

## DFID

The purpose of these *Key Sheets* is to provide DFID Natural Resource Advisers with an easy and up-to-date point of reference on issues relating to development in the natural environment.

The sheets are designed for those who are managing change and who are concerned to make well-informed implementation decisions. They aim to distil theoretical debate and field experience so that it becomes easily accessible and useful across a range of situations. Their purpose is to assist in the process of decision-making rather than to provide definitive answers.

The sheets address three broad sets of issues:

- Service Delivery
- Resource Management
- Policy Planning and Implementation

A list of contact details for organisations is provided for each sub-series.

## Overview of the debate

Over the past 5 years the debate about livestock services has focused on:

- The scope for private delivery of various types of veterinary service and livestock extension advice.
- Management of the process of reform of state veterinary services.
- The role of paraprofessionals in the delivery of livestock services.
- Finding mechanisms to secure a reliable, low cost supply of appropriate veterinary drugs.
- The need to broaden the scope of animal production research and to increase the supply of targeted advice to farmers.
- The need to improve the marketing opportunities available to livestock owners.

## Key issues in decision-making

Animal production is an integral part of most farming systems. However, this is not always evident in the composition of services offered to farmers. Livestock services have been dominated by veterinary science and relatively little attention has been paid to improving livestock productivity in other ways. There is, therefore, considerable scope for assisting developing country research and extension systems to improve the quality of their livestock work as well as for effort to be put into improving the terms of trade for livestock owners. The use of participatory techniques and the inclusion of socio-economic analysis into research are two important mechanisms which will help to reveal information to facilitate improved planning for livestock extension and veterinary service provision:

- What kind of livestock services are farmers currently receiving (including services provided by traditional healers or local animal experts)?
- How experienced in animal husbandry are livestock owners?
- To what extent are crop-livestock interactions understood and exploited (by both farmers and research and extension agents)?
- What value – including cultural value – is placed on livestock? How will this affect farmers' demand and willingness to pay for services?
- Are the gender roles in livestock production adequately understood (particularly the gender implications of increased stall feeding of cattle)?
- Through what channels do livestock owners market their produce?

It is widely agreed that curative veterinary services should be privatised. Much attention has been paid to defining the preconditions for private practice to flourish (eg. elimination of public sector competition, provision of capital to cover start-up costs). There are, nonetheless, wide variations in farmers' willingness to pay private practice rates for veterinary services and in vets' willingness to take the risk of entering private practice (especially in poorer areas where profitability is likely to be lower). Donors can help to facilitate the transition to private practice by: training vets who are seeking to establish private practice to help increase their confidence and enable them to provide a better service; raising awareness of services amongst animal owners; and supporting the political realignment which must underlie reform.

- Is there political will behind the efforts to privatise? (The time taken to build support for reform should not be underestimated.)
- Do existing vets have adequate business/marketing skills to establish private practice?
- Are veterinary curricula adequately broad (not just focusing on clinical diagnoses) so that vets have a wide range of preventative and production oriented skills to 'sell' to prospective clients?
- Is the veterinary professional association able to adapt to meet the needs of dispersed private practice (regulation, quality control etc.)?
- Are farmers aware of the economic benefits of veterinary treatment?

In a quest to support the private sector, the residual public sector role and interactions between public and private must not be neglected. Veterinary departments must be equipped to make strategic plans. They may also need support in experimental efforts to extend private practice to poorer areas where costs are high and returns low. In such areas some kind of income guarantee may need to be provided to private vets to entice them to establish practice.

Another option, in such areas, is to invest in training members of the community to provide basic animal health advice. Alternatively a cadre of paravets with lower levels of training and lower income expectations might be developed. Such paravets are particularly suited to areas with high levels of poultry and small ruminant production as for these animals routine preventative work

## DFID financed research

- The delivery of animal health services (Livestock in Development - start 1994)
- RNRRS Animal health (CTVM) and livestock production (NRI) programmes

## DFID project experience

- Ethiopia: Dairy goat development (FarmAfrica - start 1990)
- Mozambique: Training and extension for livestock workers (Vetaid - start 1992)
- Zimbabwe: Assistance to the Department of Veterinary Services (start 1986)
- Kenya: Livestock project (ITDG - start 1990)
- Indonesia: Animal Health Project (start 1989) & Development of Decentralised Livestock Services (start 1995)
- Bolivia: Epidemiology/animal disease control project (start 1995)

## UK and other expertise

- **Natural Resources Institute**
- **Livestock in Development**
- **IDS**
- **University of Reading**, Veterinary Epidemiology and Economics Research Unit
- **World Bank, EU, FAO**
- **Office International des Epizooties**, Paris
- **NGOs (ActionAid, FarmAfrica, Heifer Project International, ITDG, Oxfam, Vetaid, Network)**
- **CTVM**

## Livestock Services *continued*

tends to be more important than diagnostic services. Given the poor infrastructure and large distances in such areas it is important to equip paravets simultaneously to provide both animal health and animal production advice:

- Are the relations between community workers, paravets and full vets well-defined (so that animal owners are clear what type of service they are receiving and conflicts among service providers are avoided)?
- Are there mechanisms for linking paravets to vets for technical backup?
- Do paravets have access to the necessary veterinary drugs? (It will not be desirable for them to dispense all drugs but some drug sales are important for effectiveness of service and income generation.)
- Are mechanisms in place for paravets to be part of the official system of disease surveillance? Is training geared accordingly?
- Are there provisions for in-service training for paravets? (Specialised NGOs may be able to provide effective support.)

Donors can also support the development of membership organisations. Members of such organisations can then share the costs of service provision. An additional benefit of such groups is that they can – over the longer term and with support – interact directly with livestock service policy makers to help ensure a client orientation. Groups may coalesce around a trained paraprofessional. However, they are likely to be more cohesive and to have less difficulty covering costs if they are oriented towards marketing (the requirements of dairy marketing have proved conducive to the successful formation of dairy cooperatives in a number of countries).

- Do existing groups have particular capacity building needs? Do they have adequate expertise in marketing?
- Are there barriers to group formation? Can donors help to provide a more enabling framework for groups (eg. lobbying to reduce their tax liabilities)?
- Which farmers' needs are not met by such organisations? Can mechanisms be devised whereby these people can 'piggyback' off the veterinary services provided to group members?

It will also remain important to support regional disease control efforts. The private sector will not deal with the externalities of epidemic diseases and there is a danger that trans-border campaigns will be a low priority for financially constrained veterinary departments.

Finally, considerable thought has been put into defining public and private roles in the area of livestock services. Most of the discussion has taken place at an international level; donors should help ensure that domestic politicians, decision-makers and field staff gain the benefits of such effort, whether through supporting short-term consultancy, series of workshops or short training courses.

## Seminal literature

- Daniels, P.W. et al. (eds) (1993) *Livestock Services for Smallholders: A Critical Evaluation*. Proceedings of a Seminar in Yogyakarta, Nov. 1992.
- de Haan, C. & S. Bekure (1991) *Animal Health Services in sub-Saharan Africa: Initial Experiences with Alternative Approaches*. World Bank Technical Paper 154.
- Grandin, B., R. Thampy & J. Young (1991) *Village Animal Healthcare: A community based approach to livestock development in Kenya*. London: IT publications.
- Holden, S., S. Ashley & P. Bazeley (1996) *Improving the delivery of animal health services in developing countries*. Crewkerne: Livestock in Development.
- Umali, D. L., G. Feder & C. de Haan (1992) *The Balance between Public and Private Sector Activities in the Delivery of Livestock Services*. World Bank Discussion Paper No. 163.

Key Sheets are available on the Internet at: [www.odi.org.uk/keysheets/](http://www.odi.org.uk/keysheets/) or through DFID's website

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