

DCA-VET Launches a New Livestock Extension Package on Veterinary Public Health

As part of a series of extension packages that promote livestock development at grassroots level, DCA launched a new package on Veterinary Public Health on 09 Oct 2013. This extension package focuses on zoonotic diseases (diseases that transmit from animals to human being).

Over 165 people took part in the launching conference. Participants included veterinary field units' staff, provincial agriculture extension workers, provincial public health department staff, Provincial Veterinary Officers, DCA field monitors and staff of partner organizations from Herat, Ghor, Badghis and Farah Provinces in Western Afghanistan.

The workshop was opened by recitation of Quran (prayers) and National Anthem of Afghanistan followed by a welcome speech by Dr. Raymond Briscoe, Executive Director of DCA.

Official opening speeches were conducted by Mr. Faqir Ahmad Biangar (General Director of Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Herat Province), Mr. Abdul Naser Aswadi (Director of Economy Department of Herat Province), Dr. Mohammad Asef Kabir (Deputy Director of Department of Public Health, Herat Province) and Dr. Shoaib Shakhes (Dean of the Veterinary Faculty, Herat University).

Speakers acknowledged the effectiveness of the privatized veterinary field units' model of DCA to expand veterinary services including reaching remotely located insecure areas. They also highlighted the importance of veterinary public health as 49% of highly pathogenic human diseases are transmitted through animals or animal products.

“We have been fighting the wrong war in the last decades; says Mr. Biangar, Director of Herat DAIL “the war we need to fight is poverty and public health; this can be achieved through improving awareness of our people about health and production of their livestock”.

The directors promised to support DCA and other organizations to build synergy thereby enhancing impact and scale of the efforts towards improvement of the communities' livelihood.

The conference will continue for 2 days whereby the core extension team who led development of the package will facilitate presentations, group discussions and role plays. DCA will organize similar conferences in Kabul, Mazar and Badakhshan to roll out the package in the Central, Northern and North Eastern Regions of Afghanistan, respectively.

The extension package was developed based on a thorough consultation and discussion with farmers and herders, livestock traders, slaughterhouse operators, butchers, paravets, provincial public health and veterinary officers and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) in Kabul. The final draft of the package was reviewed and approved by MAIL. After collection of sufficient information from relevant stakeholders, DCA organized a writeshop with the extension core team to put the information together and develop an appropriate extension package. Final technical edits were made by Prof. Ezatullah Jahid of Kabul University, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.



Fig. 1 Participants of the conference standing while the national anthem was running



Fig. 2. Visits to farmers, livestock markets/traders, slaughtering operators and butchers in the development of the zoonoses extension package



Fig. 3. Writeshop of the extension package organized in Herat

So far DCA has developed and rolled-out 4 extension packages: small ruminants herd health package, large ruminants herd health package, poultry health and husbandry package, and gender package (the role of women in livestock health and production). Dairy extension package, pastoralist livestock development package, and food hygiene and food-borne diseases of animal origin are in the pipeline.