested in taking part should contact Mike Burke on 086 - 2568357 or at vivaaid@eircom.net.

How to Help in 2005

- 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. To continue our valuable work we need your support.

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

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 Rory Dicker, Eurogene AI services, Cahir Co Tipperary for their support. Also a special word of thanks to Ned Nolan and Dick Dalton, Hermitage Pigs and Genetics, Kilkenny for their help.



Dick Dalton, training in Kosovo.

IRISH PIG INDUSTRY LENDS SUPPORT TO VIVA

As a result of our involvement in the Malawi Pig Project, VIVA undertook a major fundraising drive in April targeted at the Irish pig industry. This culminated in a presentation by VIVA at the Pig Health Society's annual conference in April, which took place at the Montague Hotel in Emo, Co. Laois.

Over €6000. was raised as a result of donations from various companies associated with the pig industry, pig farmers and delegates attending the conference. We would also like to acknowledge a donation of €2000

from Maurice O'Reilly, Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan and €500 from the Pig Health Society.

SPECIAL THANKS

To Liam Mc Eldowney, recently retired SSVI Department of Agriculture who made a generous donation to VIVA at his retirement party in the Silver Tassie Hotel, Letterkenny, Co Donegal on Oct.1st last.

Also John P. Higgins, Longford DVO. Who donated his richly deserved merit award to VIVA's Nepal training programme.



Mike Burke, Pig Specialist at the VIVA stand in Emo, Portlaoise.

CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE SENT TO



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V.I.V.A. NEWS

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Bringing New Life to people and their animals

December 2004

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

There is something really satisfying about Carrying the torch forwards Fr. Michael Maher our deceased founding chairman lit a torch of enthusiasm for us during the formative years of VIVA. As a pastor and veterinarian he had served for many years in the third world helping those in need. He was acutely aware of the contribution the Irish Veterinary profession could make to the developing world by sharing and communicating the knowledge and skills that has been developed serving the farming industry for many years in Ireland. VIVA has had a positive growth in the level of support and activities over the past five years. It is now recognised abroad as a first class training organisation and is making a real difference to the economic and social development of the communities with which it has served. VIVA members who have served in the Balkans, Africa and Asia have also been touched and enriched by the kindness and eagerness to learn new skills of the recipients of Irish animals in the many countries.

The future of VIVA is very much dependant on the continuing generosity of the veterinary profession in Ireland and that of our very generous sponsors and friends. The rural communities and the small farmers in places such as Malawi and Kosovo eagerly await the next training modules from VIVA volunteers so that they can continue to improve the productivity from their livestock and reduce mortality rates. They know that small incremental improvements can have an exponential impact on the economic wellbeing of their communities.

I have been honoured with the daunting task of carrying the torch which was ignited by Fr Michael. I know that I and the VIVA board can only be successful with your continuing support and encouragement. We look forward to working with you over the coming year and hope that we will successfully build on the solid platform which has been established.

Seán O Laoide

Malawi – training for profit

This year VIVA expanded its portfolio of training courses with the introduction of a Basic Pig Husbandry course. As with other courses provided by VIVA the course was run in Malawi and Kosovo (see report overleaf) in collaboration with other development agencies working in the field of livestock aid. These projects provide excellent examples of how development agencies in conjunction with local partners can work very effectively together. In Malawi, VIVA has worked with Bóthar and a local agency called the SSLPP for a number of years. SSLPP (Small Scale Livestock Promotion Programme) organise the distribution of shipments of livestock from Bothar and other international agencies and employ several extension workers who train the recipients and provide ongoing support.

Approximately 200 pigs, which had been sourced from Hermitage Pigs (Ned Nolan) in Kilkenny, were shipped out to Malawi in December 2003. This initial shipment of pigs was distributed mainly

to people who already had pigs and had some experience in rearing them. These initial recipients (along with SSLPP's extension workers) were the target of VIVA's training. It is impossible to provide training to everyone but by training key people who can go on to train others it is possible to spread the benefits of training very widely.

The course was run over 4 days using a combination of lectures, discussion and farm visits. The farm visits, especially, provided ample evidence of how small husbandry changes can have huge impacts on the profitability of a livestock enterprise.

These pigs have the potential to lift a rural family out of poverty. A farmer selling 20 weaners annually would have a profit of approximately €300. To put this context, a teacher in Malawi would earn in the region of €600 a year. As in all these livestock projects the recipients have to donate a pig to their neighbour so the benefits are spread through the whole community.



Pig health training in Malawi

COMING UP IN 2005.....

This new year will see the launch of VIVA's training manual for village animal health workers. This well researched manual has been developed to benefit rural people in many areas of the world that are dependent on livestock for their survival.

It is difficult for people in Ireland and in the developed world to appreciate that in many areas of the globe there are no Vet's and no access to an animal health service either preventative or curative. The real challenge for VIVA is to make an effective animal health service available to all farmers. This manual coupled with practical training of village animal health workers is a vital step in that direction.

It deals with a wide range of topics that affects animals health. There are articles on the diagnosis, prevention and control of disease commonly found in animals. The book also covers nutrition, animal welfare best practice, assisting births, dealing with emergencies and simple operations. The aim is to help people help their animals and at the same time know when to seek the assistance from more experienced health workers.

Healthy animals means healthy food, a safe environment and healthy people. Many thanks to Pfizer Ireland Ltd for their financial support with this manual. We appeal for more Sponsors. If you are interested in becoming involved in this unique training experience please contact VIVA personnel for details.

Reaching new heights in Nepal

Nepal is a small country wedged between China and India with a population of 26 million living in an area less than twice the size of Ireland. In length and breadth it is nothing exceptional, but in height it is a world-beater as it contains the world's tallest mountains, Everest and Annapurna.

Nepal is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world with almost 50% of its population living below the poverty line. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, providing a livelihood for over 80% of the population and accounting for 40% of GDP. Industrial activity mainly involves the processing of agricultural produce. Pressure by Maoist rebels who want to overthrow the monarchy and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US have led to a decrease in tourism, another key source of foreign exchange. Economic prospects at present look poor and agriculture is now acquiring a new importance.

VIVA has teamed up with a local NGO - AHTCS (Animal Health Training and Consultancy Service) - whose mission is to

improve the living standards of rural communities through effective animal health and husbandry services.

Two project areas have been chosen - Itahari Municipality near Biratnagar in Eastern Nepal and Lamachaur in the central hill eco-zone of Western Nepal. In these areas families are very poor and struggle every day to provide two meals for their dependants. In Itahari district, they may own a half to one acre or are landless and depend on tilling a small piece of land for a landlord. Farming here is carried out by women who keep a buffalo to provide milk for the family with the excess milk being sold to the local dairy co-operative.

The Kaski Goat Raising Project in Lamachaur is promoted by a local NGO named CHESS - Child Health & Environment Save Society Nepal. The main source of income in this region is seasonal farm labour as most of these people are landless. There is abundant grass and forage available which farmers are allowed by the local administration to collect making it an ideal location for a goat project.

The four partners in this project AHTCS, VIVA, Heifer International Nepal and Bóthar can make a real difference to the lives of these poor smallholders- we need your help too!



This buffalo will fund Shiva and Pratima's education.



Cattle are a poor farmer's tractor in Nepal

KOSOVO

Bóthar and VIVA have been involved in Kosovo for a number of years working with their local partner, Heifer Albania (a division of the large American livestock aid agency, Heifer International). Earlier this year the first shipment of pigs (sourced from Hermitage Pigs in Kilkenny) was sent to Kosovo and VIVA organised a Basic Pig Husbandry course for August. Dick Dalton from Hermitage Pigs accompanied the Trainers to provide

some practical training in pig A.I. for the participants.

As in Malawi, the farm visits helped to illustrate the many practical problems experienced by farmers (no matter where they farm!) and how training and advice can help solve these issues. For example on our first farm visit, a very frustrated woman complained of not being able to get her two gilts served by the village boar. As soon as she

noticed that the gilts were on heat the boar was sent for but the gilts never allowed the boar to serve them. The cost of feeding the gilts for this period without any prospect of a return was causing this lady a lot of grief. She was advised to introduce the boar to the gilts a few days before the gilts were due to come on heat to allow them to become accustomed to him. This would greatly increase the chances of a successful mating. In addition, this would eliminate the possibility that the boar was being introduced too late when the gilts were no longer on heat. A simple no-cost solution but one that could make the difference between success and failure in this lady's venture into pig farming. VIVA's role is to ensure that smallholders like this lady maximise the returns from their livestock.

< Participants at the VIVA Pig health and Husbandry training course in Gjackove, Kosovo.



KOSOVO WELCOMES NEW GRADUATE

Alban Gerguri from Istog, Kosovo is one of the first three students to have graduated from the Veterinary Faculty (established in 1996) in the University of Agriculture in Prishtina, Kosovo. Alban started his studies in 1998 and graduated last year, being one of the first to have graduated since the war. Due to a lack of lecturers in the new Faculty, Alban had to travel to the University of Tirana in neighbouring Albania for many of his lectures. All in all, an excellent pupil who graduated with top grades.

After graduating, Alban began his professional practice in the local veterinary station in Lipjan where he stayed for six months. As is the lot of new graduates he is now looking for a permanent job. His dream is to have his own private clinic and to continue his post diploma studies in another country.



Alban Gerguri receives his Pig Health Training certificate from Brendan Mimmagh VIVA.

THE VOLUNTEERS THAT MAKE THE WHEELS TURN

Golfing for VIVA

A huge thanks again to the team from the Department of Agriculture in Longford which organised the VIVA Golf Classic in Athlone in May 2004. The competition was a resounding success. The event organiser again was the former Roscommon and GAA All-star Tony McManus, The fantastic sum of €5000 was raised when 100 golfers trailed the course and later spent a most enjoyable evening in the clubhouse in Athlone. 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.

VIVA winners show their Class

The second annual VIVA classic was a keenly fought and exciting competition. On the day under tremendous pressure the ladies of Roscommon with a display of sheer class, skill and not wanting of beauty and elegance stole the day.



The winning team:- Marie McManus, Mary Jo O'Riordan, Joan O'Gara, Paula Miley.

Of course this just sets the standard high for the 2005 VIVA Golf Classic that will take place at Roscommon Golf Club on Friday May 20th 2005 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.

Riding high in Cavan

Cavan Macra na Feirme led by the energetic Ray Brady had a novel fundraiser for VIVA at the well known Virginia show held on August 25th 2004. The quad-bike balancing act was a great attraction and raised valuable funds for VIVA's animal health training programme in Nepal.

Quad bike riding for VIVA. (below)



Fr Michael Patrick Maher, MVB, MRCVS, CSSp. June 2, 1926 – July 8, 2004



Mick was born in Castlemoyle, Cashel, Co. Tipperary. He attended Rockwell College for his secondary school studies and then studied Veterinary Science in University College Dublin and in the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. He was awarded the M.R.C.V.S. and the M.V.B. and practised as a veterinary surgeon for two years. He entered the Novitiate in Kilshane in 1953 and studied philosophy and theology in Kimmage Manor before being ordained on July 13, 1958.

Fr. Mick's first appointment was to Nigeria where he worked in Port Harcourt's busy St. Mary's Parish. One year later he was principal of Sebastian Academy, a secondary school at Emekuku. He remained in this post for eight years until the war in Biafra brought him back to Ireland. He was appointed to the United States and worked in pastoral ministry in the Los Angeles area.

For five years then Fr. Mick worked in Botswana where he was able to combine parish work with some veterinary work. Again from 1978 until 1993 he undertook similar work at Tshaneni and Manzini in Swaziland. In 1994 the confrères from Mauritius, Malawi and Nigeria elected Fr. Mick as their delegate to the Irish Provincial Chapter and the following year he joined the Spiritan Community in South Africa and was appointed to the district of Bethlehem.

In 1997 Fr. Mick retired to Kimmage Mission House and subsequently Shanahan House. He had an active retirement, working in ministry from time to time in England and doing the odd veterinary locum.

I had known the Maher family for many years through my association with his brother T J. Maher former leader of NFA/IFA, MEP and founder and Chairman of Bothar.

The commitment of both Fr. Michael and TJ to family farming issues here and in the Developing World was legendary. They appreciated the impact that optimum animal health and production could have on the profitability of small family farms where margins were tight.

In retirement, Fr Michael was constantly amazed by the affluence in Ireland. "If only a small amount of this wealth could filter back to the poor subsistence farmers of Africa" he said. "Surely we could do this", he exclaimed! - this was the start of VIVA. His experience in Africa as a missionary and a veterinarian was invaluable to VIVA's mission. For this we will be eternally be grateful. Thanks Mick.

Ar dheis De go raibh a anam dilis.

Veterinary Assistance