

PUM Netherlands senior experts

BUILDING ANIMAL HEALTH SERVICE CAPACITIES IN ARMENIA

In 2013, CARD initiated and implemented a needs assessment of the Armenian private veterinary sector to reveal the challenges and problems encountered by the local veterinarians. To address these problems and enhance the private veterinary sector in Armenia, CARD undertook several measures among them implementation of the capacity building programs through local and foreign experts.



As part of the initiative, CARD, in the frame of the “Animal Health Management in Cross-border Areas of Armenia and Georgia” project funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), invited Dr. Robert Back and Dr. Wim de Jong from the PUM Netherlands Senior Experts to conduct a two-week training sessions for local veterinarians and a three-day joint-workshop for the Armenian and Georgian veterinarians.

The trainings provided by the experts were aimed at improving the livestock management and disease prevention capacities in Armenia. In total, 65 veterinarians participated from the Shirak, Lori, Tavush, Aragatsotn, Gegharkunik and Syunik regions of Armenia.

The topics covered during the sessions were: feeding and housing of dairy cattle; calf rearing; herd health management; disease prevention and control; reproduction management; feed ratio balance; milking and milk hygiene and silage production.



Apart from the classroom sessions, the PUM experts had on-farm visits to provide additional consultation on feeding and housing, as well as on feed ratio improvement.

During their mission visit, the PUM experts had a great contribution to another significant event—they conducted the joint-workshop under the auspices of the ADA-funded “Animal Health Management in Cross-border Areas of Armenia and Georgia” project. The event was attended by nearly 30 veterinarians from the cross-border areas of Armenia (Lory and Shirak) and Georgia (Kvemo-Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions).

Dr. Robert Back and Dr. Wim de Jong made presentations and tackled issues on livestock management and trans-boundary disease prevention followed by the question and answer sessions.

The workshop served as a good opportunity for sharing knowledge and experience. Upon the completion, all the veterinarians from both countries were handed certificates of participation.

It is worth to mention that this was Dr. Robert Back’s last mission in Armenia. *“It makes me very emotional that my “PUM life” has ended for the reason of my age. For more than 3 years I was in Armenia and working together with the CARD staff members was unforgettable. My “PUM-Armenia life” is a very important part in my whole life”*, said Dr. Back.

The PUM experts Dr. Robert Back and Dr. Wim de Jong have accomplished a number of missions for the animal breeding and animal health sector in Armenia starting from 2011.

Apart from their main mission to teach and train the Armenian farmers and veterinarians, they introduced several Dutch-based companies to CARD experts through business link trips and helped these companies to enter the Armenian market. One of the companies is the Trouw Nutrition which produces feed additives, concentrates and milk replacers designed for improving the productivity, weight gain, and fertility and health conditions of dairy cattle. The products are available in all regions of Armenia and thousands of farmers already benefit.

Within the PUM-supported business link trip, another Dutch company was introduced to CARD- the Barenbrug which produces hay and forage seeds. As a result, three types of forage seeds have been tested in different parts of Armenia and many farmers started to cultivate in larger plots.

ONE REGION, ONE HEALTH CONFERENCE

The idea to organize the “**One Region, One Health**” conference was developed when the PUM experts Dr. Robert Back and Dr. Wim de Jong and CARD specialists had joint discussions on issues regarding **the Animal Identification and Registration, Strategy for Control and Prevention of Brucellosis and Anthrax as well as the Improvement of Animal Infection Diseases Diagnostic System**. The name of the conference “One Region, One Health” was suggested by Dr. Robert Back.

On May, 2014, CARD Foundation hosted the “One Region, One Health” regional conference in the frame of the “Animal Health Management In Cross-Border Areas of Armenia and Georgia” project financed by the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). The event served as a best platform for Armenia and Georgia to exchange experience and jointly address animal health issues still encountered and identical in both countries.



A total of 80 participants from the Armenian and Georgian state, private and NGO sector attended the conference.

Among the honorary guests present were: the RA Minister of Agriculture Mr. Sergo Karapetyan, the RA deputy Minister Mr. Armen Harutyunyan, the deputy Minister of Georgia Mr. Illa Kvitaishvili, Chief Veterinary Officer, deputy Head of Agency-Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia- Mr. Mikheil Sokhadze, Head of ADA Office for the South Caucasus Dr. Gunther Zimmer, USDA consultant Valerie E. Ragan, DVM, USDA AH project coordinator Lindsay Malecha, Debby Reynolds, Dr. Rudolf Moser from AgrarMarket, Austria and *Dr. Marcel Mirck* from the PUM Netherlands Senior Experts.

The two day conference was aimed at establishing links between the Ministries of Agriculture of Armenia and Georgia to enhance the animal disease control services and the efficiency of animal health practices through the exchange of information and coordination of joint activities.

The PUM supported the event by recommending and financing the visit of the PUM expert Dr. Marcel Mirck, one of the keynote speakers of the conference, to present **the Improvement of Animal Infection Diseases Diagnostic System** topic to the audience.

Based on the group discussions the PUM expert had with the representatives from both countries on the improvement of animal health diseases diagnostic system, *Dr. Mirck* separated three subjects that need to be improved: **the lack of knowledge on the different levels of diagnostic organizations, reliability of results and the sample delivery.**



“I would like to thank CARD for the invitation and the PUM for supporting this invitation. This was a very useful workshop. I think sitting together and talking to the representatives from Armenia and Georgia was very useful to understand the situation in both countries”, said Dr. Mirck.

After the conference Dr. Mirck visited several state veterinary laboratories as well as the Farm and Veterinary Service Center in Sarnkunq village established by CARD Foundation to provide on-job consultancy and conduct trainings.

