



Food and Agriculture Organization
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MONGOLIA ANIMAL HEALTH AND VETERINARY SERVICES SUPPORT

March 2019

SDGs:



Countries:

Mongolia

Project Codes:

TCP/MON/3607

FAO Contribution:

USD 100 000

Duration:

2 May 2017 – 31 December 2018

Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Mongolia

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Implementing Partner

Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry .

Beneficiaries

Field veterinarians, Government of Mongolia, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry (MoFALI), General Agency for Veterinary Services (GAVS) (formerly the Veterinary and Animal Breeding Agency (VABA)).

Country Programming Framework

Priority Area 1: Promotion of sustainable livestock development through improved quality, health, and productivity of livestock and increased pasture, feed, fodder, and water supply.



BACKGROUND

A key objective of the Government of Mongolia is to increase economic growth from livestock resources and from meat exports, including heat-processed products. Animals, both domestic and wild, play an important role in generating sustainable income. Meat, dairy, wool, cashmere and leather raw materials are produced from goats, sheep, yak, cattle, camels and horses for further processing, while wild animals are important both for tourism and in terms of national heritage. In addition, meat exports are critical to managing pressure on pasture lands due to overpopulation/overgrazing of livestock.

Animal diseases, as well as the challenges surrounding their prevention and control, are well established as the main impediment to the sustainable development of the livestock sector. This is directly associated with the capacity of the national veterinary services to minimize the animal disease burden and promote animal health. Nevertheless, Mongolia's services are currently under extreme pressure, facing animal diseases that are liable to limit trade.

The large number of livestock creates high demand for veterinary services. With increasing exports, the high demand for veterinary services may need to grow further to allow compliance with certification inspection, international health standards, quarantines, etc.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken in Mongolia by the Government and its development partners. For instance, there are areas of the country free from Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) that comply with the standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), an animal identification database is in place, with a number of companies selling ear tags and electronic monitoring chips, while there is also a draft veterinary drug residue detection plan. In addition, a draft Animal Health Law and a Law on Animal Genetic Resources were prepared and submitted to Parliament for debate in December 2016.

The request was made to FAO to provide additional support to the Government in order to help move these initiatives forward. The areas of FAO support were due to include the following:

- ✓ Advice on veterinary legislation, including analysis of the existing regulatory framework for animal health, veterinary public health, management of animal genetic resources and topics of special regulatory concern (e.g. antimicrobial resistance and residue detection) considering international standards, practices and norms, as well as review and revision of the existing draft laws on animal health and animal genetic resources.
- ✓ Advice on strengthening the national veterinary system and enhancing its capacities to prevent, detect and control high-impact diseases, including building on Mongolia's One Health legal framework.

IMPACT

The expected impact was an improvement in meat exports for Mongolia, specifically contributing to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture". Meat export has for years presented the country with a significant challenge, due to the lack of a legal framework or strong veterinary services in place to control the regular occurrence of animal disease outbreaks. The project was expected to provide international and national experts to review and analyse the current state of Mongolian Veterinary Service standard operating procedures (SOPs).

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The two main outputs of the project were successfully achieved. These are outlined both immediately below and, in greater detail, in the Logical Framework.

In particular, the advisory report on strengthening the national veterinary system and enhancing its capacities to prevent, detect and control high-impact diseases will further assist in strengthening the newly established General Agency for Veterinary Services (GAVS) and promoting Mongolia's meat exports.

Output 1: Advisory report provided on veterinary legislation

A comprehensive review on veterinary legislation was conducted by the team, which consisted of an international and a national expert. A report was produced and included in the general report developed for Output 2.

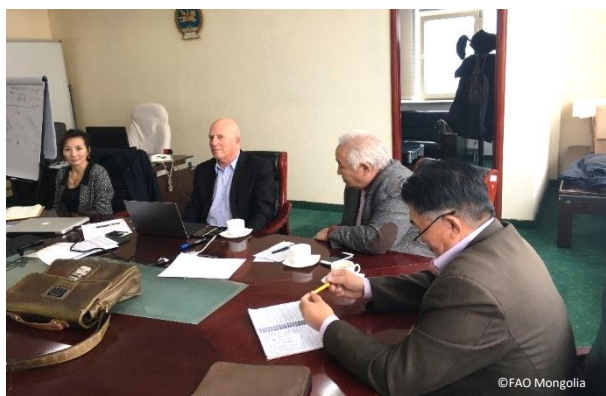
Output 2: Advisory report provided on strengthening of veterinary systems

A comprehensive advisory report was produced by the experts, who worked from 10 October to 7 December 2017.

The Mongolian-language version was published and disseminated to relevant stakeholders, including the President's office, the Parliament office, members of Parliament, ministries, agencies, local governor offices, academia, research institutions and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)/Civil society organizations (CSOs).

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

All planned activities were completed within the agreed budget, with no over- or underexpenditure, while there were no major challenges encountered in terms of timely delivery during project implementation. Certain savings were made from a number of budget lines that enabled training to be conducted on outbreak investigation. This was initially carried out in Mongolia with assistance from the FAO Animal Production and Health Division through other sources. The training was executed by local trainers in high-risk provinces ("aimags").



FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

A five-year action plan was developed for the implementation of the recommended changes to the veterinary system, and subsequently presented to the Government. The plan includes a proposal on a long-term training programme and a number of other activities that should be executed according to regulations and resolutions to be made following the approval of the new law. The allocation of the necessary human and financial resources is required to fulfil this action plan.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The project assisted in conducting analysis of the existing regulatory framework for animal health, veterinary public health and strengthening of the national veterinary system, while enhancing its capacities on animal diseases. Recommendations and proposals for the actions to be taken to fill gaps and initiatives will help to maintain the sustainability of the project's outcome.

More than 200 field veterinarians and final-year veterinary students participated in trainings and are expected to contribute to maintaining project sustainability.

In addition, the advisory report provided to the Government was based on in-depth research into the current state of the sector, including interviews with a number of stakeholders and on-site visits. The report included proposals on the effective structure of the GAVS at national, regional and field levels and the selection procedure for a Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), which was appreciated by the Government and taken into consideration during the establishment of the GAVS. The proposed action plan and training programme were included in the agency's work plan for the coming years.

2. Gender equality

Male and female stakeholders were actively and equally involved in all consultations, while the review process took gender issues into consideration.

3. Technological sustainability

Stakeholders and beneficiaries are in need of further technical capacity improvement, as the restructuring of the Veterinary Service and animal health sector is underway and will require full technological capacity.

4. Economic sustainability

The government has allocated a higher amount of funding to the animal health and veterinary service sector than in previous years. The sector expects to execute a number of follow-up activities in to order to stabilize its functions.

DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ Presentations on FMD and Brucellosis. N. Galon. Ulaanbaatar. November 2017. 40 pp.
- ❑ Mission report. N. Galon, B. Nantsag and O. Batmunkh. Ulaanbaatar. December 2017. 54 pp (excluding attachments).
- ❑ Five-year Action Plan (including suggested training programme). N. Galon and B. Nantsag. Ulaanbaatar. December 2017. 8 pp.
- ❑ Analysis of current state of the Mongolian Veterinary Service (in Mongolian language). N. Galon, B. Nantsag and O. Batmunkh. December 2017. 100 pp
- ❑ Summary leaflet of analysis of current state of the Mongolian veterinary service. N. Galon and B. Nantsag. December 2017. 2 pp.
- ❑ Interview on FMD outbreak and combating measures. B. Nantsag. October 2018.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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| Expected Impact | Meat exports will be improved | | |
| Outcome | Veterinary services and legal framework are improved to support livestock sector development. | | |
| | Indicator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal review for new Law on Animal Health. • Legal review for new Law on Animal Genetic Resources. • Veterinary Service SOPs review. | |
| | Baseline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No review on new Law on Animal Health. • No review on new Law on Animal Genetic Resources. • No review in light of new Health Law. | |
| | End Target | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review provided on new Law on Animal Health during spring 2017 parliamentary session. • Review provided on new Law on Animal Genetic Resources during spring 2017 parliamentary session. • Review provided in line with new Animal Health Law. | |
| | Comments and follow-up action to be taken | <p>Achieved.</p> <p>Review carried out of recommendations provided by team of international and national experts on both the new Animal Health Law and the new Law on Animal Genetic Resources, prior to their approval by the Parliament of Mongolia.</p> <p>Current state of SOPs in Mongolia's Veterinary Service reviewed by a team of national and international experts and a full advisory report published in Mongolian and disseminated to relevant stakeholders.</p> | |
| Output 1 | Advisory report provided on veterinary legislation | | |
| | Indicators | Target | Achieved |
| | Advisory report on veterinary legislation. | One report. | Yes |
| Baseline | 0 | | |
| Comments | A comprehensive review on veterinary legislation was conducted by a team consisting of one national and one international expert. A report was produced and included in the general report developed for Output 2 (please see Activity 1.1). | | |

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| Activity 1.1 | Review of animal health, veterinary public health and animal genetic resources legislation by national and international legal experts and recommendations to update the draft laws | |
| | Achieved | Partially |
| Activity 1.2 | Comments | <p>Due to local circumstances and the fact that Government's internal process on the Law on Animal Genetic Resources had been carried out ahead of time, the review of legislation was conducted only on the Law on Animal Health by the team of two experts (one national and one international). The activity was therefore only "partially" achieved.</p> <p>The government placed greatest emphasis on the finalization of the new animal health law as it was considered a unique opportunity to initiate the necessary changes in structure, norms and functions of the country's veterinary services, as well as for overcoming past obstacles and barriers for the sake of animal and public health and a stronger economy. The main recommendations made were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Animal Health Law is expected to pave the way for major improvements in veterinary regulations, operations and inspection along the entire food chain. • The Animal Health Law should be in line with international standards, as detailed in the OIE Terrestrial Code. As per assessment, a number of points and recommendations made previously by the OIE and FAO have not been incorporated into the draft law. • As primary laws are not easily nor frequently approved, the new Animal Health Law should be solid, sound and able to make the necessary changes to the structure and functioning of the veterinary authority, for the benefit of animal health, food safety, production and trade in Mongolia. • The new Animal Health Law emphasizes the responsibility of the producer – whether they be a herder, farmer, processor, distributor or related supplier – to follow rules and regulations and to take action to minimize the risk to animal and human health. The producer is required to increase self-control, inform the veterinary authorities of disease suspicion, extraordinary morbidity or mortality at the herd or premises, to monitor, record and report, as stated in instructions, and communicate to the relevant authority. Producers' responsibilities should be advocated by the regulator both in directives and in training. The producer should be aware of the impact of their actions and products upon consumer health and on animal health in other herds and regions. • The number of state-dictated mandatory vaccinations should be substantially reduced, leaving all other vaccines to the discretion of the herder and farmer. This could lead to a meaningful reduction in volatile fluctuations in the variety and quantity of vaccines procured locally, which in turn, may lead to increased prices or the cessation of productions of some vaccines, as well as increased initiatives and pressure from private businesses to import competitive vaccines parallel to local production. |
| | Two consultation workshops undertaken with stakeholders | |
| Activity 1.2 | Achieved | Yes |
| | Comments | Three consultation workshops were undertaken with the relevant stakeholders to discuss the content of new laws. Stakeholders included the MoFALI and Animal Breeding Agency, the National Security Council, the National Emergency Management Agency, the State Central Veterinary Laboratory, provincial and soum-level veterinary and animal breeding units and private veterinarians. |

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| Output 2 | Advisory report provided on strengthening of veterinary systems | | |
| | Indicators | Target | Achieved |
| | Advisory report on strengthening of veterinary systems | One report. | Yes |
| Baseline | 0 | | |
| Comments | <p>A comprehensive advisory report was produced by the experts, who worked from 10 October to 7 December 2017.</p> <p>The Mongolian-language version was published and disseminated to the relevant stakeholders, including the President's office, the Parliament office, members of Parliament, ministries, agencies, local governor offices, academia, research institutions and NGOs/CSOs. The concluding recommendations included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With use of correct policy, authority and measures, vaccination, surveillance, inspection and movement control, FMD can be kept outside or at least close to the borders of the country and large areas of the country can be declared as FMD-free without vaccination, allowing the export of animal products to many more countries. • An improved level of traceability, both of live animals and of animal products, and a higher level of inspection and equivalency with the recognized international (OIE) standards are needed in order to expand and open markets in countries that demand these standards. This is a long and expensive process, both in terms of primary investments and for maintaining the standards. • Careful analysis on niche or high-end export markets for premium products should be carried out prior to major investments in production and inspection standards. Terms such as "grass-fed" and "free-roaming" and geographical indicators are often used as potential advantages for the export of Mongolian meat and other products. These high-end markets demand very high standards and verifications of production process and inspection, while neighbouring export markets may pay lower prices per unit but are likely to buy larger volumes and demand lower standards. These markets, in Southeast Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, have the potential for export from Mongolia and may present lower requirements than the OIE standards. As a result, Mongolia should carefully reflect on the approach of large-scale investment in animal identification, traceability, slaughter inspection and processing facilities for the sake of export growth. • A gradual improvement in production and inspection standards is also required for the local market, which is likely to change and demand higher standards over time. Currently, almost all of the meat consumed inside the country is slaughtered outside of official abattoirs, without a satisfactory level of processing and inspection of food safety or traceability. <p>A five-year action plan was developed for the implementation of the recommended changes to the veterinary system, and subsequently presented to the Government. The plan includes a proposal on a long-term training programme and a number of other activities that should be executed according to regulations and resolutions to be made following the approval of the new law. The allocation of the necessary human and financial resources is required to fulfil this action plan.</p> | | |
| Activity 2.1 | Review all available documents relevant to the veterinary service's capacity to prevent, detect and control animal diseases and to suggest an action plan aiming at strengthening its capacity. This will also include a veterinary drug residue plan | | |
| | Achieved | Partially | |
| | Comments | <p>The team of experts carried out a full review of all of the documents relevant to the veterinary service's capacity to prevent, detect and control animal diseases. On this basis, a comprehensive advisory report was produced.</p> <p>A five-year action plan with the following elements was developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the structure and functions of the GAVS. • Nomination and appointment of a CVO as the director of the GAVS. • Appointment of the personnel and establishment of the units at the GAVS. • Establishment or restructuring of new or existing field units of the GAVS. • Merger and reorganization of the veterinary research and diagnosis institute. • Execution of the training programme. <p>Due to circumstances that included insufficient capacity and resources, as well as a lack of data, the development of a veterinary drug residue plan was not carried out during the course of project implementation.</p> | |

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| Activity 2.2 | Interview related stakeholders, whether they are government officials, farmers, NGOs or others, on the veterinary service's capacity to conduct the above, with emphasis on weaknesses and methods of improvement. This should be conducted through individual or group interviews | |
| | Achieved | Yes |
| | Comments | <p>Meetings and interviews took place with a number of government agencies and officers, parliamentarians, NGOs, other stakeholders, herders and producers in the capital city in order to obtain a good picture of the situation. The total coverage reached 97 individuals.</p> <p>The following were identified as weak points of the current veterinary service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No central independent competent veterinary authority. Veterinary services are a part of the VABA, the agency also responsible for animal breeding. The veterinary services have few officers, with no sound organizational hierarchy and no systematic working procedures. • The chain of command from central level to the field is weak. The accredited private veterinarians – soum and aimag-level government veterinarians – carry out a number of different tasks due to a lack of supervision, inspection or interventions by aimag and soum governors or other agencies. • There is a lack of real-time monitoring, information and surveillance. The Veterinary Service is incapable of producing a clear, real-time picture of disease outbreak and to analyse it to assess the situation well and execute suitable responses. • There is a lack of evidence-based and risk-based decisions. Due to a lack of information and up-to-date knowledge, decisions are often made late, not based on the real picture and not effective. • With regard to risk assessment and risk management, no structured processes of discussion-decision-action are in place, whether using risk analysis or any other systematic working procedures. Discussions and decisions are not documented, not transparent and not communicated clearly enough to the operating levels. • Disease experts from research and diagnosis organizations are not sufficiently involved in procedures. Although there are a number of capable disease experts within laboratories, the research institute, academia and other organizations who have broad and up-to-date knowledge, they are rarely invited to share their expertise in discussions on veterinary services, whether prior to decision-making or in follow-up discussions. When they are consulted, it tends to be without a clear mandate or nomination as members of a standing committee for a certain disease programme or a specific issue. • Both the CVO and the director of the State Central Veterinary Laboratory have been replaced four times in eight years. This creates ineffective functions and makes the positions unattractive to capable candidates. • There are split and overlapping inspection authorities between the VABA and the Government Agency for Specialized Inspection (GASI). The situation in which two government agencies are responsible for inspection of similar fields and activities leads to a confusing situation with overlaps, gaps and contradicting instructions, both for operating levels within each organization and for producers, herders, traders and processors. • The continuous outbreaks of FMD, the unclear situation of Peste des Petits Ruminants and Sheep and goat pox and the vague strategy for Brucellosis control are prominent examples of the inability of the Veterinary Service to properly prevent, detect and control animal diseases. • Over the previous decade, Mongolia's Veterinary Service had a number of international missions related to various aspects of technical support. Many of these mission reports highlighted similar findings, conclusions and recommendations. This method leads to considerations on the effectiveness of additional missions, and on how to improve their implementation by the country authorities. • Food Safety-Vet Public Health. The field of food safety and veterinarian public health is severely deficient, both in infrastructure and in procedures. The sector needs dramatic changes and improvements in order to protect the health of local consumers and to enable export expansion. • Import-export control is not currently under the authority of the veterinary service. This poses a major risk to the cross-border incursion of emerging diseases via imported animals or animal products. |

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| Activity 2.2 | Interview related stakeholders, whether they are government officials, farmers, NGOs or others, on the veterinary service's capacity to conduct the above, with emphasis on weaknesses and methods of improvement. This should be conducted through individual or group interviews | |
| | Achieved | Yes |
| | Comments | <p>Recommendations and suggested improvements include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To rectify and improve the veterinary service's capabilities to prevent, detect and control animal diseases, changes are required in risk assessment, risk management, training, executing and communication abilities of the service and related units. Instructions from the central veterinary authority are not clear enough, the vertical chain of command is weak, while at times different and contradicting instructions are given by other government bodies and officers. It is recommended that legal authority and all regulatory veterinary activities be brought together and managed as part of one central, strong and capable government authority, a new Veterinary Service agency within the MoFALI. • A new veterinary authority called the Mongolian Veterinary Agency (MoVA) should be established within the MoFALI, in line with the new Animal Health Law and internationally recognized veterinary standards, strengthened by additional regulations and with sufficient human and financial resources to improve prevention, detection and control of animal diseases and veterinary public health. In addition, it is recommended that this opportunity for a major change be used to concentrate all the stages of inspection "from farm to fork", including feed, drugs, animal health, veterinary public health and international trade in animals and animal products, under a single government authority. The new Animal Health Law is an opportunity to overcome past obstacles and barriers for the sake of better animal and public health and a stronger economy. • The chain of command should be vertical and clear from the director of the MoVA – CVO at the top to the accredited private veterinarian executing the veterinary service's instructions at herd level, the veterinary inspector at processing factory level and the import inspector at a border crossing. All of this should take place without interventions by local government authorities or other central government authorities. • The three different laboratories and organizations currently dealing with animal diseases in diagnosis, research and quality control should be merged into one united diagnosis and research institute, under the command of the CVO. This act would save human and financial resources and would concentrate the various capabilities supporting animal health and veterinary public health into a stronger, more efficient and better-serving organization. • Export expansion can take place once the animal disease situation and the inspection has been improved, following the above-mentioned changes. It is advisable that changes be made gradually and carefully in traceability, infrastructure and inspection measures, in order to maintain the cost-effectiveness of investments in animal identification, processing plants and other major investments, in proportion to the needs of the major potential export markets and the changing requirements of the local market. <p>In order to implement these major changes, an action plan is proposed for the next five years, including recruitment of personnel, building the new agency and its new sub-units and a vast training programme. During this long period of gradual and careful change, a number of immediate and short-term actions must be taken to improve the detection, prevention and control of animal diseases.</p> |
| Activity 2.3 | Conduct on-site visits to selected sites that can provide the relevant information on the current functionality of the Veterinary Service at local, provincial and national levels | |
| | Achieved | Yes |
| | Comments | A number of on-site visits were made to different parts of the country, including Jargaltkhaan, Murun and Hulunbuir soums in Khentii Aimag, Bayantumen soum in Dornod Aimag and Erdenetsagaan and Baruun-Urt soums in Sukhbaatar Aimag. |
| Activity 2.4 | Four consultation workshops undertaken with stakeholders | |
| | Achieved | Yes |
| | Comments | A number of one-day workshops and conferences carried out by international and national experts. Specifically, experts gave four seminars on veterinary issues and led two group training exercises on risk analysis with Veterinary Service stakeholders and partners. |

Outreach, Marketing and Reporting Unit (PSRR)
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