



DUTCH COMMITTEE FOR AFGHANISTAN

کمیته هالنډ برای افغانستان



VETERINARY PROGRAMMES

Veterinary Teaching Clinician January 1 – December 31, 2009

Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA)
USAID/ASAP Livestock Sub-Sector Development Project

Through the USAID funded Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program, the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) is recruiting a full time teaching clinician to develop a strong, comprehensive clinical veterinary teaching program in large animal medicine at Kabul University and Nangarhar University and to train their clinical staff so they can successfully carry on the clinical teaching program into the future.

Background

Afghanistan has traditionally been, and remains, an agrarian society, with the vast majority of the population living in rural areas. A large segment of this rural population is engaged in subsistence agriculture or nomadic herding of small ruminants and depends directly or indirectly on livestock for their livelihood. In the past, livestock products such as cashmere fiber, karakul hides and value added Afghan wool carpets were important foreign-exchange earners for the country. In short, animals play a vital role in Afghan culture and the Afghan economy.

Given the importance of livestock in the country, veterinary medicine serves a vital, core function in the social and economic well-being of Afghanistan and its people. Unfortunately, almost 30 years of war have critically degraded the veterinary infrastructure and professional resources of Afghanistan. The provision of veterinary services, in both the private and public sectors, has suffered accordingly.

There is a critical need for external support—moral, financial, and technical—to help restore the capacity of veterinary medicine in this country. Well-defined needs exist in all key areas of veterinary medicine in Afghanistan, including regulatory medicine, diagnostic medicine, clinical-service delivery, and particularly, veterinary education, which must provide the trained human resources required in all the various sectors of the profession.

There are currently two schools of veterinary medicine in Afghanistan recognized by the Ministry of Higher Education. The oldest and most established is Kabul University Veterinary Faculty. The second school of long standing is the Nangarhar University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Jalalabad.

The veterinary schools, especially Kabul University, suffered serious degradation during the extended conflict in Afghanistan. Academic staff diminished drastically in terms of number and educational background. Many staff with advanced degrees left the universities for emigration or for work with non-governmental aid organizations.

Physical facilities were seriously damaged during armed conflict, with the veterinary school at Kabul University being used as a command headquarters for a warring mujahideen faction. Clinical training was severely curtailed and remains inadequate.

Veterinary students currently receive inadequate training in physical restraint, clinical examination, and diagnostic and therapeutic techniques. There is no use of problem oriented medical records and a rational approach to differential diagnosis based on systematic evaluation of clinical signs is not practiced. Use of basic clinical pathology is minimal. Clinical teaching faculty themselves have had little exposure to or experience with modern clinical teaching methods or continuing education on current methods of diagnosis and treatment.

As such current veterinary graduates in Afghanistan are not adequately prepared to practice clinical medicine or to apply necessary clinical medical knowledge to regulatory activities such as disease investigation and disease surveillance.

The teaching clinic at Kabul University was destroyed and remained unused for almost a decade until the building was restored in 2003 and the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA) provided equipment, supplies and paraprofessional staff to make it operational once more in 2004, albeit in a most rudimentary fashion to provide clinical services to livestock and also to companion animals. Several veterinary practitioners from abroad have volunteered to come and work at the clinic for periods of several months and this has benefited both students and staff. Currently, a teaching clinic is being built at Nangarhar University with support from the U.S. military. While these developments represent some progress for the clinical training of Afghan veterinarians, there remains a pressing need for a full time teaching clinician to develop a strong, comprehensive clinical teaching program and to train existing staff at Kabul University and Nangarhar University so they can successfully carry on the clinical teaching program into the future.

Responsibilities

The overall responsibility of the Veterinary Teaching Clinician will be to develop a strong, comprehensive clinical veterinary teaching program in large animal medicine at Kabul University and Nangarhar University and to train their clinical staff so they can successfully carry on the clinical teaching program into the future. Specific responsibilities include:

1. It is envisioned that 70-75% of time will be spent at Kabul University and 25-30% time at Nangarhar University. A satisfactory and appropriate schedule will be worked out between the two universities and the teaching clinician upon arrival. It may be necessary for Nangarhar staff to spend some time in Kabul.
2. In conjunction with clinical faculty, to develop and co-teach a set of practical laboratory courses to teach basic animal handling techniques, physical examination skills, and diagnostic and therapeutic techniques to be taught in the curriculum prior to entry into the final clinical year of training.
3. Work with students and faculty at the teaching hospital to develop clinical skills in client relations and communication, history taking, physical examination, record keeping, differential diagnosis, and treatment.
4. Introduce the concept of the problem oriented medical record to encourage systematic evaluation of clinical cases by students and faculty.
5. Set up a basic clinical pathology lab at the teaching hospital for simple diagnostic procedures such as fecal flotation's, examination of blood smears and tissue aspirates and ensure that faculty can continue to maintain and operate the lab.
6. Develop weekly clinical rounds for students to present case material for discussion with faculty and peers.
7. Make recommendations on staffing, equipment and operational needs for the long term development of the clinical teaching program.
8. In association with DCA and the Afghan Veterinary Association, develop a continuing education course of 1-2 weeks duration to improve the clinical skills of graduate veterinarians and paraveterinarians already working at VFUs in the field. The emphasis should be on proper clinical examination and improved diagnostic and therapeutic techniques. The course will be given at least twice as a refresher course at the DCA training center in Charikar.

Required qualifications

1. DVM or equivalent professional degree from an accredited faculty of veterinary medicine.
2. Licensed to practice veterinary medicine with licenses in good standing in all jurisdictions where licenses are held.
3. Minimum of three years experience teaching clinical medicine to veterinary students or veterinary technicians in a teaching hospital or ambulatory setting. Private practitioners with at least 5 years experience hosting veterinary students in clinical externships will also be considered.
4. Primary clinical practice and teaching experience in large animal medicine with focus on cattle, sheep, goats, and equines.

5. At least 1 year experience living or working in a developing country.
6. Awareness, understanding and acceptance of different standards of clinical practice, and the cultural and economic factors which may impact the standard of practice in a developing country.
7. Proven effective communicator and teacher.
8. Adaptable to difficult working conditions.
9. Patient, tolerant, understanding and not easily frustrated.
10. Willing to accept the risks associated with work in Afghanistan.
11. Names and contact information of 3 references shall be provided.

Desired qualifications

1. Clinical and teaching experience with companion animals and poultry also desirable but not essential.
2. Basic large animal surgery and anesthesia skills desirable but not essential.
3. Experience with artificial insemination desirable but not essential.
4. Speaking knowledge of Dari desirable but not essential.

Interested parties with the necessary qualifications should submit a letter of interest, a CV and contact information for 3 professional references to Dr. David M. Sherman, DCA/ASAP Program Manager, at dms Sherman@rcn.com or Dr. Raymond Briscoe, DCA Country Director at briscoe_raymond@yahoo.co.uk, Dutch Committee for Afghanistan, Kabul, Afghanistan.

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