

Viva News

Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance
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Volunteers in Irish
Veterinary Assistance

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VÉTÉRINAIRES
SANS FRONTIÈRES

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Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance

2020 – A year like no other

Dear Supporter,

After the high of our 20th anniversary last year we were brought back down to earth this year with the arrival of COVID 19. Like every aspect of society, our activities were affected, with our two biggest fundraisers, the annual golf classic and the "Bike 'n Hike" cancelled. Our "Heifer Draw" went ahead so all was not lost and again we have donations from Clinical Societies and corporate donors (see Donor News on Page 7) to make up some of the deficit. COVID 19 also affects the communities we work with. In Uganda, a combination of Foot and Mouth Disease restrictions on animal movements and the closing of livestock markets to prevent the spread of COVID 19 has meant pastoralists cannot sell cattle to buy grain resulting in food shortages.

We continued to support our joint project with VSF Belgium in Uganda with a contribution of

€20,000 and we also supported a brucellosis surveillance initiative in Malawi (See pages 6 - 7)

So this year we are asking all our supporters to consider donating to our Christmas Appeal so that we can end 2020 on a high note. Maybe you had a Reunion coming up this year and it didn't come off due to restrictions so maybe you could mark the occasion with a donation to VIVA. Think about all the money you saved with online conferences – that must be worth a donation to VIVA!

We look forward to re-launching our regular fundraisers in 2021 and hope you renew your support.

In the meantime here's wishing you a Christmas that renews your spirit for 2021

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



Farmer Paul Achak and his goats – see Page 4 for his story

VSF Belgium & VIVA in Karamoja

Our collaboration with VSF Belgium in the Karamoja region in north-east Uganda continued in 2020. VIVA is funding the animal health elements and the breed improvement activities of this large development project which is working with local pastoralists communities.

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.

The first aspect of this is the training of local farmers as Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) to provide basic animal care to the farmers in their community. These CAHWs have formed associations, of which there are now nine, and eight of these have small outlets where they can meet, store supplies and sell

medicines to local farmers. Refresher training continues to enhance disease diagnosis, treatment and control.

The second element of the programme is vaccination of livestock for local endemic diseases. As well as vaccinating local livestock for endemic conditions such as Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP) and Pestes de Petits Ruminants (PPR) the projects assists the local government in vaccinating livestock in the face of outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease.

The third element of our funding involves trying to improve the productivity of the pastoralists cattle. Sahiwal cattle have been introduced. This dual breed, from the Punjab region on the borders of Pakistan and India, is tick-resistant, heat tolerant and an excellent milker. With the goat herds, Galla goats have been introduced due to their ability to withstand tough conditions, like extended periods of drought, while giving higher milk yields.



Paul Achak – one of the project farmers

My name is Achak Paul. I am 36 years old and I live with my family in Naroo village on the mountain, Kakingol parish in Katikekile sub-county of Moroto district. I am part of Eteteunos livestock husbandry and the Village Community Bank group (VICOBA) that is supported by Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium (VSF-B) and its partner Matheniko Development Forum (MADEFO). Last year (2018), at the end of August, I received 5 goats from VSF-B: four local female goats and an improved Galla buck.

Before I didn't have goats, but now I count 15 – since all of them produced and one even had twins. I am very proud of my goats and I feel like a wealthy man. My 9 (!) children can now take milk from the goats and I can pay for school fees if I sell a goat. The goats are like walking cash, which can pay for family expenses. In the future I can maybe have 50 goats and send all my young children to school; for now, only the eldest two – of 10 and 7 years – go to school.

Yet, raising goats is not without challenges. They often fall sick of CCPP (Contagious

Caprine Pleuro Pneumonia), anaplasmosis, foot rot or even diarrhoea. When this happens, I go and buy drugs from the vet outlet in Nakiloro, which is not too far. Usually, I can treat them myself, but when it is complicated, I request for a Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) to come and help me. Luckily my father is part of the CAHWs' Association in Nakiloro, so he can help me with treating the goats. Most times, I try to prevent diseases. In the dry season the goats stay in the kraal, but when the rain comes, they stay in the raised shelter I constructed near the family home. Further I do spray (against ticks and other insects that spread diseases) and I keep the environment of my goats clean. I also take part in vaccination from the district and with help of the mutual benefit fund established by VSF-B I vaccinated all my animals. I learnt these preventive measures during the training VSF-B gave on livestock management. They taught me how to detect sick animals, how to construct proper housing and all about hygiene. I can also apply what I learnt in my business. With the money I borrow from the group, I started livestock trade. I buy and sell goats. I know which animals not to pick, because I recognize when they look sickly. The profits are small, since I usually buy and sell at the same day. I can maybe add 2000 or 5000 shilling per goat (€0,50 – €1,20). But MADEFO trained our group on business skills and marketing. I learned that I can make better profits when I stay with the goats for a little bit, I can gain up to 20.000 Ugx (€4,85) more per animal.

Within Eteteunos group we exchange with those who also received goats. We discuss the challenges and the health. If it is needed, we even share animal drugs between us. Sometimes I trade animals within the group. The VICOBA savings and the goats have really brought us together as a community.





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VIVA's One Health initiative in Malawi

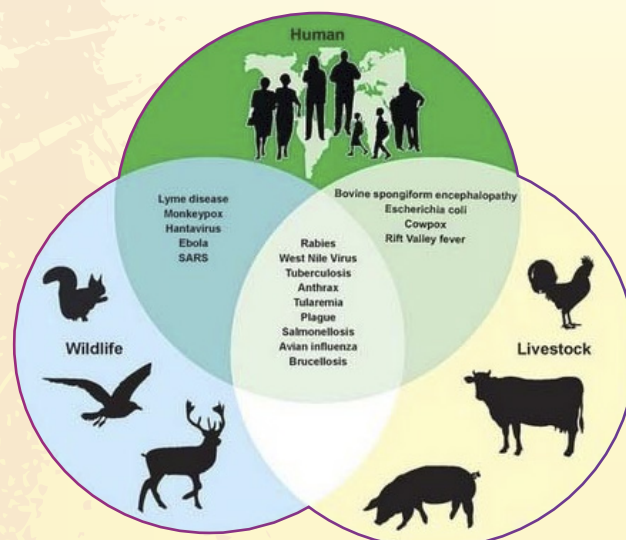
One Health is a collaborative, multisectoral and trans-disciplinary approach - working at the local, regional, national, and global levels - with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes for all, recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment. Increasing globalization, urban density, ease of travel, environmental changes and habitat overlap between humans and animals means that there are more opportunities now than ever for the emergence and spread of disease that adversely impacts on both human and animal health, prosperity, and food security. The health of people, domestic animals, wildlife, and our environment are intrinsically linked and interdependent and we have to recognise the importance of this in order to mitigate future health problems.

Look at the diagram on the right to begin to visualise the crossover of disease between all species at the animal, environmental, human interface. Approximately 75% of new emerging infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic in origin. Zoonotic diseases are diseases that are transmitted between vertebrate animals and humans. The impact of both endemic and emerging zoonotic diseases in poorer countries is disproportionately high because of lack of sustainable multisectoral coordination mechanisms, weak health systems and lack of resources for investigation and control of cases and clusters.

To date VIVA has been involved in a number of partnerships with other NGOs such as Heifer International and VSF International in the implementation of training programmes for Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW). Through extending our current partnerships and expanding upon our current knowledge platform in the delivery of animal health services to resource poor communities we are adopting a One Health approach to disease in the developing world.

VIVA is addressing the need for improved zoonotic disease surveillance through a bovine brucellosis project in collaboration with the Shire Highlands Milking Producers Association (SHMPA), a dairy co-operative in Southern Malawi. *Brucella* spp. is a zoonotic bacteria causing chronic debilitating illness in humans while negatively impacting on animal health with marked reductions in production levels. Pasteurisation eliminates *Brucella* from milk. However, in Malawi, milk is often consumed raw, especially by children who drink milk directly from the cow, meaning that the risk to human health is extremely high.

VIVA Director, Eithne Leahy, has been working with



The One Health Paradigm



Consumption of raw milk, especially among children, is commonplace in Malawi

the Co-Ops vet, Roulex Owino, and the Co-Op's Farm Livestock Technicians (FLT) to implement a study to understand the prevalence of brucellosis infected cows. The results of this study will help inform and educate farmers on milking hygiene and farm biosecurity to mitigate the risk to public health. Only by knowing what disease burden is out there can we then implement measures to act upon it. Over time, by reducing brucellosis levels, dairy cow health will be improved, and milk production will also increase.

Healthy cows are productive cows; more milk will be available to the farmers and their families for home consumption, once boiled, or for sale to increase household incomes. Also, the overall public health risk of human brucellosis will be reduced.

In January 2020, 184 SHMPA farmers in the peri-urban area of Blantyre were recruited to the bovine brucellosis study. Farmers were interviewed using a pre-tested KAP (knowledge, attitude and practices) questionnaire including questions on their cows' clinical history, breeding methods used, farmers knowledge of zoonotic disease and practices around milking and calving. A Brucella antibody screening kit was used to test cows for exposure to the disease. All field work was undertaken by SHMPA's vet with support given by FLTs.

From an early stage in the study, SHMPA veterinary staff were suspicious of high levels of what they suspected to be false negatives to the antibody test. Of the first 33 cows sampled, all had negative results despite having clinical histories associated with Brucella spp. infection. An improved kit, with higher sensitivity and specificity was ordered from the manufacturer in the UK. Unfortunately, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, transportation of kits to Malawi as well as farm visits have been delayed.

However, some interesting results have emerged from the 33 farmers interviewed so far.

- On knowledge and awareness relating to brucellosis, all farmers reported having no idea of a disease called brucellosis.
- 85% of farmers consume milk both boiled and raw at times.
- On boiled milk; 81% of respondents are unsure whether boiling negatively affects milk's nutritive value while 19% think it does.
- Regarding peripartum practices, 54% said they allow newborn calves in the house while 46% did not, preferring to leave them at the khola (cattle enclosure) with the dam. 36% do assist their cows during calving while 54% call the FLTs to help.
- 100% never wear protective gear while handling afterbirths. 85% of respondents do believe that washing hands is necessary after close contact with animal and animal products. 95% do dispose of the afterbirths in pit latrines or dig a hole and bury it.

Regarding episodes of abortions in cows, 82% of respondents reported at least one case of abortion during their dam's reproductive cycle. None of the correspondents had an idea about vaccination.



A farmer prepares to milk his cows



Dr. Roulex Owino, at work in his laboratory

However, farmers say prevention was important and if vaccination helps, they would be willing to go for it. Knowledge provides the basis for all human behaviour and action. Over the coming twelve months VIVA plans to continue its work with brucellosis surveillance and improve the current knowledge base, moving forward with the involvement of all local animal health stakeholders, towards reducing zoonotic disease in this area of Malawi.



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 €296,000 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) and Mallorca (2019)

This year the VIVA Wheelers were heading to the Ballyhoura Hills on the Cork – Limerick border for the annual “Bike ‘n Hike” but like so much else COVID 19 restrictions led to a last-minute cancellation. However, our sponsors, Zoetis, generously donated their promised sponsorship of the event to VIVA.

However, some of our more enthusiastic Wheelers still headed out on the day for a spin on their own or with friends and here we present a selection of their efforts.



Tom Fabby tackles the scenic Westport to Clifden route



Joe O'Donnell (2nd from left) with his Burren Cycling Club colleagues

Rebecca Fabby took on the Ring of Beara. Here she is pictured with her peleton - L - R Ciarán Walsh, Jack Owens, Fiona McKeever, Rebecca & Paddy Lennon.





Conor Sheridan (1st on the left), for some reason posed with apple tart and custard instead of the rolling hills of Co. Meath.



Joe Collins in Ballycotton



To honour the hikers, Frank Conway conquered Carrauntoohill



Pat and Allison Kirwan in Gatabawn, Co. Kilkenny



Jim Higgins, Mike Burke & Mary Rafferty enjoy a coffee in Carrick-on-Shannon

Avolon donate €5,000 to VIVA

Dublin-based aircraft leasing company, Avolon, has again made a contribution of €5,000 to VIVA's overseas projects as part of its corporate social responsibility CARE programme. VIVA would like to thank Pat Murphy Jnr. in their Treasury Department for facilitating this very generous contribution. Coincidentally, Avolon are based in offices on the site of the old veterinary college in Ballybridge.

Incidentally, Avolon provided aircraft to transport large consignments of PPE from China in the early stages of the COVID 19 pandemic in March



Midlands Clinical Society donate €1,200 to VIVA

The Midlands Clinical Society has donated €1,200 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.

Legacy Giving

Leaving a gift of any value in your Will can make a real and lasting difference for generations to come. to the small-scale livestock farmers that VIVA works with in the Developing World.

While providing for our loved ones will be your priority, making a will is also a unique chance to provide for those causes close to our heart and leave an everlasting gift.

If you would like further information about including a gift to VIVA in your will please contact Mike Burke on 086 – 2568357 or mike@viva.ie. All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence.



The "Heifer Draw" this year raised just over €4,000. VIVA would also like to acknowledge the support of our sponsor, Duggan Veterinary Supplies in Thurles who generously sponsored all the prizes. We wish their MD, Dónal Duggan, and his staff the best of luck with the opening of their new premises in Thurles.

Heifer Draw Winners 2020

- The Heifer goes to Sadie Brennan, Ardrahan, Co Galway (Seller - Mary Coen).
- Second prize of a Weekend Away Hotel Voucher goes to Peter Sheehan, Co. Wicklow.
- Third prize of €500 to James Reilly, Cornafean, Co. Cavan (Seller - Rachel Burgess).
- And lastly, fourth prize of €250 to Pat Heraty, Westport, Co. Mayo (Seller Tom Fabby).

Thanks to everyone who bought and sold a ticket!

In a year where our other two big fundraisers, the Golf Classic and the "Bike 'n Hike" were cancelled, your support is much appreciated.

Last year we updated you on our "VIVA Heifer" from 2017, Altamira Kate, who had given birth to a calf (christened "Bó") after some infertility issues. Having been 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! This year, in April she gave birth to "Conbealy Rascal" (unassisted after last year's Caesarian). For the bull connoisseurs out there, his father is Castleview Gazelle (aka ZAG!). Kate has now gotten together with Ewdenvale Ivor (this is beginning to sound like an episode of "Downton Abbey") and is due to calve again in April 2021.



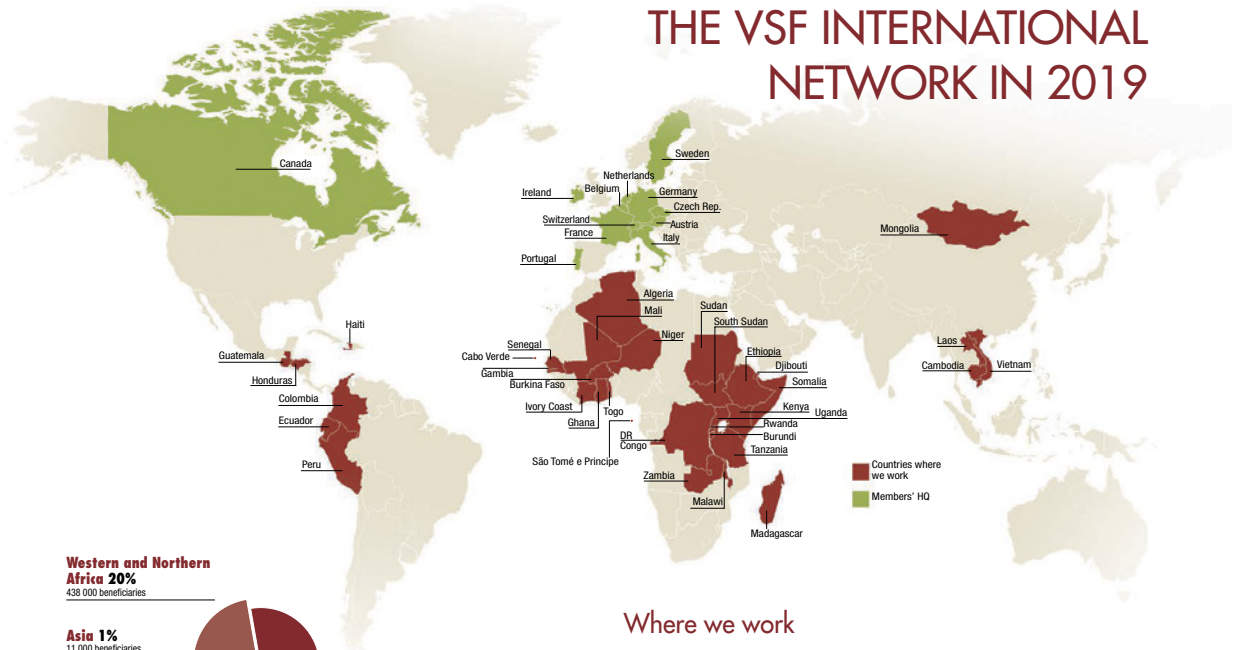
Altamira Kate and her calf

A look at the work in 2019 of Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International (VSF), of which VIVA is a member.

WHO WE ARE

Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International is a network of non-profit organisations working all over the world to support small-scale farmers, livestock keepers and local animal health and welfare initiatives.

Through the implementation of our projects and programs, we serve the most vulnerable populations whose livelihoods depend on livestock, and we act collectively to support small-scale family farming, pastoralism, animal and human health, and a healthy environment.

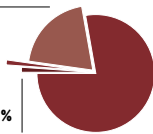


THE VSF INTERNATIONAL NETWORK IN 2019

Western and Northern Africa 20%
438 000 beneficiaries

Asia 1%
11 000 beneficiaries

Latin America & Caribbeans 1%
16 000 beneficiaries



Central, Eastern and Southern Africa 78%
1 692 000 beneficiaries

Where we work

The VSF International network supports families and farmers' organizations in **35 countries** in Africa, the Americas and Asia. In 2019, the members of VSF International reached over **2.16 million families (direct beneficiaries)**, with an overall budget of **51.1 million €**.

