



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 over €200,000 for VIVA's projects worldwide with fundraising cycles in Vietnam (2005), Morocco (2007), the Burren (2009), Bantry (2010), Westport (2011) and Dungarvan (2012).

## The Dungarvan Bike 'n Hike

The Copper Coast and Comeragh mountains were this year's destinations for the VIVA Wheelers for their annual one-day event. Our base for the weekend was the Park Hotel in Dungarvan from which the cyclists departed that morning. Taking an inland road they headed for Tramore for lunch. After lunch, they returned to Tramore via the coastal route known as the Copper Coast (in reference to its copper mining heritage). This comprises some 25 kilometres of spectacular coastline consisting of scalloped beaches and coves buttressed and enclosed by rocky headlands.

The hikers took a 20 minute bus ride to the foot of the Comeraghs where they were met by their guide Mario McRory and his team. After a short walk through Kilclooney wood they tackled the slopes and were rewarded with spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. The highlight of the climb was reaching Commshingaun Lake, one of the finest corrie lakes in Europe. After a walk around the ridge and lunch the group returned to base.

A well-deserved dinner in the Park Hotel sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health rounded off the day. Pfizer were represented on the cycle by Eamon O'Sullivan (their Companion Animal & Equine Manager) and his colleagues, Charles Chavasse and Tom Duggan.

A special mention also for XL Vets who put together a team of 20 hikers and cyclists for the event raising €5,000 in the process.

The event was a huge success with almost €22,000 raised for VIVA's overseas projects.

The VIVA Wheelers offers participants the opportunity to get fit, have fun, explore some of Ireland's most spectacular scenery and support farming families in Africa, Asia and eastern Europe.

Why not make joining the VIVA Wheelers your New Year's resolution for 2013? To join our mailing list contact Mike Burke on 086 - 2568257 or [mike@viva.ie](mailto:mike@viva.ie)

Join us on Facebook – just search for "VIVA Wheelers" and "like" us!



Brian Brady, Mike Burke and Geoff Dooley take a break on the Copper Coast



John Keogh takes a break to inspect the local livestock



"Team Westport" get ready for the off!



The hikers on the summit

## Join the VIVA Fundraisers!

Without your help, VIVA cannot continue to support livestock farmers in the Developing World. With just over 400 regular supporters we have achieved an enormous amount over the last decade but we need new blood. Our two flagship fundraisers are the annual Golf Classic and the VIVA Wheelers cycle challenges. Why not make a New Year's resolution today to join us in one of our events

or organise one of your own. We can guarantee you a good day out and the satisfaction of knowing that you've made a significant impact on the life of a farmer in the Developing World.

(For more info contact Mike Burke on 086 - 2568357 / [mike@viva.ie](mailto:mike@viva.ie))

## VIVA Golf Classic

On July 27th, the VIVA Golf Classic returned to Glasson Golf Club, one of the most scenic courses in the Midlands. Over 40 teams competed for a host of prizes with the team of P. McManus, I. McManus, M. Talbot and G. Heavin and emerging victorious.

Since its inception in 2003, the event has built up a loyal following and has now raised over €65,000 for VIVA's overseas projects.

VIVA would again like to thank Tony McManus for all his efforts in organising the Classic. We would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support of our main sponsors, Univet, C & M Vetlink and Liam McEldowney (Letterkenny veterinary surgeon).



G. Crowe, K. McCaig, T. McManus, E. Wall and J. Spratt enjoying the VIVA Golf Classic

## The Heifer Draw 2012

Our "Heifer Draw" goes from strength to strength with 3,200 tickets being sold this year raising over €16,000 for our overseas projects.

The winning tickets were as follows:

- The winner of the Limousin heifer is Tom Cronin from Sallins in Co. Kildare (Seller - Brendan Leslie).
- The runner-up prize of a holiday voucher was Adrian Cummins from Castlerea in Co. Roscommon (Seller - Kevin Geoghegan).

A special thanks to everyone who sold tickets.

## Inner Wheel Adopts VIVA

Inner Wheel is an international women's organisation which promotes friendship, personal service and international understanding amongst its members.

The Chairman of District 16 (which comprises 23 clubs across the island of Ireland) for 2011 / 2012, Sylvia Tennant, chose VIVA as her charity for the year.

A year of fundraising across all the clubs culminated in the presentation of a cheque for €3,500 to VIVA

Maureen O'Sullivan of Inner Wheel (Limerick) presents a cheque to Mike Burke of VIVA



## Fundraising Events

If one of our fundraising events doesn't grab you why not organise your own. VIVA is now registered on [www.sponsor.ie](http://www.sponsor.ie) With Sponsor.ie you can set up your own fundraising page in 5 minutes, email the link to all your friends and contacts who can then donate online to VIVA. Fundraising made easy! Special Thanks

VIVA would also like to thank the following for their support in 2012:

- Maurice & Paula O'Reilly
- Sean Collins
- Karen Dunne (who took part in Gaelforce to raise funds for VIVA)
- Midlands Showjumping who donated the fees from their summer events.
- Oldcastle Vet Labs
- Dónal McLoone
- Pat Kelleher
- Joe Broderick (Merla) who donated fees from a recent CPD event
- Martin Downes who ran the Dublin City Marathon for VIVA



# Viva News

Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance  
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supporting livestock,  
supporting people

This September a VIVA team visited Uganda to launch the next phase of our Animal Traction project. Over the next three years VIVA and Irish Aid have committed €400,000 to the expansion of the scheme which has been a major success to date. To mark the occasion a tree was planted at the home of James Otuba, the Chairman of the Koilie Amora Ican Farmers Group who are our local partner in the project.



Denis Kelliher, Denis Healy, Mike O'Brien, Mark Connellan (foreground) at the tree-planting ceremony.

## Message from the Chairman

As we enter another year of relentless recession in Ireland we are looking to the Agri-food industry for salvation. In a world heading towards a population of nine billion by 2050 and in an age of unprecedented increase in the so-called middle class sector particularly in China Ireland is uniquely poised to grow its food industries. We already have major world players in Ireland in the shape of Kerry Foods and Glanbia. These developments contrast with the slow evolution of the food industry in the Developing World. Here subsistence farming is the norm. However, the potential of agriculture to transform communities and economies is the same.

Livestock in the Developing World meet four basic and critical needs

- They act as a vital source of income: Improved livestock production can contribute significantly to

household income through the sale of food such as milk and eggs, live animals, and skins as hides, as well as manure to be used as fertilizer for crops.

- They act as a vital source of nutrition
- They contribute to increased farm productivity: Livestock produce manure for fertilizing crops and provide power to haul and plough fields
- They act as "living" banks for farmers who lack other ways to store wealth. Livestock can help develop financial security, provide regular cash flow and allow farmers to hedge against risk and disaster.

VIVA with your help will continue to help livestock farmers in the Developing World to achieve their potential. Our flagship project in Uganda is transforming communities but we need your continued support in 2012.

Séan Ó'Laoide – VIVA Chairman

## Check out our website ([www.viva.ie](http://www.viva.ie))

There, you can read about our projects, make a donation and register for regular email updates. Have a look!

## Ugandan Animal Traction Project

Working in conjunction with Heifer Uganda and the Koile Amora Ican Farmers Group and with the assistance of funding from Irish Aid VIVA's project has transformed the lives of 400 farming families. In addition to providing oxen and ploughs for crop cultivation, the families receive training and assistance in other areas such as vegetable growing, home sanitation, tree-planting, installation of energy-efficient stoves and gender issues. In the next phase of the project the emphasis will be on helping these farmers with post-harvest handling and marketing of their produce in addition to climate change adaptation strategies.

These are some of the main achievements so far of the project:

With household food production having tripled, over 400 families are now food secure and can afford two balanced meals a day.

439 families are using energy-efficient Lorena stoves which use less fuel (wood) thus reducing environmental degradation. As families no longer cook over open fires which fill their homes with smoke the incidence of respiratory disease in women and children has dramatically reduced.

Each farmer has planted at least 50 multi-purpose trees to protect the environment. In addition to helping with soil conservation the trees are a source of fuel for the stoves and a fodder source for the oxen.



438 families have benefited from the project. 372 are original recipients of oxen and ploughs and 66 families have received oxen and ploughs from some of the original families who financed these gifts from the sale of surplus produce. This Passing on the Gift (POG) is a cornerstone of the project which ensures that every donor becomes a recipient.

The status of women in the community has greatly improved. Half the beneficiaries are women and the economic independence this has brought has given them a new status in the community. In fact, women make up half the executive committee that run the project.

## Mike O'Leary Trust Travel Bursary

This year's winner of the Mike O'Leary Trust Travel Bursary was Una Boyle a third year veterinary student from Newry, Co. Down. Una travelled to Uganda in July to visit our animal traction project.

This is the seventh year of the Bursary which sponsors a veterinary student each year to spend a month visiting on one of VIVA's overseas projects. The Mike O'Leary Trust was established to honour the memory of Kerry vet, Mike O'Leary, who died tragically in 2003 at the age of 39.

While in Uganda, Una focussed on the incomes the farmers are generating from the sale of surplus produce – what uses is it being put to? Una reports below:

Some farmers spoke about how previous to owning their own bull they had to hire oxen and a plough. This was proving costly for them at approx. €16 per acre plus they had to wait for the owners of the oxen and plough to work their land first, consequently they were late in ploughing and sowing seed. An acre may have taken 2-3 weeks to dig by hand but with the help of the bulls and plough it can be done in 3 hours. Now the only thing she has to buy is oil for cooking as her produce can feed her family a healthier and more stable diet and the remainder is sold in the market. The farmers grew a variety of different crops such as ground nuts, cassava, maize, sweet potatoes, cow peas, sorghum, beans, millet, eggplant and rice. The importance of the knowledge and skills gained in their agricultural training they received was emphasized.

Some women also appreciated the family planning knowledge they had gained as this is an issue in Uganda where the population is 33 million and growing. The families I visited had anything from 3 children up to 16 with an overall average of 9.

I was pleased to learn that all the farmers were using their extra income to provide their children with the best education they could afford, with a couple even gaining the opportunity to go to university. It was explained to me how sending a child to school can be very expensive. The figures quoted varied amongst the households, with school fees varying from €19 to €143 per term with 3



Una is presented with a gift of eggs on one of her farm visits

terms in a year; school uniforms from €3 to €16 and books on top of this (a dozen for ≈ €1). It should be remembered that the Gross National Income (GNI) in Uganda is €380 or €1 a day.

On questioning the farmers about any recent investments a few spoke about how they were building a 'permanent' (brick) house. The majority of farmers had invested in animals such as local breeds of chicken at (€3-5). Some invested in goats (€13 to €22). Others investments consisted of guinea fowl, pigs and tree seedlings to grow citrus fruits.

Since participation in the project the extra cash available can be spent on clothing. One of the farmers informed me that beforehand "children didn't have proper clothing and women dressed shabby but now they look smart. Women are able to purchase 2 Gomezi (traditional Ugandan dress) now." Investments in household items such as bedding, mattresses, saucepans, plates and cups have been made. The Vice Chairperson of the group had invested in a wheel barrow to help her carry the water back from the distant well, rather than carrying a jerry can (20 litres) on her head. The same intelligent lady had invested in a solar panel - it could charge "2 mobiles per day and provide 4 hours of light at night."

Most farmers informed me of the difference purchasing a simple mosquito net has had on their families health as it has reduced the incidence of malaria. This in turn has reduced doctor fees drastically. Many of the recipients outlined the positive effect their more varied, healthier diet has had; people are better nourished and therefore having less health.



An ox is prepared for ploughing

## Animal Traction Project

VIVA Board member, Denis Kelliher, visited Uganda in September of this year to see at first-hand the animal traction project. These are his impressions from the trip:

Denis stressed that "education of their children is one the main goals of the progressive families involved in our Project. Speaking to a local education official Denis was told that although Government policy is to promote free primary education for all, Uganda lacks the resources to realise it and over one third of the population is illiterate. The primary education programme is meant to be a 7 year cycle but there is a massive fall off in the final two years of primary cycle. Classes are overcrowded and teachers lack training and experience. Approx. 20% of children go on to second level with only 1 - 2% making it to third level".

Denis thought that the educational approach for the farm families in the project being adopted by Heifer Uganda was very appropriate in this situation. Basically this involves training the progressive farmers to do better on their own farms but also to train them to engage in knowledge transfer with their neighbouring farmers. Locals train locals and it means that the transfer of basic technology is done very simply and effectively.

Other aspects of the project that particularly impressed Denis were:

- The Lorena stoves, which in addition to being energy-saving (less wood required) also provide a smoke-free cooking and living quarters. With the open fires in the bamboo huts, they become smoke filled which has serious repercussions on the health of both women and children.
- The Biogas systems which use animal faeces and household waste. This ferments in underground tanks and is harnessed to provide a source of energy for cooking and lighting. The high ambient temperature of the soil means that it is an efficient process with the final compost available as a fertiliser. Denis recounted that "one moment of real helplessness during the trip was on the farm with

the biogas plant. The lady had a cow byre with three stalls but only one cow, having lost the other two to disease, while the cost of a replacement heifer was the equivalent of €700".

- According to Denis, it was evident that not an inch of ground is wasted in the cultivation of land. For example elephant grass is grown around the headlands to provide fodder for the oxen, whilst maize plants are grown amongst the potato crop.
- Families that have benefited can be seen to be in the process of erecting simply designed, brick-built houses, moving away from the bamboo huts. Also the introduction of very simple, basic personal hygiene systems to improve the prevention of disease in a community system with very little access to medical services appears to be really appreciated.

According to Denis the benefits of the Animal Traction project are very evident when you visit some of the participating farmers, simple but industrious people who are striving to improve their lot in very basic conditions. These people are very appreciative of the assistance they are receiving and are not slow in making every effort to express their gratitude.

A traditional welcome for the VIVA Team



Denis Healy (L) and Denis Kelliher (R) supervise the Passing of the Gift of an oxen from one farmer in the project to another.