

CASE STUDY 20

IF FLOCKS MOVE AHEAD, RURAL LIFE GETS BETTER

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Sector: Agriculture

CONTEXT

The agriculture sector has been the engine of growth and continues to contribute for about half of GDP in Albania. Livestock production is important for the development of agricultural economy. The small ruminant's population is almost three million. Small ruminants are the main animals held in the mountain area farms and in many cases the only source for survival or subsistence.

Most Albanian farmers in the mountainous areas are predominantly subsistence farmers. Their livestock farming provides food for the family or the village community and then it is for sale to the local market. The farms are managed and maintained as a family business, using family land, housing facilities and family labour. The husbandry system is extensive and the Small Ruminants production is not optimized.

Enterotoxaemia is an internationally renowned disease that causes severe losses in flocks and production. From previous studies in Albania, in case of disease outbreaks it is noted that the prevalence of mortality in the flock ranges from 5-15%, while the production loss reaches up to 30%. A recent study in Kukes region has shown that about 80% of farms in the Has-district encounter problems of this disease, 8% of farms in the Kukes-district and all (!) interviewed farmers in Tropoje-district.

The main reasons for this are:

- Lack of animal identification and registration system;
- Private veterinary services badly organized;
- A lack of connection and trust among the farmers, input suppliers and government structures.

Based on the farmer needs assessment in the sub sector analysis and following a dialog among all the actores, we reached the conclusion that an animal identification and registration system needs to be established. This should be done in cooperation with the state and private veterinary services. The technical and institutional capacities of these services need to be strengthened in order to achieve efficient and reliable veterinary service for the animal disease control in small ruminants.

CLIENTS AND PARTNERS

The Directorate of Animal Health and Plant Protection and the Food Safety and Veterinary Institute at national level, as well as the Agriculture Department in the Kukes region are responsible for the arrangements and implementation of these project activities. SNV commenced its advisory work with these departments in the formulation of the program/objectives to be achieved by the implementation of "*Support to Improve Productivity and Health of Small Ruminants in Kukes Region*". Through the initial contacts all the stakeholders involved in this process understood the need for:

- Multi-stakeholder collaboration in the implementation of the small ruminants tagging and vaccination;
- A detailed program with a clear project logical frame work;
- An awareness campaign on the farmers community;
- Co-investment of the stakeholders;
- Monitoring and evaluation processes.

A Project Coordinating Committee was established. This group was composed of staff from the Directorate of Animal Health and Plan Protection, Animal Health Sector, Department of Epidemiology, Regional Veterinary Sector of Kukes, representatives of District Veterinary Office, representatives of private veterinarians and SNV advisors.

INTERVENTION LOGIC AND METHOD

- Facilitate an understanding of the intervention logic based interrelation between the small ruminants sector development, family incomes and poverty in the region;
- Facilitate the formulation of programme objectives and tasks that were to be achieved through this project;
- Coordinate the activities with the Department of Epidemiology, Identification and Registration and the Regional Veterinary Sector of Kukesi, as well as the liaison with the Animal Health and Plant Protection;
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder processes within the Small Ruminant value chain;
- Provide advisory service and technical assistance for the implementation of project activities on enterotoxaemia vaccination; traceability system of small ruminants; monitoring of vaccination campaign; strengthening the technical and institutional capacity of public and private veterinary services; farmer awareness campaign and public information;



- Supervise and verify that the different project activities are properly implemented on time and technical requirements are met;
- Provide advisory services and technical assistance concerning procurement of supported equipments and facilities required for the project implementation;
- Review and provide technical assistance for the operational plan of the enterotoxaemia vaccination, the workshop, the technical report of Identification and Registration and the technical report on the vaccination campaign;
- Ensure that the cooperation and priorities are adequately reflected and addressed during the implementation of the projects;
- The Project Coordination Committee acts as focal point to coordinate and follow up all the related correspondence;
- Organize project opening and closing workshops;
- Facilitate and coordinate to the relevant training for private veterinarians (field operators) on aspects of the Identification and Registration system and enterotoxaemia vaccination in small ruminants;
- Participate and assist the Project Coordinating Committee in the decision-making and the consultation process of the implementation of project activities, including on-the-job training;
- Participate and collaborate, including on-the-job training, with the project staff in the preparation of the inception report, the monthly reports and the final report to be submitted as required.



OUTCOME

The major outcomes of the project are:

- The Identification and Registration programme enabled the identification and registration of farms and animals.
- All small ruminants are identified with ear tags and all farms are registered according to Identification and Registration national system, in compliance with EU guideline. All data of farms registration and animal identification are analyzed and presented in a final report.
- In targeted areas all small ruminants were vaccinated and all records were analyzed and presented in a final report.

- The operational plan document including strategy issues, instruction of vaccine cold chain, instruction of vaccine administration, instruction of animal identification and farm registration and instruction of data recording.
- The awareness campaign for the farmers' community successfully delivered the information on disease control, vaccination benefits, farm hygiene and farm bio-security and obtains the farmers participation for infectious diseases control in small ruminants.

Outputs

- 3,292 farmers (in 165 villages) benefited from the program; this number accounts for 90% of the total number of Small Ruminant farmers.
- 80,177 sheep and goats tagged, accounting for 87% of total number.
- 363 farmers benefited from the state subsidy schemes; this number accounts for 95% of the number of farmers who had the allowed flock size. A financial value amounted ALL 15,120,000 (EUR 112,000) disbursed from the state subsidy schemes to the target areas;
- 49,966 sheep and goats vaccinated; this number accounts 50% of total number.
- Awareness level for the program varies from 60-100%.



Outcomes:

- The creation of the basis for the development of an integrated system of animal movement control, traceability and improved product quality and food safety;
- The system is the basis for the ongoing veterinary service planning to eradicate infectious diseases of small ruminants;
- Immediate inclusion of farmers in the state subsidy schemes increased the interest of farmers to be engaged on Small Ruminants and the interest of Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection (MoAFCP) to create more profiting spaces by farmers in the 2011 subsidy scheme;
- Improved Animal Health and decreased mortality. This year it's expected that the region will have less infected flock compared to the previous period before the program; this indicator will be measured during the spring time.
- Reduced economic losses associated with disease adverse effects;
- Strengthened technical and institutional capacity of private and public veterinary services on planning, implementation and monitoring of quality veterinary services, as well as becoming aware of the need for a new organization of private veterinary services;
- Increased efficiency and reliability of the veterinary service for the animal disease control in small ruminants.
- The quality of medicines and services increased the trust in vet services.

IMPACT

The Identification and Registration system enabled the identification and registration of farms and animals. As a short term result this activity had the immediate inclusion of farmers in the state subsidy schemes for small livestock. This triggered their interest to increase the flock size. Both result are leading to increased income from the animal husbandry.



On the longer term, this system is the basis for the ongoing veterinary service planning to eradicate infectious diseases in small ruminants. With the development of this system during the three years of implementation of the project it will create the premise for the development of an integrated system of animal movement and transhumance control, traceability and improved product quality and food safety.

The control of enterotoxaemia in small ruminants by mass vaccination in selected villages rapidly reduced the infection in animals and the economic losses.

The quality service of private veterinarians and the bridging between farmers and private veterinary sector in the Region of Kukes has improved. The animal health care delivery of private veterinary service in terms of disease control in remote areas has improved. The process of consultation and decision-making based on the technical specification and the strategic planning of project activities were achieved by the work of the Coordinating Committee. The coordinating committee identified and resolved the difficulties that came up during the implementation and ensured the veterinary service sustainability.

Awareness about the benefits of immunization, hygiene and bio-security at farm level, improved farmers' knowledge and their participation in combating diseases in livestock.

Better health and prevention and a proper tracking system increase the trust in the sector and the market access. This leads to more effectiveness and efficiency of the animal production, hence bringing more income.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **The survey** on the Small Ruminants sub-sector **was the base of the decision** to consider the IR and tagging in the region as a priority. It served as VCD.
- **Using the best experts/LCB based on the well-formulated ToR** constitutes one of nodal points to success.
- The process went very well and all the stakeholders were very committed because **a well planned intervention program was prepared**. The private vets and monitoring staff were particularly effective at reporting on progress of the program;
- **Trust** among the stakeholders was the basement of this process;
- Every multi-stakeholder process needs a **system of organizing and cooperation**. Such kind of intervention needs a very good organization and cooperation among all the stakeholders and adequate structures; All the multi-stakeholder process organization and cooperation was facilitated and coordinated by SNV;
- **Ownership of local actors is essential**. The regional agriculture department and the communes possess now adequate Small Ruminants identification and registration data base and might use it even after the program will have finished;
- **The system and motivation build trust**. The farmers have increased trust toward the private veterinary service;
- **The infrastructural circumstances should be planned and tested**. Full implications of data exchange from field to center were not well understood until the data entry procedure commenced. It was then found that the local agriculture directorates were not easily accessible through telephone lines so resources had to be found to retrieve physically the required data. This coincided with several crashes of the electronic system and its software (ADI/RUDA) due to lighting strokes and electricity cuts.
- **The baseline**, based on the Identification and registration documents, provides the necessary indicators;
- **The system implemented**, might very well serve the clients as a good base to improve the whole value chain and build or propose new policies in favor of a further supporting of Small Ruminants;
- **All stakeholders are co-owners** of mistakes and successes of the program. Each of stakeholders felt him/herself part of this process. This means that the project opened new perspectives for the future: increase flock size, improve production, improve vet service, improve livestock production policies, etc.;

SUSTAINABILITY

- **Ministry of Agriculture has a good example of why to further support a programme like this in other regions and implement new policies to the Small Ruminants.**

The vaccination against clostridia diseases has been shown to be a wise investment. Vaccinating small ruminants not only prevents unnecessary suffering and death of animals but also promotes the development of healthier animals and more productive livestock farms, thus securing more income.

- **A better market with safe products for consumers is guaranteed only through a traceability system.** Animal identification and registration is a key tool for animal health and food

safety and is a must to maintain consumer confidence in products of animal origin and to assure market access for livestock and animal products. It further improves the competitiveness of the livestock sector of the Kukesi region and thus contributes to sustainable economic development in the rural areas.

- **A step further toward EU integration of Agriculture.** A first step towards the obligatory countrywide registrations of births and movements as it is applied in EU member states is set. Albania, with less favorable conditions, opts for a regional approach (zoning) for tagging, birth registration and movement control. The Kukesi intervention Program was one of these kinds of approaches which show the value of the regionalization.
- **The private veterinary service got a good lesson on what needs to be improved and supported.** They understood that better organisation within private and public structures increases efficiency.



STANDARD DATA:

Start and end date of contract within which the intervention occurred: May-December 2010

Composition of team:

SNV: Small Ruminants VC Manager, Regional Coordinator in Kukes

LCBs/Local Service Providers: 29 private veterinarians

External consultants: 5

Number of PPDays already invested and planned to be invested per category of staff:

SNV: 160 PPDs

LCBs: 2940 PPDs

External consultants: 128

The financial resources invested: 145,000 EUR