

Improving Basic Services and Capacity Building in Uruzgan – Animal Health and Production Component

Donor / contractor	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Royal Netherlands Embassy
Budget	€ 184,401 (inception phase); € 1,782,725 (revised)
Period	July 2008 – April 2009 (inception); April 2009 – March 2013
Area	Province of Uruzgan
Partner	AVA (Afghanistan Veterinary Association)

In 2006, three Dutch NGOs combined forces and founded the Dutch Consortium for Uruzgan (DCU). This partnership proved to be successful in its first joint project. Therefore in 2008 two other NGOs joined the Dutch Consortium for Uruzgan, amongst which was DCA-VET. The current partners of DCU are Save the Children, HealthNet-TPO, Cordaid, ZOA, and DCA-VET. Together they submitted a project proposal to the Dutch Embassy in Afghanistan. In July 2008, the inception phase was started of what would become the DCU-2 project.

The DCU-2 project started on 1 May 2009 with a time frame of four years. In this project, DCA-VET works on the improvement of the animal health and productivity of the Uruzgan livestock. DCA-VET contracted the Afghanistan Veterinary Association (AVA) to implement part of the field work. DCA-VET takes care of the management and supervision of the work of AVA and training of new paravets.

Uruzgan already had seven veterinary field units, previously supported by AVA or Mercy Corps. Ten new VFUs were established to ensure that all farmers in Uruzgan can rely on veterinary services. To increase the number of professional VFU staff (and to replace retired or retreated paravets) some 17 new paravets were trained. AVA has trained an additional 30 basic veterinary workers who perform the basic animal care in remote areas.

At the start of the project, all VFUs received the necessary veterinary equipment, a refrigerator for storage of vaccines, and a motorbike to visit the farmers. In 2011, a store of VetServ – provider of quality vaccines and medicines – has been established in Uruzgan. From this store, the VFU staff can buy their monthly package of vaccines and medicines.

Some VFU staffs and technicians were trained in laboratory techniques to be able to diagnose animal diseases which cannot be diagnosed by simple clinical examinations. Other VFU staffs and technicians received training in artificial insemination (AI) and pregnancy tests in order to increase cattle production. Artificial Insemination aims at improving the local cow breeds, for Uruzgan breeds of cows do not produce much milk or meat. In theory, most VFUs are now well-equipped to offer the farmers AI as well laboratory services. However, in practice it is difficult to assess the results of the lab and AI activities of VFUs in the non-secure areas of Uruzgan.

One of the main reasons for animal mortality in Uruzgan is starvation during the harsh winter period. To reduce animal mortality in winter yearly 160 to 180 tons of concentrated feeds are distributed for a subsidised price among the poorest farmers of the nine Uruzgan districts.

In 2011, the VFUs were trained in extension to increase the awareness of farmers of animal husbandry, and the importance of treatment and preventive care of their animals. In 2012, this extension is intensified to train more farmers how to increase the health and productivity of their livestock.

New elements in 2012 were a pilot project on poultry vaccination and poultry breeding, and a campaign to refurbish barns to improve living conditions of the livestock.

The 31st of March 2013 the project was finalised. Veterinary services in Uruzgan have been significantly improved. Key results are the 28 capable VFU staff and 45 Basic Veterinary Workers, the VetServ store of quality medicines and vaccines, and the enthusiastic and enterprising VFU cooperative.