



Viva News

Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance

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*supporting
livestock farmers in
the Developing World*

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VIVA joins Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International (VSF-International)

Dear Supporter,

In recent years the “One Health” concept has gained traction emphasizing the interconnectedness of human and animal health and the environment they inhabit. For example, it is impossible to focus on human health initiatives alone when 75% of the emerging threats to human health are zoonotic (animal in origin). The concept of “One Health” has also led to a greater appreciation of the role of livestock in the lives of farmers in the Developing World and the importance of improving animal health. In the first instance, improved animal health increases the income from livestock rearing and secondly, it improves the health of the farmer and their family if zoonotic diseases are controlled.

The large, international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are now starting to focus on the livestock resources of communities when humanitarian crises occur to ensure that they are preserved to enable people to get back on their feet once the crisis period is over. In addition VSF International (a network of 13 organisations) is working in over 30 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to support small-scale livestock farmers and their families by improving the health and productivity of their animals. In October of this year, VIVA joined the VSF network at its AGM in Lisbon. As a small, volunteer-based organization we hope this will help us make a bigger impact by enabling us to collaborate on animal health projects with other similarly minded partners and tap into their expertise.

On the home-front 2017 was one of our best years in terms of fund-raising and we would like to thank everyone who contributed to this in terms of time, money and effort.

We look forward to your continued support in 2018.

Pat Murphy (VIVA Chairperson) & Mike Burke (VIVA CEO)



"It's Your Field" Animal Health Awards



Michael Coyle presents a cheque for €1,375 to Brendan Mimmagh, the proceeds of the Animal Health Awards dinner raffle.

"It's Your Field" is an animal health journal for manufacturers, advisors and retailers of animal health products. The journal was launched in February 2011 by Michael Coyle of Coyle Veterinary in Galway and is published on a quarterly basis.

This year they launched the inaugural Animal Health Awards which recognise vets, vet nurses, researchers, responsible persons and advisors in the industry. The awards ceremony was held in the Clayton Hotel in Galway in October and, in addition to a raffle which raised €1,375 for VIVA, a special award for Distinguished Service was presented to Brendan Mimmagh for his work with VIVA.



Brendan Mimmagh (VIVA) accepts his Distinguished Service Award from Kevin Waters (Coyle Veterinary) and Michéal Ó Muircheartaigh (MC for the event)



The VIVA Wheelers

The VIVA Wheelers are a group of cyclists of all ages and abilities who have raised €275,000 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) and the Burren (2017).

On September 9th the VIVA Wheelers returned to the Burren, the scene of their first "Bike 'n Hike" in 2009. The 50 cyclists were guests of the Burren Cycling Club who escorted them on a 90km tour of the Burren on a rain-free, sunny day. At the same time 10 hikers spent a few hours walking the Burren under the direction of local guide, Shane Connolly (who generously donated his fee to VIVA). That evening, all the participants retired to Monks Bar and Restaurant for a meal where the evening was rounded off with a music session provided by the resident trad group, The Badgers, who also generously donated their fee on the night to VIVA.

A special note of thanks to Eamon O'Sullivan who organised the Zoetis sponsorship of the meal in Monks Bar (as he has done for a number of years). We would also like to express our sympathies to Eamon on the death of his father. Eamon had arrived in Ballyvaughan to partake in the cycle but he had to leave shortly after when his father was taken ill.

Our thanks to Paddy O'Donoghue and the Burren Cycling Club for organising a great day out and to the staff of Monks Bar and Restaurant for a fantastic evening. Paddy's company, Veterinary Instruments Ltd (VIL), also sponsored the lunch for the cyclists and hikers. All told, the event raised just over €14,000 for VIVA which is our best return in a number of years.

Syd Nagle and Karen Mulherin



(L to R): Donal Flynn, Jim Higgins and Enda Finnerty ready for the off.



Paula Bergeson-Quinn conquers the Burren



A "Class of 89" reunion in the Burren - (L to R) Enda Finnerty, James Madden, Mike Burke & Roddy Crehan



The Hikers (L to R) - Darragh McKenna, Aine Collins, Catherine McHugh, Karen Dunne, Celine Partland, James Madden, Karen Mulherin, Paula Bergeson-Quinn, Shane McAuliffe.

Gordon Kellett, Karen Mulherin and Syd Nagle stretching before the off



The western contingent representing Westport, Gort & Castlebar - (L to R back) - Simon Wall, Andrew Coen, John Henry, Mary Coen. (L to R front) - Cathy Waddell, Mary Sadlier, Ascinta Kilroy.

Cycling not enough for some people - Cathy Waddell goes for a dip in Ballyvaughan after the cycle.



Grainne & John McCarthy take a well-earned rest



"What a view" (Simon Wall)



Mary Coen passes Leamaneh Castle

“Ronnie in Rwanda” one year on

Last year, VIVA supported the airlift of 260 Irish pigs to Rwanda as part of a multi-species livestock shipment by Bóthar. The programme has been a resounding success with local partners highlighting the speed at which the animals begin to generate an income. So far the sows are averaging twelve pigs born alive per litter with the largest litter so far being eighteen piglets. Demand for weaner pigs is developing in the area and the current market price is 15,000 to 20,000 Rwandan Francs (approx. €15 to €20) at 3 months old. A dedicated local market place is being set up to consolidate this local trade and further boost the earning power of the farmers. So far, the first-born piglet has been passed on from 21 sows creating a growing ripple effect of prosperity in the community.



*Aideen O'Leary (Bothar)
with some new piglets*



A proud new pig farmer

Pakistan – three years on

In 2014 VIVA, in conjunction with Electric Aid (the social justice fund of the staff of Electric Ireland), supported a Pakistani charity, THJ, with a goat project which worked with 80 marginalised women who, with their families worked in the local brick kilns earning approx. €1 a day. Their low incomes did not allow the women to care properly for their families or send their children to school. In fact, as soon as children are old enough they also start working in the kilns to help their families meet the daily target of 1000 bricks. The kilns do not operate during the monsoon season (July to September) so the women then get loans to tide them over from the brick kiln owners at very high interest rates. To help the women generate additional income 240 teddy goats (a local breed raised for its meat) were purchased and each of the 80 women received 3 goats. The goats generated an income from the sale of milk, ghee (a type of butter) and meat. The women also received training in the care of the goats.

Three years on, the project has been a great success. Monthly incomes have increased by up to 25%, many of the women have cleared their debts and

more children are going to school as the families can afford the fees. In addition to the 80 initial recipients, another 240 women have benefited as the original recipients had to pass on the first three offspring from their goats to other women in the community.

One of the lucky recipients, Ms Nusrta Babi lives along with her husband and five children in the village Malkha Wala. Since then, her family's life has improved significantly. Nusrta's husband used to look after other people's goats on a daily basis. Now he helps his wife take care of their own goats. Using the training and skills which TNJ taught her, Nusrat's Babi is able to vaccinate her goats, ensure that they have the right kind of food and enough water and make sure that they are not getting sick. She and her family now have 6 goats. Nusrat has also worked hard to fulfil her promise to “Pass on the Gift” - giving three of the offspring of her goats to another poor family in the community. She now generates an income from selling goat milk. According to Nusrat - “At home there were no goats until TNJ gave my family goats. I'm so happy and proud about what TNJ have done for my family”.



Nusrta Babi with her goats.

A poultry project empowering women in Zimbabwe

This year, in conjunction with Bothar, VIVA funded a poultry project in Zimbabwe - The Women's Livelihood and Economic Empowerment Project (WOLEEP). This is being implemented by Heifer International Zimbabwe (HIZ) in the Chiwundura Communal Area and targets 1 000 households with a specific focus on women. The aim of the project is to empower 1,000 women smallholder farming households that were affected by the El Nino induced drought experienced in the Southern region of Africa in the period 2015 to early 2017.

WOLEEP is making use of Heifer's Exponential Pass on the Gift (EPOG) approach in reaching out to the 1,000 women farmers. This involves the initial recipients (250 families) using the improved incomes generated by their participation in the project to buy chickens for other families in the community. To help monitor the project, four community facilitators (CFs) and one Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) have been recruited, trained and equipped with bicycles and a vet-kit (for the CAHW).

The recipients received training in poultry husbandry, microfinance, financial literacy and group governance. Recipients then constructed poultry housing using their own funds and received the birds in mid-October. HIZ also facilitated a vaccination programme of all local poultry in the target area to ensure the disease pressure in the area was reduced prior to placement of the improved poultry breeds.



The CFs and CAHW receiving bicycles from the Project.



One of the poultry houses constructed by the women farmers.

Our Aberdeen Angus heifers settle into Romania

Our latest project involved the purchase of 6 Aberdeen Angus heifers for an orphanage farm in Oradea in Romania. This farm has a large dairy unit and is affiliated with Caminul Felix Family Villages, which has been providing homes for abandoned children in Romania since 1990. It provides basic food needs like milk and meat for the children in Caminul Felix as well as acting as a place where children can learn the value of work, the importance of discipline and how to interact with colleagues at work. In the long-term, Caminul Felix seeks to reintegrate into society the children that were abandoned or orphaned. Today, Caminul Felix Villages have almost 200 children in their care. Our colleagues in

Bothar have used the farm as a quarantine unit for their cattle shipments to Romania in recent years and this is how it came to the attention of VIVA. The farm was very anxious to source some Aberdeen Angus heifers so VIVA agreed to fund the purchase of the heifers. Over the summer the heifers all calved successfully and have enjoyed more sunshine than they would have had at home!

Marcel Filip, the orphanage Director, thanked VIVA for the livestock donation and commented that he was looking forward to these heifers providing “all the beef for our 200 children and in the future for many more”. In addition he said that the heifers “are a great help providing Vocational Trade for many of our children and even Occupational Therapy for two of our teenagers with special needs. It is great to see the bonding and healthy connection they have with the animals”.



Some of the orphanage kids with the Irish heifers

Maurice & Paula O'Reilly

VIVA would like to thank Maurice and Paula O'Reilly for their very generous donation to mark Maurice's retirement. Maurice's retirement brings to a close a 50 year plus career, most of which he spent in Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan where he eventually specialized in pig medicine, building up a large practice in the heart of pig country.



Joe Broderick (Merial) presents a cheque to Brendan Mimmagh (VIVA)

Merial "Fitbit Challenge"

This year Merial, in conjunction with their calf vaccines promotional campaign (#calfmatters) signed up 36 practice vets to undertake a fitness challenge. Each vet received a FitBit fitness monitor, the challenge being to clock up 10,000 steps or more a day and be sponsored for their efforts. The top "stepper" was Donal Flynn from Roscommon, who clocked up a remarkable 3,318,883 steps while training for the Barcelona "Ironman" challenge which he completed in under 12 hours. The campaign has so far raised a remarkable €4,000 for VIVA with donations still coming in. A big

"Thank You" to Stephen Cox of Merial, who initiated the fundraiser, and all the vets involved. (Merial is now part of Boehringer Ingelheim.)

Teagasc Moorepark inaugural 5k

Aine Collins, one of the winners of the Mike O'Leary Trust Bursary in the past and now a PhD student in Moorepark, recently organised a 5 km run on the campus in aid of Bothar and VIVA. This is Aine's report – "On July 27, an enthusiastic gathering of staff, researchers, PhD students, summer interns and Teagasc Moorepark family members joined together to run a 5.2 km road race in support of Bothar and VIVA. The event was held throughout the picturesque Teagasc Moorepark (Fermoy) campus which led runners and walkers around the rolling pastures and along the farm roadways where they had to carefully dodge evidence the cows had walked the same path earlier that day! With upbeat music blasting at the start line and cheers from the nearly sixty runners, there was a

great atmosphere about the yard. Blazing the trail was Michael Liddane at 21:16 minutes who came in first overall. PhD student Aisling Claffey was the first of the female runners to cross the line at 24:58 minutes. The event was a huge success and the effort raised €575 for the



A participant speeds past some disinterested observers



The runners head for the fields

The "Univet" and "C & M Vetlink" Golf Classic

The 2017 VIVA golf classic returned to its usual haunt, Tullamore Golf Club's mature 18-hole parkland championship course, in July. VIVA would like to thank Tony McManus for organising the event and to all the competitors who played on the day with over 30 teams competing for an array of prizes. Once again the VIVA classic was sponsored by Univet and C&M Vetlink. Without their valued support it would be very difficult to stage this most successful annual competition that has raised almost €85,000 for VIVA's projects. Special thanks also to the following for their sponsorship:

Liam McEldowney, Donal Brady and Anthony Sweeney.



Enjoying the golf and the sunshine at the Golf Classic (L-R) Bernie Browne, Marie Mc Manus, Paula Miley and Joan O Gara

The Christmas Quarry Dip

Longford vet, Donagh McDonnell, dedicated his annual Christmas morning fundraising "Quarry Dip" to VIVA last year. This novel fundraiser, which involved a dawn swim in the flooded quarry on Donagh's farm raised €300 for VIVA.



The "Hardy Bucks" before the dive.

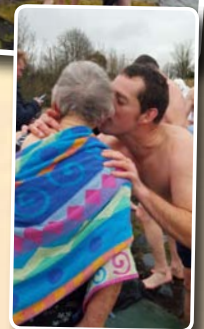
Kilkenny & North Connaught Clinical Societies support VIVA

VIVA would like to thank Kilkenny Clinical Society for their extremely generous donation of €2,500. This brings to €5,500 their total donations in recent years.

In addition North Connacht Clinical Society made a donation of €600 bringing to

€1,850 their donations in recent years.

VIVA would be delighted to make a presentation (e.g. as a short curtain raiser to the clinic talk) for any Clinical Society at one of their winter meetings. Please contact us if you are interested.



Donagh congratulates Margie Magan after the swim

Tommy the Vet's "90 for 90"

The Wicklow veterinary herd health consultant, Tommy Heffernan, aka "Tommy the Vet" used his recent "90 for 90" campaign to raise funds for VIVA's animal health projects. The challenge was to cover 90 topics related to farm animal health in 90 days and each topic in under 90 seconds on social media. Tommy (with the help of some colleagues) raised €1,150 for VIVA. Congrats also to Tommy on becoming a Nuffield Scholar for 2018.



Tommy Heffernan

Heifer Draw 2017

Our annual Heifer Draw raised almost €4,000 for VIVA's projects. The winners are as follows:

- The heifer goes to Jim McCartan, Navan, Co. Meath (Seller is Denis Carolan, Navan)
- Second prize of €500 goes to Anna O'Rourke, Ballyhaise, Co. Cavan (Seller - Rachel Burgess, Virginia, Co. Cavan)
- Third prize of a €250 voucher goes to Edward Cassidy, Nobber, Co. Meath (Seller - John Taite, Mullagh, Co. Cavan)



Our 2015 heifer, Altamira Jordan (who has been living in Westport since her move from the Altamira herd of Brendan & Joan O'Connor in Co. Cork) was sold during the year by her owner, Liam Garavan, to his neighbor, Michael Gavin. Altamira Jordan has now calved and she is pictured here with her calf, Bill. Liam is on the left and Michael is on the right. (Photo courtesy of Cathy Waddell) We had some epic feats of ticket selling this year with Rachel Burgess (Virginia), Mary Coen (Gort), Karen Mulherin (Ballina) and Brendan Leslie (Granard) selling large numbers of tickets. However, Rachel Burgess wins the prize for the most innovative sales technique, having donned a "cow suit" to sell tickets at Virginia Show.



Rachel Burgess in full bovine regalia selling "Heifer Draw" tickets at Virginia Show.



Our 2016 heifer, Altamira Kate, was won by Stephen Harrison, Riverstick, Co. Cork. She is now being looked after by his uncle Sean Coffey in Newport, Co. Tipperary (who sold Stephen the winning ticket).