

25th Anniversary: DCA-VET 1988 – 2013

Twenty-five years ago, in September 1988, DCA-VET established a veterinary training centre in Peshawar, Pakistan to initiate and support the delivery of private veterinary services in Afghanistan. At that time, Afghanistan was a dangerous environment for international development organizations. In Peshawar, DCA-VET trained the first Afghan paravets who, after the graduation, returned to their home villages to start Veterinary Field Units (VFUs), and to offer their services in providing animal health care to their fellow livestock owners, with support from DCA-VET.

Now, 25 years later, DCA-VET is still extremely committed to support Afghan livestock owners in many provinces in Afghanistan by improving the health and productivity of their animals. During the past 25 years, a lot has been changed, but the basic elements of the DCA-VET programme have remained the same: training of paravets, establishment, support, and monitoring of Veterinary Field Units, extension training for livestock owners on animal management and production, and disease monitoring. Through the years the focus has largely shifted from paravet training and VFU development towards VFU sustainability. To increase the self sustainability of VFU staff more emphasis is now placed on extension to raise the awareness of farmers on the benefits the VFU services can offer them. And new refresher courses for VFU staff have been developed to increase the range of services the VFUs can provide to livestock owners, e.g. advice on nutrition, or on harvesting of cashmere and wool, and artificial insemination of cows.

For the past 25 years, many donors have enabled DCA-VET to pursue and implement its mission: healthy and productive animals for all farmers in Afghanistan. Therefore, DCA-VET is very grateful and would like to thank all respective donors for the valuable support it has received, and the ongoing support it can still count on. The impact of the donor funding is considerable. There are at present some 1,000 VFUs active in Afghanistan of which about 500 are still supported by DCA-VET projects. Thousands of farmers have found their way to the VFUs, resulting in increased animal production, and reduced mortality of their animals (20-30% reduction according to a recent impact assessment). Improved food security for rural Afghans and more income for Afghan farmers are the major results of the DCA-VET program over the past 25 years.

DCA-VET plans to celebrate its 25th Anniversary with a symposium for officials from the Government of Afghanistan and donor representatives in Kabul. During that occasion we will look back to what has been achieved and which lessons have been learned, as we also look forward to the challenges that remain, for DCA-VET's mission is not yet completed.

Further news on the Celebration will follow.

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