

BUILDING PRIVATE EXTENSION SERVICE CAPACITIES IN GEORGIA

The “Animal Health Management in Cross-Border Areas of Armenia and Georgia” project financed by the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) is jointly implemented by the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) Foundation in Armenia and by the Heifer Georgia International in Georgia. The project is aimed at improving the economic viability at cross-border areas of Armenia and Georgia through awareness building campaigns on prevention and control of trans-boundary diseases, improvement of herd management strategies and development of private veterinary business capacities through application of new techniques and establishment of the Farm and Veterinary Service Centers (FVSCs).



The new model of the private extension veterinary and farm services established by CARD Foundation was supported also through the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) starting from 2011 in Shirak and Lori regions.

To replicate the model in Georgia as well, in the frame of the ADC funded project, the opening of one such Center was launched on May 27th in Ninotsminda region of Georgia. This is the second Farm and Veterinary Service Center after Dmanisi (Kvemo Kartli region) funded by ADC with the Project.



These Centers are to serve and consult local farmers in animal health management through the trained veterinarians. In addition, it is equipped with veterinary equipment and tools needed to provide with high quality animal health and artificial insemination services, small agricultural equipment, high quality farm input supplies, basic tools for animal artificial insemination and animal health medicines which will greatly contribute to providing proper and timely veterinary services. The Centers will also be a venue for conducting community meetings and trainings, for sharing news and information on advanced



technologies in the sector.

"The Ninotsminda Farm and Veterinary Service Center is one of the first in Georgia to provide better access of farmers in cross border areas to high quality farm and veterinary services. This veterinary unit is unique by its set up and operations, it will provide private veterinary services and be managed by local veterinary association. I hope that this model will be replicated in other regions of Georgia", concluded the professor of the Georgian Agrarian University Mr. Tengiz Kurashvili.

"Animal Health Management in Cross-Border Areas of Armenia and Georgia" focused primary on

shifting from traditional farming to new animal husbandry approaches, such as (a) herd and labour management; (b) reproduction; (c) housing and environment; (d) nutrition; (e) calf rearing; (f) trans-boundary animal diseases prevention and control. Stakeholders from private and public sectors were involved in the project. While the project targeted veterinarians, animal and artificial insemination specialists, farmers and households, the indirect beneficiary list is rather big, including commercial farmers, private vet specialists, community self-governing bodies, Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs and international organizations involved in animal health improvement and disease control, medicine, tools and veterinary supply providers/sellers.

Through a comprehensive trainings program the project have supported the

transition of low-profile vets involved mainly in vaccination activities to the highly professional specialists , providing a wide range of services accessible for all 4 regions (more than 300,000 households) with the base of modern Farm Service Centers and Veterinary Service Units enhanced with knowledge and supply, veterinary associations with explicit development goals are among the considerable achievements.

- *60 veterinarians from Armenia and Georgia have participated in more than 20 training classes led by local and international experts (AGES, Austria, PUM Netherlands, WWS United States, USDA, etc);*
- *Four joints workshops of Armenian and Georgian veterinarians and Governments representatives led by international experts were conducted.*
- *Regional Conference "One Region, One Health" represented by Georgian, Armenian, Austrian, USA organizations, Government officials was conducted first time in the region.*
- *Four veterinary Associations were established in Shirak, Lori regions of Armenia, Kvemo Kartli, Samskhe Javakheti regions of Georgia. The associations were supported by veterinary tools and equipment;*
- *Four Farm and Veterinary Service Centers (two in Armenia and two in Georgia are providing services to local farmers and cooperating with State agencies (Ministry of Agriculture, Food Safety Agencies).*