



Background

Healthy animals mean health and food security for all Mongolians and livelihood security for a quarter of the population. The Swiss-funded Animal Health Project (AHP) is aimed at improving Mongolia's animal-health system by aligning the national veterinary service with international standards and establishing efficient control programmes for brucellosis and foot-and-mouth disease. These efforts are coupled with the implementation of programmes to strengthen formal veterinary education in Mongolia.



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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Project name:

Animal Health Project (AHP)

Period:

2012-2015

Target group / beneficiaries:

- National veterinary service
- Private veterinarians
- Institutions involved in veterinary education

Budget:

CHF 5.9 million

SDC's strategic objective:

To contribute to improved and more secure livelihoods of herders and ex-herders in rural areas focusing on improving sustainable use and rehabilitation of natural resources and supporting ecologically-oriented social and economic development.

Traditionally, the livestock sector has been an integral part of Mongolian culture and at present generates 80 percent of the agricultural sector's total income, providing livelihood security for more than 800,000 people. The number of livestock in Mongolia has risen dramatically in the past few years, reaching more than 40 million in 2012.

Major problems affecting the livestock sector include low animal productivity and low-quality animal products, inadequate animal health services, degraded pastureland, unsustainable stocking rates, limited access to markets and underdeveloped value chains, resulting in low overall sectoral competitiveness.



PROJECT GOAL

To contribute to improve the Mongolian animal health system and make it more effective

OUTCOME 1: POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Mongolia has solid and well organized veterinary services in accordance with OIE standards, with well trained personnel.

OUTCOME 2: COST EFFECTIVE DISEASE CONTROL

Mongolian authorities have the necessary skills and tools to control brucellosis and foot and mouth disease (FMD).

OUTCOME 3: FORMAL EDUCATION

The formal veterinary education is based on a state-of-the-art curriculum and is taught by competent male and female teachers.

Project activities:

Supporting policy development in the livestock sector

In 2007 and 2010, the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) conducted analyses of Mongolian veterinary services using international assessment frameworks. On completion, they recommended changes to the legal structure to ensure more effective decision-making in veterinary practices. Conducive policy and legal environments are the key to the development of both

the animal and public health sectors.

The AHP guides policymakers in developing and implementing new laws for animal health which are in accordance with international standards. This includes consultation with relevant stakeholders and capacity building at the ministerial level through twinning activities with Swiss competence centres.

Cost-effective disease control and prevention

Brucellosis and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) are among the most critical livestock diseases in Mongolia. Brucellosis is of concern because of its potential risk to public health and because it causes livestock to miscarry and leads to reduced overall productivity among infected herds. At present, Mongolia has one of the highest brucellosis rates in the world, in both humans and animals. FMD prevents access to international markets and causes a high level of livestock losses among infected herds, placing affected herders' livelihoods at risk.

The AHP supports the Mongolian government in developing and implementing adequate control strategies for these two diseases. In relation to brucellosis, that strategy is based on the One-Health approach, which requires collaboration between the medical and veterinary sectors and includes whole-herd vaccinations followed up by vaccination

coverage monitoring. In relation to FMD, authorities are supported in achieving FMD-free status in the western aimags, in maintaining this status through movement control and surveillance, and in expanding that disease-free zone eastwards through the formulation of a needs-based control strategy.

In accordance with AHP advice, whole-herd brucellosis vaccinations using eye-drop vaccines were conducted in 2012. A total of 14 million goats and sheep and 1.2 million cattle were vaccinated. In order to monitor the success of the control strategy, the AHP helped to set up field studies to assess the level of vaccination coverage and to estimate the rate of brucellosis infection in people. This effort was made possible through the collaboration of 17 aimag veterinarians and medical doctors, who have been receiving training since June 2012.

Formal veterinary education

The needs of the livestock sector have been changing, and veterinarians of the future need to be well trained in issues related to herd health, food safety and infectious disease control. This means that the current curriculum and teaching methods must be updated so they align with international standards.

To support the School of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology (SVMB) in this endeavour,

the AHP facilitated an external review of the curriculum. This review provided the basis with which to assess the competencies of graduate veterinarians, to identify the training needs of SVMB teaching staff, and to prioritise investments in teaching facilities. The AHP provides training through workshops and twinning activities with Swiss schools, which in 2012 have included a study tour to Switzerland for nine SVMB teachers and students.

PARTNERS:

Implementing organisations:

- Ministry of Industry and Agriculture and its agencies
- Ministry of Health and its agencies
- School of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology

Project partners:

- National NGOs
- Government ministries and agencies
- Development organisations

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