

# THE ROLE OF VETERINARY PARA-PROFESSIONALS IN CLINICAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: A CASE STUDY FROM AFGHANISTAN



**OIE - AVTA - GALVMed**

**REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE ROLE OF VETERINARY PARA-PROFESSIONALS IN AFRICA ::  
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**WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH**

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## Country background



- Islamic Republic with close ethnic ties to neighboring countries
- Rugged, mountainous terrain and deserts predominate the landscape. Only 12% of the land is arable.
- Traditional social, cultural and religious values prevail.
- The majority of the population lives in rural areas, linked to subsistence agriculture.
- War and civil strife have been the defining characteristics of the last quarter century.

# Role of livestock



- Lack of arable land (12%) puts heavy emphasis on livestock grazing
- 80% of rural Afghans depend directly or indirectly on animals for their livelihood
- Sheep and goats predominate
- Meat and dairy products for nutrition
- Fiber for textiles and carpets
- Draft power for agricultural work
- Manure for crop fertilization and kitchen fuel
- Horse, donkey or camel-drawn taxis & wagons to bring produce to market



# Livestock Numbers in Afghanistan



- Sheep 8.8 million
- Goats 7.3 million
- Cattle 3.7 million
- Donkeys 1.6 million
- Horses 142 thousand
- Camels 175 thousand
- Poultry 12.0 million



FAO Livestock Census 2003

# Status of Veterinary Services - 2004



- Only about 200 veterinarians in the country
- University veterinary faculties were barely functional
- Vet graduates were poorly trained even after 5 years
- Vets were (and still are) reluctant to work in rural areas
- Gov't clinics were barely equipped or non-functional
- Gov't was without the resources to reliably outfit its clinics, particularly if providing free service
- Contagious diseases like FMD & PPR were widespread
- Livestock populations were severely depleted by disease, war and drought - over 50% in some regions
- **What could be done?**

# Implementation of the Veterinary Field Unit (VFU) Programme



- Funded by USAID
- \$12 million budget and 2.5 year duration
- 31 of 34 provinces covered in a **national Veterinary Field Unit (VFU) network based at the district level**
- VFUs staffed by veterinary para-professionals trained through the VFU programme
- Programme implemented by an NGO, the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA)

# Rationale for use of community-based veterinary para-professionals



- **Need for field veterinary services was immediate**
- Pool of available veterinarians was limited
- Capacity of veterinary faculties to train was limited
- **5 years required to train new vets**
- Infrastructure limitations on mobility
- Security and trust concerns favoured local participation
- 15 or so diseases were responsible for 90% of problems
- High school graduates with extensive livestock experience could be trained to recognize and treat or prevent those 15 or so diseases

# Structure of Programme



- VFU programme explained to gov't & community leaders
- High school graduates with livestock experience were proposed by their communities & trained for 6 months
- They were trained intensively on identification and control of the 15 or so most costly livestock diseases in the country
- A network of veterinary field units (VFUs) was established at the district level, staffed by veterinary para-professionals
- VFUs operated as **private sector enterprises**
- VFUs were provided with high quality goods that worked well
- Goods distributed initially by DCA, later by the private sector
- VFUs made **sustainable** by requiring **fee-for-service & full cost recovery**



# Meet Senior Government Officials and Community Leaders



# Train veterinary para-professionals



Classroom training



Practical laboratories



Supervised field training



Examination and graduation

# Supply Veterinary Instruments



# Signboards, Furniture, Utensils



17 9:45PM

# Motorcycles and Cattle Crushes



# Solar Powered Refrigerator



# Cool boxes with ice packs



# Vaccine & Medicine Supply Network



- **Main store – DCA Kabul**
- **Regional Stores**
  - Herat
  - Mazar
  - Kunduz
  - Jalalabad
  - Ghazni
  - Kandahar





# Main Vaccines Supplied for Ruminants

- Anthrax
- Enterotoxaemia
- PPR
- Sheep/Goat pox
- Pasteurellosis
- Blackleg
- CCPP
- FMD



# Establishing the Veterinary Field Unit (VFU)



# Opening for Business



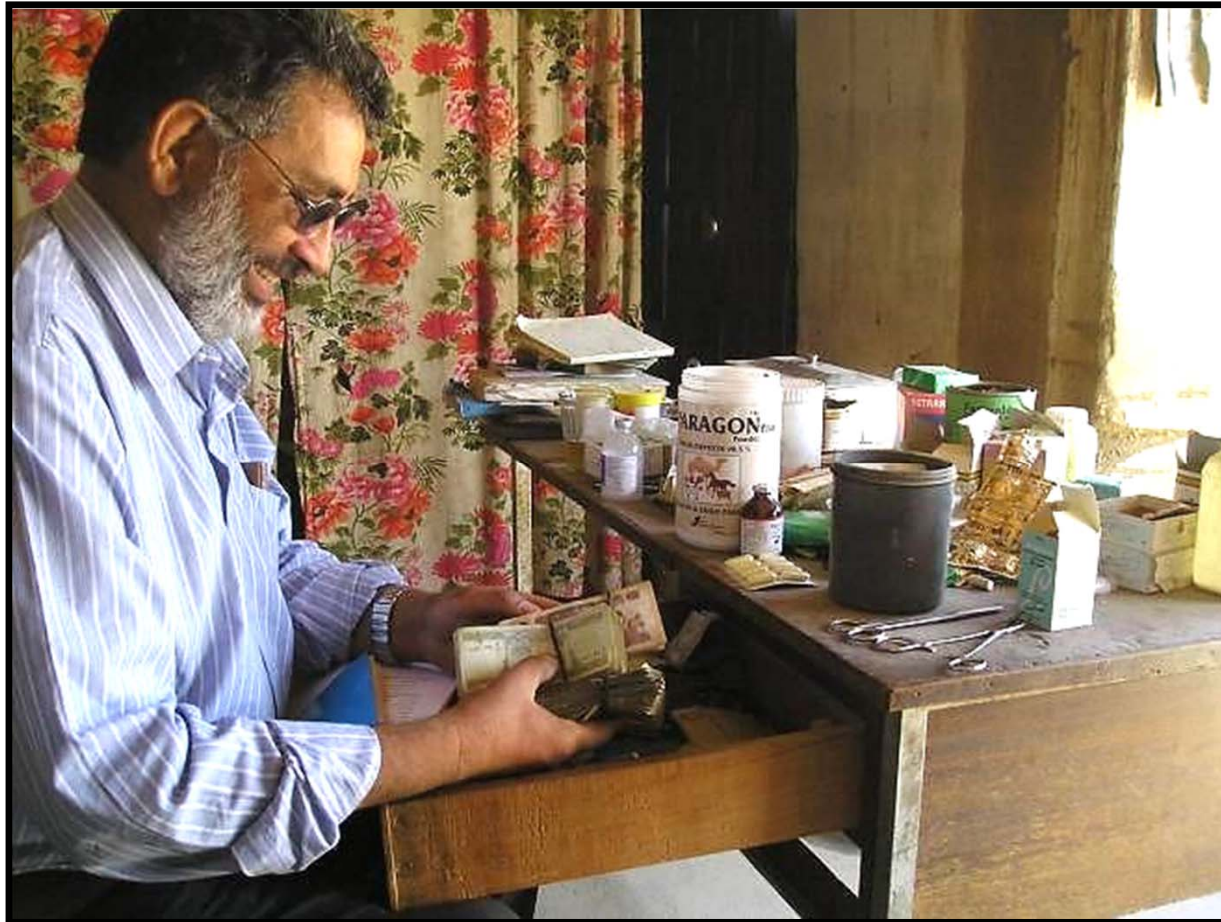
# Seeing Animals at the VFU Clinic



# Making Visits to the Field



# Earning a Sustainable Living and...



**...Serving their Communities**

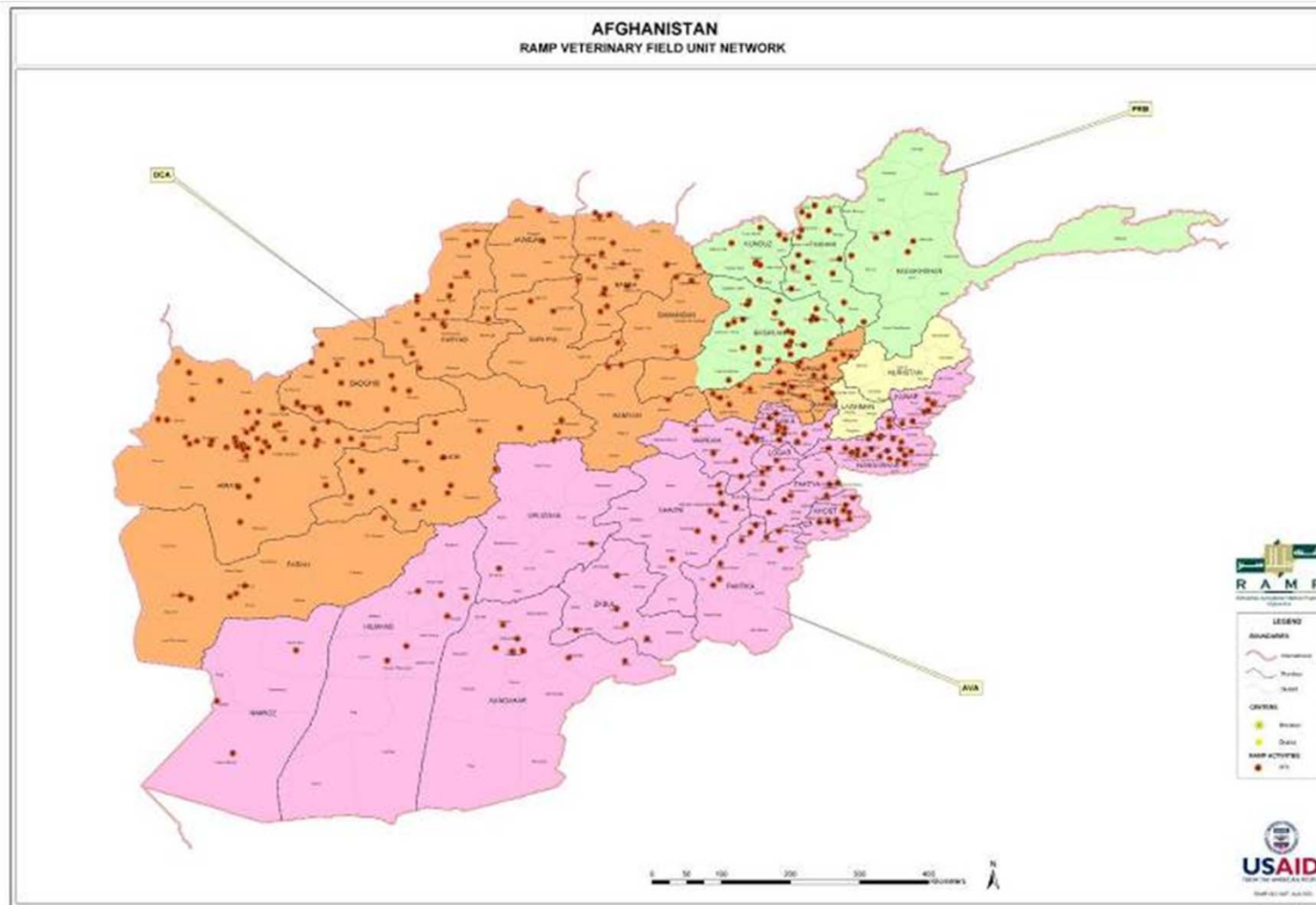
# Results at end of programme in June, 2006



- 274 Districts in 31 Provinces served
- 388 VFUs operating
- 585 Staff working at VFUs
- 16.5 million vaccinations
- 8.9 million treatments
- All on a fee for service basis
- Gradual full cost recovery
- Client satisfaction evident



# VFU distribution by end of project





# An evolving relationship with government



- **Initial response of government highly negative**

- Objected to private sector clinical services
- Objected to use of para-professionals
- Objected to lack of control of their activities
- Objected to donor investment in private sector



- Time proved the grass-roots support for and sustainability of the VFU network and **government attitudes about VFUs have gradually changed.**
- The national VFU network became **recognized as an asset** for national disease surveillance & control.
- **A sanitary mandate control scheme has now begun.**

# Birth of the Public-Private Partnership



Ministry of Agriculture,  
Irrigation & Livestock



Afghanistan Veterinary Field  
Unit (VFU) Network

## The Sanitary Mandate Control Scheme (SMCS)

# Why the Sanitary Mandate Control Scheme (SMCS)?



- Government does not employ sufficient staff to implement disease surveillance and control activities in the field.
- So Government (**public sector**) has contracted Veterinary Field Units (**VFUs – private sector businesses**) to carry out specified services (surveillance, vaccination) on their behalf under a **Sanitary Mandate**.
- Design of surveillance and disease control programmes, sample analysis, contracting, training, monitoring, quality assessment and payments are **all performed by government**.

# Objectives of the SMCS



- Develop an animal **disease reporting and control** system carried out by **private service providers** (VFUs)
- Develop government capacity to manage and monitor this system (**public function**)
- Provide reliable data as part of an **active and passive disease surveillance** system, including early warning of disease outbreaks
- Develop a system which can be engaged in emergencies and for **disease prevention & control schemes**
- Support Afghanistan in fulfilling its **international animal disease reporting requirements** and obligations under the **SPS agreement** and **OIE** membership

# Current Situation and Future Plans



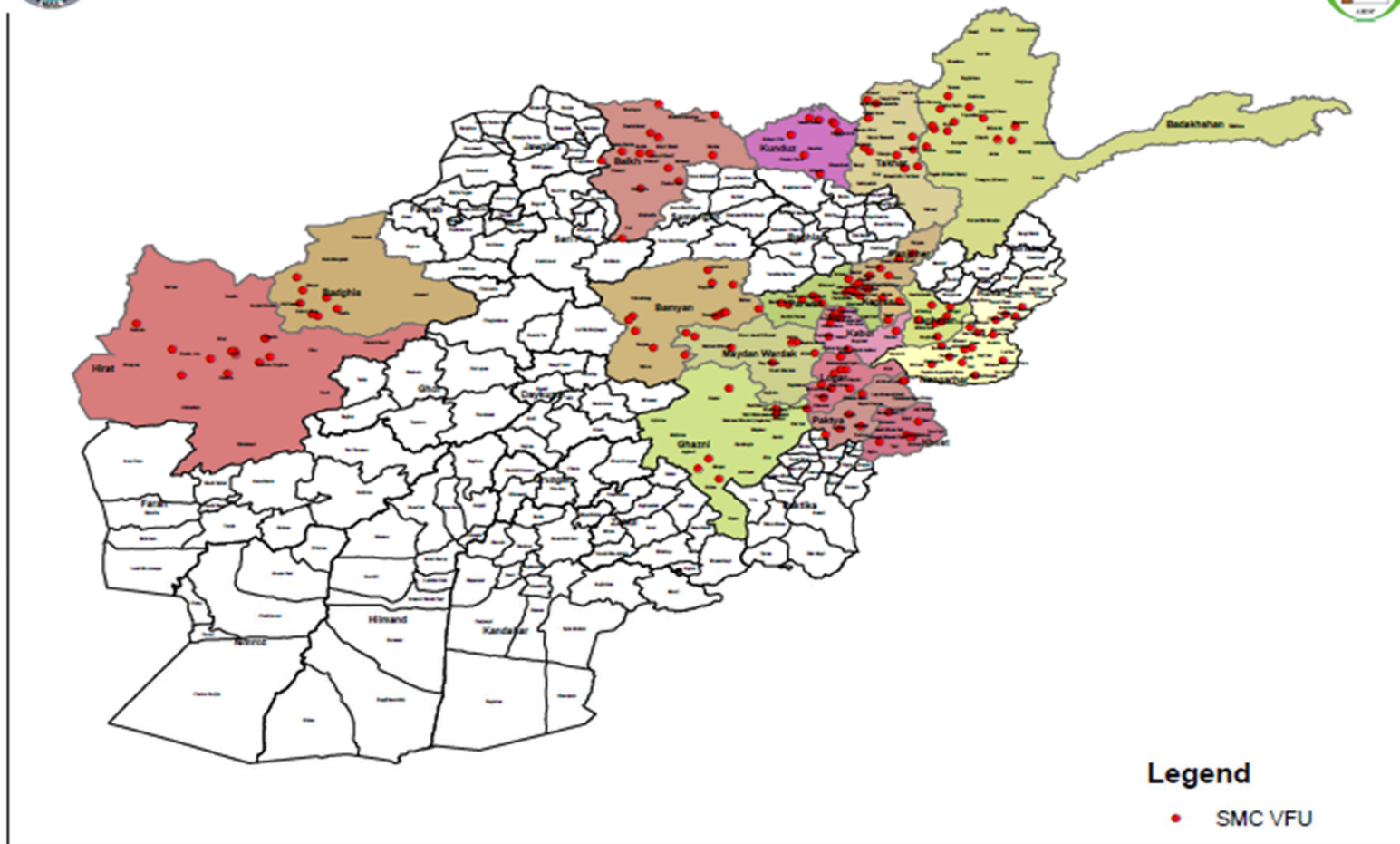
SMCS Year	No. of Provinces	No. of VFUs	No. of Provincial Staff	Contract Period (Months)	Funded by
2010	7	140	0	3	EU/AHDP
2011	14	80	56	12	EU/AHDP + WB/NHLP
2012	17	100	68	6	WB/NHLP
2013	19	138	76	9	WB/NHLP
2014	19	168	76	9	WB/NHLP
2015	27	240	116	12	WB/NHLP
	7	70	20	3	FAO
Entire Country	34 (All Provinces)	310	136		

EU / AHDP: European Union - Animal Health Development Project;  
 WB-NHLP : World Bank - National Horticulture and Livestock Project;  
 FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

# SMCS VFU coverage - 2014



Sanitary Mandate Contracted (SMC) Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) 2014



Animal Health Development Programme (AHDP) Phase II

# SMCS in Action: National Brucellosis Sero-Survey (NBSS)



- Initial pilot activities were strictly for disease reporting.
- In 2012, **public – private** partnerships for collection of sera were established between government and **210 Veterinary Field Units (VFUs)** using Sanitary Mandate Contracts.
- The tasks of **designing** the survey, **contracting**, **training**, **co-ordination**, **communication** and **monitoring** of field activities were performed by **central and provincial government staff**.
- **Payments** were made on the basis of work done.

# National Brucellosis Control Scheme (NBCP)



- Commenced in 2013 (design based on NBSS results)
- 5 year WB / NHLP funded programme providing vaccine in 29 Provinces
- Vaccination of young cattle (approx. 307,000), sheep & goats (approx. 1,600,000) to protect against Brucellosis
- Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock (MAIL) commitment to vaccinate livestock in 5 additional provinces
- Central Epidemiology Department (CED) responsible for planning programme, implementing training & vaccination
- Sanitary Mandate Contracting Department (SMCD) does verification of payment claims & administration of payments



# Conclusions (1)



- The VFU system is an effective model to rapidly rebuild clinical veterinary services in a post-conflict situation in a country where livestock are vital to the economy:
  - Community-based (trust, acceptance & accountability)
  - Staffed by para-professionals (rapid, low cost production)
  - High quality goods & reliable services provided (client satisfaction)
  - Operated in the private sector (efficient and responsive)
  - Based on full cost recovery & fee for service (sustainable)
  - **First line of contact with animal disease in the field**

## Conclusions (2)



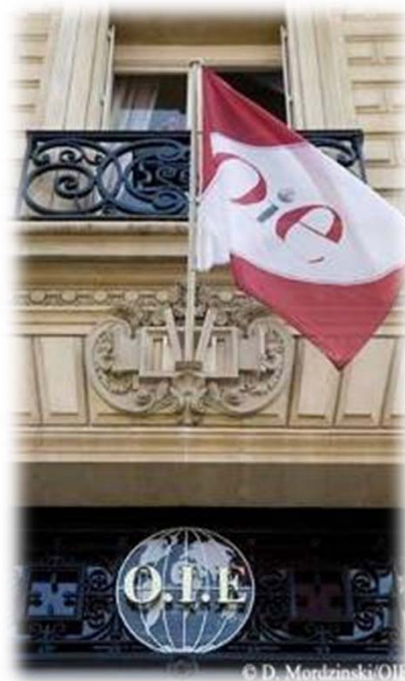
- The Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) provide a **valuable resource** to the Afghanistan Veterinary Authority **for disease control activities via public-private partnership.**
- Afghanistan is currently undertaking a gradual integration of the VFU network into the national veterinary services through **sanitary mandate contracts.**
- Funding is currently being provided by donor-funded projects but **government must take ownership** for the Sanitary Mandate Contracting Scheme to remain viable.

## Conclusions (3)



- Governments can benefit from sanitary mandate schemes by creating an enabling environment for them:
  - **Laws and regulations** that recognize and facilitate the activities of veterinary para-professionals and allow delegation of official activities to them;
  - **Standards** of practice, certification and licensing through a veterinary statutory body;
  - **Effective monitoring** of Veterinary Field Units & their staff;
  - Streamlined procedures for approval and importation of **quality vaccines and medicines**; and
  - Control of sale of vaccines and medicines in the bazaar, with **enforcement** powers exercised.

# Thank you for your attention!



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