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EVA Newsletter

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INFORMATION FROM THE ETHIOPIAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

THE DONKEY SKIN TRADE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

By Mr Desta Arega, Country Director, The Brooke Ethiopia

Ethiopia is home to an estimated 8.8 million donkeys, thought to be the largest number in any one country. The working livestock are critical to people's livelihoods. Research shows that owning a donkey in some of the poorest communities can mean the difference between poverty and survival.

In Ethiopia, where over 80% of people are dependent on agriculture, donkeys remain essential to ensure market access, empower women and improve social inclusion. They support agriculture and are a lifeline for multitudes of the poorest communities, thus are instrumental to the realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Highly valued skins

Donkeys are not just valued for their contribution to agriculture, their skins are also in high demand. However, the supply market equilibrium for donkey skin cannot be achieved. Although the Ejiao – a traditional Chinese remedy – industry in China is investing heavily in breeding donkeys, it cannot currently meet the demand. Donkeys are poorly suited to intensive breeding practices due to long gestation periods, low fecundity, low success rates of artificial insemination and high propensity to abortion and mortality caused by stress.

The demand for donkey skins has been blamed for halving the global donkey population and illegal traders are now casting their net widely, including to Ethiopia. Donkeys are being smuggled across the border to Kenya where more than a thousand are slaughtered each day. This illegal practice is putting Ethiopia's donkey population at risk and threatening the livelihoods of millions in rural communities.

Widespread problems

As the economy of China grows, wealthy Chinese are fueling the demand for the traditional remedy. Kenya has already experienced significant issues and our donkey population will also be decimated if smuggling is allowed to continue.

The loss of donkeys through legal and illegal skin trading undermines livelihoods, access to water and agricultural practices. The SDGs will be also compromised since they underpin survival of many dependent communities. Rampant trade in donkey skins also fuels the spread of diseases – such as anthrax, and equine flu – and compromises animal welfare due to inappropriate sourcing, handling, transportation and slaughter.

The illegal trade is contributing to grave environmental pollution from abandoned carcasses, compounded by inappropriate waste disposal at the legal slaughterhouses.

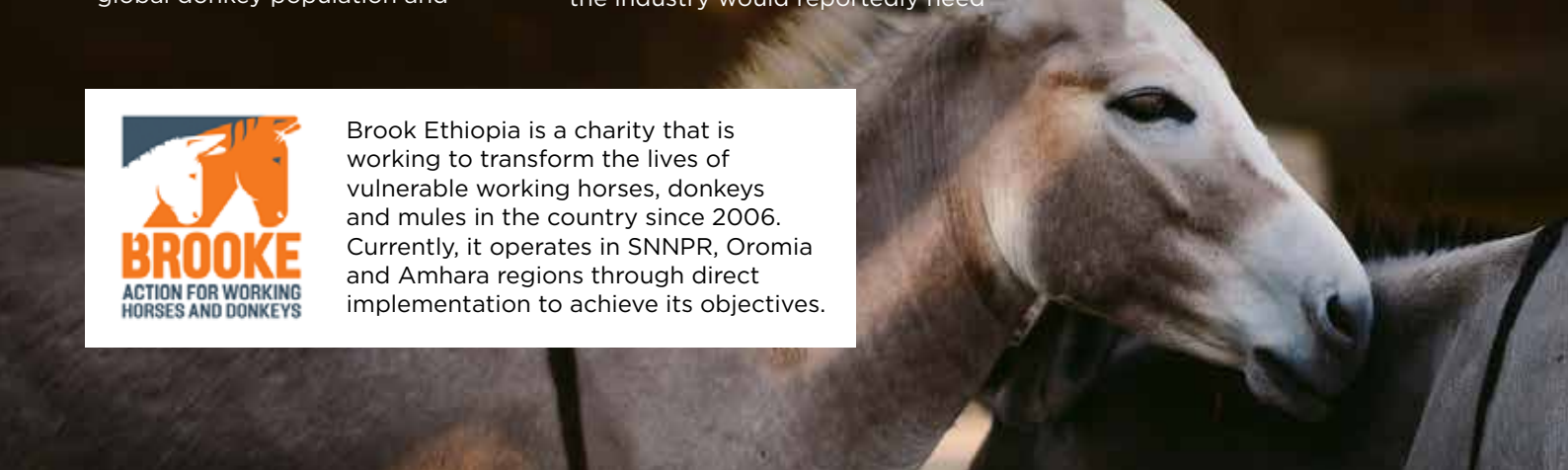
Addressing the problem

Four to five million skins are needed every year for Ejiao production, and the industry would reportedly need more than half the world's current donkeys over the next five years to meet demand. In the past six years the Ejiao industry has grown rapidly due to increased demand and price rises, with annual production increasing from 3,200 tons in 2013 to 5,600 tons in 2016 to meet demand.

Rising demand risks outstripping supply, leading to localized extinctions. Donkey populations in China have collapsed by 76% since 1992, so the industry has turned to foreign suppliers, particularly in Africa, Asia and South America.

Brooke Ethiopia had a consultative workshop with stakeholders and is pressing for an urgent halt to the largely unregulated global trade in donkey skins before the animals are virtually wiped out.

The impact of the collapse of the donkey population will be felt most keenly by those 500 million people who rely on the animals in some of the world's poorest communities. Governments and local authorities should support affected communities, by preventing the annihilation of the donkey population through increased protection from legal and illegal trade. Laws on animal movement should be enforced and mechanisms to ascertain ownership and sale at the local level enhanced to curb donkey theft. Community sensitization on impacts of donkey slaughter on their livelihoods by key stakeholders is also recommended.



BROOKE
ACTION FOR WORKING HORSES AND DONKEYS

Brook Ethiopia is a charity that is working to transform the lives of vulnerable working horses, donkeys and mules in the country since 2006. Currently, it operates in SNNPR, Oromia and Amhara regions through direct implementation to achieve its objectives.

RABIES: VACCINATE TO ELIMINATE

By Baye Ashenefe[1], Meseret Bekele[2], Getnet Yimer[3], Sylvia Murphy[4]

Rabies, a 100% vaccine preventable, yet neglected, disease, claims tens of thousands of human lives every year, mostly among underprivileged and marginalized populations in developing countries.

Rabies is a public health and socio-economic problem in Ethiopia, with many identified cases and deaths in various parts of the country. Dogs are responsible for exposure in over 90% of human cases. Governance problems in the control of the disease aggravate the problem.

In light of the high burden and socio-economic importance of the disease, Ethiopian Rabies Day was celebrated for the first time on the 10th of February 2020 at the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI). More than 250 participants attended, including: parliamentary representatives, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Agriculture, high level partners, heads of regions and other relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at national and regional levels.

The goal of the day was to increase and sustain national awareness, to encourage different sectors to get involved and organize activities that would cascade life-saving rabies information to communities. It also provided a platform to urge the government to support the implementation of national rabies prevention programs.

Dr. Ebba, Director general of EPHI, opened the event, followed by keynote addresses from Her Excellency Dr. Liya Taddesse, State Minister, Ministry of Health (MoH) and Dr. Alemayehu Mekonnen, Chief Veterinary Officer, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

In her keynote address, Dr. Liya described the issue of zoonotic diseases and the scenario in Ethiopia. She considered the National Rabies Control Strategy as a step forward while stressing the need to control the disease in dogs. Moreover, Dr. Liya suggested the need to make rabies a strong national agenda for the government.

Dr. Alemayehu indicated the need for a 'One Health' approach in rabies control and shared the status of the work of the national One Health steering committee and rabies control technical working group. In addition, Dr. Alemayehu also noted that Ethiopia has planned to eliminate rabies by 2030, and for this a National Rabies Control Strategy has been developed.

Following the keynote addresses, the workshop was formally opened by Mr. Tilahun Ayele, from FDRE, House of Representatives. In his speech, Mr. Tilahun said that the house of representatives recognizes rabies as a problem, and deliverables of the conference will be good input for policies and strategies.

Other activities included a drama show presented by young artists – showing the worst scenario of rabies in Ethiopia – and presentations on: One Health in Ethiopia, Achievements and Challenges in Rabies Prevention and Control, and National Rabies Control and Elimination Strategy and a panel discussion session.

There was also a demonstration of the established human and animal one health rabies clinic at Semien municipal health center and veterinary clinic in Addis Ababa, and a mass dog vaccination campaign against rabies.

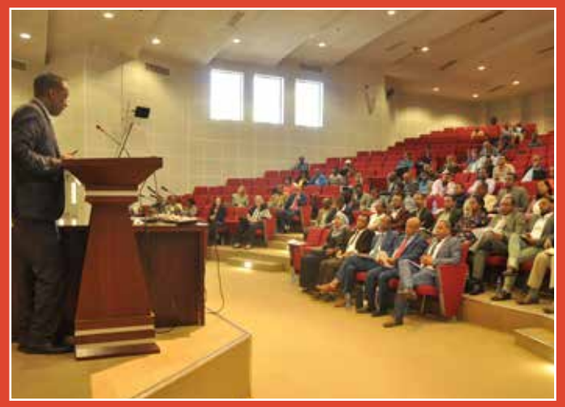
The day provided valuable information and gave participants the opportunity to exchange ideas related to rabies in Ethiopia, and how it is a critical health, social and economic issue.

Efforts made by different sectors, like MoH, EPHI, Ministry of Agriculture, CDC, Ohio State University, Addis Ababa City – Agricultural Commission, and others, were acknowledged and these organizations were encouraged to deliver more.

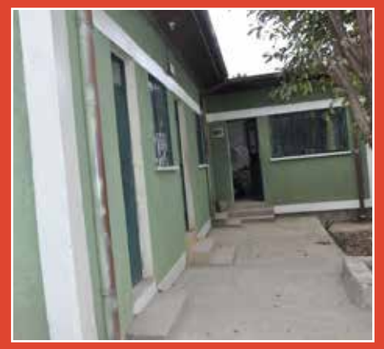
At the event high level officials understood the issue of rabies in Ethiopia and committed to further collaboration in the prevention and control of rabies in Ethiopia.

At the conclusion of the event, Dr. Liya Tadesse, Dr. Ebba Abate and Dr. Alemayehu Mekonnen, made the following points regarding the way forward:

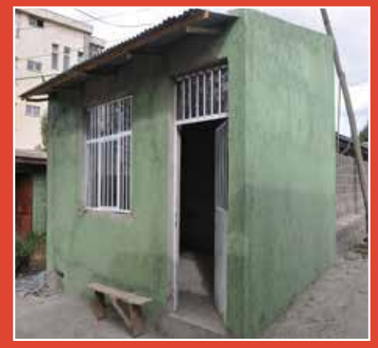
- There is a need to work on vaccine quality and quantity
- The National Rabies Control and Elimination Strategy has a great importance
- Multi-sectorial and multi-disciplinary collaboration is key in rabies as well as other zoonotic disease control
- There is a need for fundamental change at grass root level (capacity building)
- On the One-Health platform the steering committee should work on measurable outcomes
- There is an urgent need to use the media in a better way to raise community awareness
- There is a need to make rabies a strong national agenda, and its control requires prioritization of existing problems



Ethiopian Rabies Day celebrated for the first time on 10th of February 2020 at Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI)



Human and animal rabies disease counseling and treatment center



Vaccination, quarantine and sample collection facility

[1]*Ethiopian Public Health Institute,* [2]*Ministry of Agriculture,* [3]*OSU-GOHI,* [4]*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

NEW EDITION OF VETERINARY PHARMACEUTICAL MANAGEMENT MANUAL

By Dr. Solomon Kebede, Director, Veterinary drug quality standard registration and certification directorate, Veterinary Drugs and Feed Administration and Control Authority

The Veterinary drug and feed administration and control authority (VDFACA) produces different guidelines and manuals to improve its regulatory capacity and promote rational use of veterinary medicines to improve animal health services. It also conducts baseline assessments on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in animal health sectors. There are many guidelines and manuals prepared by the authority which have a great role to strengthen regulatory capacity of the authority and to promote rational use of veterinary drugs. Some of the most important guidelines and manuals include the veterinary medicines list, rational use of veterinary drug and vaccine manual, standard veterinary treatment guideline, veterinary drug and animal feed disposal directive, and veterinary pharmaceutical management manual (VPMM).

The VPMM was the first of its kind and was developed by a Core Working Group containing experts from University of Gondar, College of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences; Addis Ababa University, College of Health Science; VDFACA; and Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO). The group also drafted the new edition.

The draft document was further validated by inviting veterinary professionals working on veterinary drug procurement from each regional state and veterinary drug professionals working in veterinary drug import and wholesale.

Veterinary drugs are not only key inputs in animal health services but also one of the biggest expenditures in terms of resources and externalities. Moreover, effective and efficient pharmaceutical management of these essential resources requires that animal health workers have the right skills, knowledge, attitude, and practice. Wastage through incorrect selection and quantification, procurement, distribution, overstocking, expiry, and inappropriate use should be minimized and their use prioritized as vital, essential, none or less essential (VEN/L) classification.

The development of the VPMM is expected to greatly contribute to promoting the rational use of veterinary medicines in the country and VADACA encourages professionals to use the manual in their practice.

BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Ethiopian vets would benefit from targeted training on laboratory diagnostic testing, disease prevention, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), antibiotic sensitivity tests (ASTs), basic epidemiology and clinical procedures according to the survey conducted by vHive – the veterinary health innovation engine – at last September's EVA conference.

Beyond providing training, the study showed that strategies are also required to tackle the identified key constraints to professional development and veterinary services – lack of appropriate tools and equipment, lack of access to, or absence of, diagnostic labs and the unavailability of funds – to achieve long-term and effective interventions.

Background

The survey was developed jointly by the vHive team from the University of Surrey in England and the EVA to collect relevant data. This included general information and demographics, important diseases and diagnosis, disease prevention and biosecurity, disease control and treatment, epidemiology, One Health and disease reporting and the participants' opinions about their training needs.

A total of 243 veterinarians completed the survey, participants were mainly male, aged between 26-35 and holders of a veterinary medicine degree. Of the total respondents, just over half worked in government and about a tenth in private practice. Participation in the survey was voluntary and the questionnaire was administered electronically.

The EVA and the vHive team are grateful to everyone who took the time to complete the assessment.

Key findings

With regards to AMR, the weighted knowledge score ranged between moderate and high, with the lowest score reported for when to request (AST). Targeted training on laboratory diagnostics, AMR and AST use may help address the perceived gaps in knowledge highlighted by the respondents. It could also improve the veterinarians' knowledge on the optimal test to run for disease diagnosis, lab test result interpretation and the best antibiotic treatment to select.

Other topics considered beneficial by over half of the respondents were basic epidemiology and practical clinical skills, such as blood sample collection and conduct of general clinical exam. The reported areas of low knowledge in basic epidemiology were disease surveillance, outbreak investigation and transboundary, emerging, zoonotic, notifiable and reportable diseases.

Conducting general clinical examinations and performing simple clinical procedures (blood sampling, rectal examination, placing intravenous catheter, etc) is standard practice in the clinical sector. The clinical procedures most frequently carried out by respondents were caesarean section, pregnancy diagnosis, oestrous detection and anaesthetic procedures. Refresher training in these areas will equip veterinarians with the latest relevant skills that will enable them to make sound evidence-based clinical decisions. The survey shows that the preferred training delivery format is practical workshops.

Next steps

Due emphasis has not previously been given to enhancing the qualities and competencies of veterinary services through continuous professional development (CPD) in view of maximising the utilisation of the livestock sector.

Following the survey, the EVA, in collaboration with the A.L.P.H.A. initiative, intends to deliver skills-based professional training to veterinary practitioners, to enhance the delivery and governance of veterinary services across Ethiopia.

The full details of the study will be published in a peer reviewed paper. For more information on the topic please contact your EVA representative.

DRAFT ETHIOPIAN ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE PROCLAMATION: A PROGRESS UPDATE

Dr. Kassaw Amsalu, The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Agriculture

The need for legal support in implementing animal health and food safety standards cannot be overemphasized. Control of animal disease is achievable by establishing a sound regulatory framework and strong enforcement mechanisms.

Current Ethiopian laws related to animal health and meat safety are outdated and do not conform to World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) standards, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreements (SPS) and Codex Alimentarius.

In light of changing disease risks and occurrences, as well as scientific advances and improving international standards, current laws fail to address the situation and emerging challenges. In addition, nowadays, veterinary services regulation is set by international organizations, such as OIE.

In accordance with the power and duties given to the Ministry of Agriculture by proclamation number 1097/2019, a draft Animal Health and Welfare proclamation was prepared to strengthen the animal health service, public health, and welfare.

The Proclamation would enforce:

- The powers and duties of the Ministry and regional veterinary Authority
- Duties and responsibilities of animal health professionals
- Registration of animal health professionals and animal health service delivery
- The surveillance, prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases
- Animal identification, registration, movement control and traceability
- Veterinary laboratories
- Controlling the export, import, and transit of animals, animal products, by-products
- Safety and quality of foods of animal origin
- Animal welfare and the control of stray animals
- Other miscellaneous provisions – complaint handling, penalties and others.

In June 2018, the first stakeholder consultation was held. Accordingly, the document was refined and sent to the Attorney General and FAO legal experts for comment. In 2019, through the support of AU-IBAR, the animal health and welfare proclamation was updated by the Ministry. A legislation justification note was developed and the previous draft proclamation was evaluated and consequently, the Animal Health and Welfare Proclamation 2019 was updated.

A stakeholder validation workshop – a requirement in the legislation enactment process in Ethiopia – was held on the Newly Updated 'Animal Health and Welfare Proclamation' in November 2019, in Bishoftu Town. The workshop was coordinated by The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and conducted through the financial support of AU-IBAR. A total of 65 participants representing the public sector (veterinary service, animal production, public health), academic institutions, private sector, professional associations and NGOs attended the important workshop.

His Excellency Dr. Alemayehu Mekonnen, CVO, MoA, and Dr Bonaventure Mtei, AU-IBAR also participated. Following the workshop, the draft proclamation was submitted to the Ministry of Councils for comment. The legal department of the council then commented. The Ministry of Agriculture subsequently updated the draft legislation and resubmitted it to the Ministry of Councils.

Every aspect of The Animal Health and Welfare Proclamation was scrutinized, and important suggestions were forwarded by the participants and finally the proclamation has been endorsed.

NATIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH DIAGNOSTIC & INVESTIGATION CENTER (NAHDIC)

By: Tesfaye Rufael, Kuastros Mekonnen, Getachew Abichu, Hagos Asgedom
National Animal Health Diagnostic and Investigation Center (NAHDIC)

Since being established in 1995 as the Central Disease Investigation Laboratory (CDIL) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the organization now known as the National Animal Health Diagnostic and Investigation Center (NAHDIC), has undergone several changes in name, remit and governance.

It was originally set up with the aim of providing referral diagnostic services on animal health problems which are beyond the capacity of the regional laboratories, as well as undertaking a coordination role for those labs. Its mandate and responsibility were then changed to research – as the National Animal Health Research Center (NAHRC) – when it had an excellent track record on animal health research.

In 2007, the government revised the Center's mission once again – from research into development – its latest name was introduced, and the Ministry of Agriculture took on responsibility for it. The NAHDIC is an ISO 17025 accredited national reference laboratory, as well as Designated Regional Support Laboratory for the eastern Africa Region. The NAHDIC now strives to be an internationally accepted center of excellence in veterinary laboratory services.

What are the mandates?

- Generate internationally acceptable laboratory diagnostic test results for the certification of export animals, animal products and by-products to make the country competent in the international markets.
- Coordinate and perform national surveillances and diagnosis of transboundary animal diseases of economic and public health importance whose occurrence could lead to the prohibition of trade.
- Build the technical capacity of the regional veterinary laboratories in the country, which closely address the smallholder farming and pastoral community.
- Deliver training for regional veterinary laboratory personnel, field animal health professionals, abattoir workers, quarantine personnel, university students and others.
- Deliver regional diagnostic services for avian flu and Newcastle Disease, and provide technical support for East African National Laboratories.
- Gather, organize and document the country's animal health information to assist the development of a strategic plan for animal disease prevention and control.
- Contribute to the expansion of high-quality veterinary education through its support in providing practical training, supervision and advisory activities for post and undergraduate students from different universities in the country.
- Participate in preparation and implementation of animal health policies.

What are the Facilities?

NAHDIC has fourteen laboratories that actively function in various disciplines.

- Six laboratories are engaged in the field of Microbiology (viral and bacterial serology, mycology and bacteriology, virus isolation laboratories, molecular biology laboratory, sequence and bioinformatics laboratory)
- Seven parasitology-pathology laboratories (protozoology, acarology entomology, helminthology, fish diseases, honey bee, pharmacology-toxicology laboratory and pathology with its autopsy facilities)
- One Biosafety Level-3 (BSL-3) laboratory for the diagnosis of emerging and re-emerging zoonotic diseases. It has supported confirmation of diseases like Anthrax, TB and Ebola. It is currently engaged in diagnosis of COVID-19.

NAHDIC also has a state-of-the-art sequencing machine called Illumina and is endowed with an epidemiology unit, ICT, GIS facilities, incinerators and standby generators. The center has implemented a laboratory information management system (SILAB) which automates and traces every laboratory process, starting from sample reception and running up to the creation of the test report to customers according to the time frame stated in the citizens charter. On top of that, it has standard experimental and laboratory animal facilities to conduct animal health experiments. The center has built and completed a standard training and conference hall.

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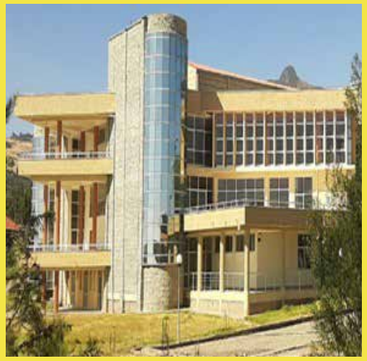

NAHDIC partners

NAHDIC has links with relevant organizations:

- National – NVI, Regional Veterinary laboratories, Universities, AHRI, AAU, EPHI, EIAR, ESA, ENAO, EVA, etc.
- Regional – AU-IBAR, national laboratories in Eastern Africa, etc.
- International – OIE, FAO, Ohio State University, Cambridge University, Pennsylvania University, IAEA, DTRA, USAID, CDC, CIRAD, OVI, WRFMD-TPI and VLA UK, ISZAM, Teramo, etc.

NAHDIC Quality Management System

As a national and referral laboratory, NAHDIC started implementation of ISO/IEC 17025:2005 in 2008. Currently NAHDIC is accredited for nine test methods in its serology, bacteriology and molecular biology laboratories.

The center was accredited by the Ethiopian National Accreditation Organization (ENAO) in 2019, having previously, been accredited by SANAS (South African National Accreditation System). NAHDIC has 20 technical signatories approved by ENAO. This enables the center to attain competency through releasing quality and reliable test results. The quality of test results has been assured by regular participation in proficiency tests (PT) and inter-laboratory testing arranged by international and national providers.

NAHDIC is designated as the Eastern Africa regional support laboratory for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and Newcastle Disease (ND). This designation was given by Eastern Africa community and representatives from EARLN member states based on different criteria. Moreover, NAHDIC is currently engaged in a twinning project with OIE towards becoming a regional referral lab for CBPP and FMD. To accomplish these regional responsibilities, NAHDIC in collaboration with technical partners is working towards strengthening its capacity to provide efficient and quality support service. In addition, the center has been also selected as a regional support laboratory for other Trans-boundary Animal Disease (TADs).

NAHDIC conducts capacity building and technical support to national laboratories in the region. It provides training for animal health professionals from different countries in the region on different topics such as foot and mouth disease, avian influenza and other transboundary animal diseases. NAHDIC staff also participated on international workshops, training and conference worldwide to develop its capacity.

INTRODUCING ANDREW TERWIN, NEW COUNTRY LEAD FOR ETHIOPIA

Andrew Terwin guides the in-country Zoetis team to effectively advance productivity of smallholder livestock farmers in Ethiopia through access to proper vet care and diagnostics services.

1. When did you begin your role as Country Lead and what did you do before taking this job?

I have been involved with the veterinary export business for the past 18 years. Having spent six of those years living in Kenya, Ethiopia is familiar to me although I haven't had the opportunity to travel to Ethiopia in the past few years. I re-joined Zoetis on 1st March as Country Lead for Ethiopia. My previous role, a few years ago, with Pfizer/Zoetis was Business Unit Lead for export, pigs and poultry and I was based in South Africa. Key regions during this time were: Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

2. What are your goals for the rest of 2020?

Our goals for 2020 are to develop our activities in Ethiopia around our three A.L.P.H.A. key pillars: availability of veterinary medicines and services, veterinary diagnostics, training and education for two key portfolios: poultry and ruminants. For ruminants, our focus is on the supply of quality products and education. Poultry we will concentrating on the development of rural poultry farmers through effective vaccination programs, diagnostics and education.

Finally, we are planning to establish two or three diagnostics laboratories in Ethiopia this year to support the ruminants and poultry industries. Providing lasting infrastructure like this, alongside training and education, is a key part of the A.L.P.H.A. initiative's aims.

We are committed to enabling farmers in Ethiopia to have access to veterinary diagnostic services. Our goal is to ensure farmers' investments are secure and sustainable, helping their own lives, and the local and the national economies.

3. What are the biggest challenges for the animal health industry in Ethiopia and how will the A.L.P.H.A. initiative help?

To me there a few key challenges that we are focusing on in the year ahead:

1) The value of using quality products
2) A better understanding of the diseases the farmers are dealing with in Ethiopia
3) How we can improve the general standard of the herd for the farmer be it for reproduction or slaughter through education and appropriate use of vaccines and medicines

We are applying what we have learnt from the A.L.P.H.A. initiative across Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania and, of course, Ethiopia, to achieve lasting results. The steps we are taking are to ensure we can continue to build the infrastructure needed to help veterinarians and farmers to improve the health and productivity of their livestock and livelihoods.

I look forward to working alongside the members of the EVA, as well as the farmers and many others involved in the livestock industry in Ethiopia.