



VETERINARIANS
WITHOUT BORDERS



VÉTÉRINAIRES
SANS FRONTIÈRES



THE BIG PICTURE: PROGRAM REPORT 2015

A DECADE IN PROFILE

Message from the Executive Director



Seemingly in the blink of an eye, Vets without Borders-Canada is ten years old and entering into its second decade. But the reality is that it has taken countless hours of visioning, planning and hard work from hundreds of VWB/VSF volunteers,

staff, directors, and supporters to turn an idea hatched in a coffee shop into a fully-fledged organization. The road through the first decade was exhilarating as the initial vision of VWB/VSF began to take shape and new partnerships and programs emerged. But it also had some bumps as we learned to navigate the realities of working in developing communities and securing funding to accomplish our goals.

Over the last several years, VWB/VSF has experienced many changes including downsizing the head office and relocating it to Ottawa and transitioning the leadership of programs in Latin America to a new organization, the Global Alliance for Animals and People, launched by former VWB/VSF staff members.

As a result of these critical steps to develop a new structure and process, VWB/VSF created a new pathway to take advantage of expanded funding and partnership opportunities. VWB/VSF is now well positioned to scale up on a host of activities—from training Primary Animal Health Workers to capacity building of veterinarians and supporting local partners to improve animal and public health, livelihoods, and food security.

In 2015, VWB/VSF will be launching two new programs funded by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. The first is a five-year volunteer cooperation program aimed at increasing food security of small-scale farmers in Ghana, Kenya, Laos, Tanzania, Uganda, and Vietnam by engaging Canadian volunteers-- veterinarians and technicians, animal nutritionists, health economists, food safety specialists and others. The second program is a two-year food security program in South Sudan in partnership with the German and Swiss Vets without Borders.

My personal journey has been very closely tied to that of VWB/VSF – first as a member of the founding board of directors and then as the organization's first, and only, executive director. But after an exceptional decade, I have made the difficult decision to transition out of my role with VWB/VSF this year to pursue other personal and professional goals as well as to open up an opportunity for a new leader to bring fresh ideas and energy to the organization. I feel very honoured to have had the chance to work with the incredible people that make up the VWB/VSF community and I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the endless support, commitment, and passion that have moved VWB/VSF toward the goal of making our world a healthier place for animals and for people. With all of you as my inspiration, I promise to remain a dedicated supporter and tireless advocate for VWB/VSF.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erin Fraser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sincerely,
Erin Fraser

ECOHEALTH: THE BIG PICTURE IN CONTEXT

From the beginning, VWB/VSF has been careful to keep an eye on The Big Picture in designing and implementing projects around the world. That Big Picture is best defined by the concept of Ecohealth, which suggests that people and animals can only be healthy if the environment they live in is healthy. That means that the air and water need to be clean, that the soil is healthy enough to support the plants that, in turn, support human and animal life, and that animals, both wild and domestic are healthy, are available as a source of food, and are not transmitting diseases to humans.

What sets the Ecohealth approach apart from earlier ecological thinking is that it puts humans squarely in the middle of the frame. It is based on natural sciences, but it also takes human behaviour into account, and ensures that people and communities are involved in the decisions that affect their health and environment. The animals that are the focus of VWB/VSF's work bring value to humans as a source of food, income, traction, and companionship, but they are both affected by, and affect the environment in which they exist. They are part of a delicate balance that includes soil, water, topography, population density, markets, culture, and tradition.

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has been a leading proponent of Ecohealth and has supported VWB/VSF in employing the concept in its work.

Field Building Leadership Initiative (FBLI)

This project is an IDRC-funded consortium created to build regional Ecohealth leadership in Southeast Asia. It supports multi-country, multi-disciplinary research into human health issues related to agricultural intensification. VWB/VSF led the production of an Ecohealth Training Manual.

Building EcoHealth Capacity in Asia (BECA)

This was a multi-country program to apply Ecohealth approaches to the prevention of emerging infectious diseases (EIDs). VWB/VSF worked with academic researchers, government staff and extension personnel from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam to develop expertise in Ecohealth to combat EIDs and strengthen networks and policies with Ecohealth approaches. This initiative was also funded by IDRC.



Photo: Ernest Goh

KEY ISSUES IN FOCUS

A unique approach to poverty reduction

VWB/VSF occupies a unique position among Canadian organizations involved in international development. Its position is defined by the Ecohealth approach, and its experience has given it a specific perspective on development issues and approaches. What follows are three of the many issues that define VWB/VSF's unique contribution.

Women and Livestock

Livestock are important to small farmers all over the world, but they are particularly important to women from subsistence farming families in the poorest countries of the developing world. Even though women do a lot of the farm work in Africa and Asia, they often have little control over what is produced, or the profits from that production. With livestock it is a different story. At least two thirds of the poor livestock keepers in the world are rural women. They often own small livestock—poultry, goats and pigs—and even if they don't own cows, as the people in charge of milking and processing, they often have control over the consumption of milk and the use of the profits from dairying.



For Veterinarians without Borders, these special circumstances mean that women are an important focus for livestock programming. By ensuring that women have access to livestock and training, VWB/VSF can ensure better nutrition for the entire family as well as income that will be used for household needs such as clothing, health care, and school fees. As well, women have been engaged as group leaders and local educators and trained as Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW), providing a new source of family income, and a place of respect within the community.

Where there is no veterinarian

Community animal health workers (CAHWS) have become an important element of VWB/VSF's approach to development. While members of VSF-International have developed decades of expertise in CAHW training models, embracing the practical notion that local people with an aptitude for animal care can be empowered to perform many basic veterinary tasks, dramatically improving animal health in their villages and regions.

In many of the countries where VWB/VSF works there are few veterinarians and most of those are government employees working at a policy or supervisory level. Even if more vets were available, most small farmers would not be able to afford their services. CAHWs fill the gap, serving the needs of small livestock owners at an affordable price, while providing a good livelihood for the CAHWs. VWB/VSF has developed an effective training program based on a curriculum developed by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

VWB/VSF tries to ensure that CAHWs have the support of veterinarians, often by cell phone, to provide diagnostic assistance and advice. Government veterinarians have learned that the value flows both ways. CAHWs are their eyes and ears in the field—the first to notice the emergence of new diseases, or spot an outbreak in time to prevent a full epidemic. Another important factor in CAHW success is ensuring that they have appropriate, properly refrigerated medicines, vaccines, and supplies. That need is filled through the creation of rural drug vendors and, in some cases, regional animal health centres.

Rabies

Among zoonotic diseases, rabies is very much a known quantity. It is preventable – a vaccine has been available for more than 100 years (CDC) —and it is curable with timely post-exposure treatment, yet in the developing world it continues to be a serious threat to human life. Estimates put the death toll at 70,000 people each year, nearly all in the developing countries of Africa and Asia. Children are disproportionately affected— more than 60 per cent of the deaths are in



children under 15 years of age and 99 per cent of the deaths are the result of dog bites.

VWB/VSF has been working on this challenge since it was founded. Volunteers have been working with VWB/VSF on rabies prevention in Latin America since 2005, but it is increasingly difficult to fund those missions and VWB/VSF has recently transferred its rabies work in Latin America to the Global Alliance for Animals and People. VWB/VSF has built rabies prevention clinics into other projects – the effort in Laos and Cambodia is a good example where over 5,000 dogs and cats have been vaccinated in the last five years. In South Sudan, VWB/VSF's Community Animal Health Workers saw that people were being infected from the more than 50,000 dogs in Maban County. VWB/VSF was able to scrape together money to run a small campaign to vaccinate 400 animals – a good start, but not nearly enough to reach the level of herd immunity necessary to eliminate the threat.

For VWB/VSF, any focus on zoonotic diseases in the tropics must necessarily include attention to rabies. And while finding resources for rabies prevention may be a challenge, the disease will continue to be on VWB/VSF's radar as it expands its efforts around the world.

SNAPSHOT: SOUTH SUDAN

It is the world's newest sovereign nation, and one of the most troubled. Since the spring of 2013, South Sudan has become an important focal point for VWB/VSF's work in Africa. Two projects, one just completed and another in the planning stages, have immersed VWB/VSF in the intense and difficult work of ensuring the survival of people and animals in a country torn by decades of conflict and teetering on the edge of famine.

Helping People and Animals Survive Conflict and Displacement

When VWB/VSF-Canada arrived in South Sudan's Maban County in April 2013, a humanitarian crisis was already underway. International Aid agencies were struggling to get food to as many as 130,000 refugees who had fled a violent conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State, as well as the 45,000 original residents. Compounding the problem was the fact that the refugees had brought with them some 350,000 cattle, sheep and goats, an unsustainable number given that they had no claim to grazing rights or water. Not surprisingly, 400 to 500 animals were dying every week.

Over the next 18 months, with funding support from Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and

Development, VWB/VSF Canada and its partner VSF-Germany set to work to preserve as many of these prized animals as possible, vaccinating, de-worming and treating nearly 170,000 head. Forty three local people—both men and women, locals and refugees—were trained as animal health workers to do much of that work and three animal health centres, stocked with the necessary supplies and medications, were established. VWB/VSF also set to work to reduce the animal population, easing the pressure on scarce resources and providing badly needed food for hungry people. Two hygienic slaughter facilities were constructed and 23 local butchers trained in sanitary slaughtering and meat-preparation. VWB/VSF purchased healthy animals from refugees and local herders, and used a voucher system to distribute nearly 20 metric tonnes of meat to more than 4,500 of the most vulnerable families.

Other project activities include helping 250 women-headed households to establish small poultry flocks, organizing the proper disposal of animal carcasses, improving resource management and conflict resolution through water and pasture sharing agreements, and initiating first steps in a rabies reduction program targeting the estimated 50,000 dogs in the refugee camps.

Building Sustainable Food Security for the Future

The work in Maban County was an intensive, short-term effort to keep people and animals alive. For the people thrown together in Maban County, and the organizations there to help them, the immediate focus is on survival, and plans for the future are an unaffordable luxury. Yet for South Sudan as a whole, in spite of decades of war, and a food crisis brought on by a new civil conflict—an estimated 3.9 million people are short of food—a vision of a better future is essential to motivate the hard work required to become a self-sufficient nation state. VWB/VSF is working to develop a project to support South Sudanese food producers to take the first steps toward realizing that goal.





paid to women-headed households. Some of the most vulnerable people are youth – both boys and girls – who survive by processing or marketing food products produced by others – both farmers and fishers. There will also be a special effort made to improve their livelihoods.



Starting in two of the less-conflicted states, Warrap and Northern Bahr El Ghazal, VWB/VSF-Canada and its partners VSF Germany and VSF Swiss are starting the difficult process of transforming food production activities from desperate subsistence to sustainable business. The challenge in that, is considerable. Through decades of conflict, South Sudan has fallen behind. As many as 1.3 million farmers have abandoned agriculture because of conflict. Only 27 per cent of the population can read and write – one of the lowest literacy rates in the world.

VWB/VSF and its partners are planning an integrated program of support to small farmers and fishers that will help them increase production of cereal grains, vegetables, fruit, and small livestock, and will help fresh water fishers increase their catches. Support will include training, as well as inputs such as seed, fruit trees, tools including fishing supplies, and poultry. In addition to production assistance, the initiative will work with producers and community groups to improve the value chain for food products through better processing, storage and marketing. It will improve support systems for small farmers and fishers by training agriculture extension workers and community animal health workers and will help farmers engage in the planning and policy process at both country and the state levels.

The focus of this effort is on vulnerable rural populations in the two target states. That includes the majority of small farmers, but there will be particular attention



SNAPSHOT: LAOS AND CAMBODIA

Laos and Cambodia are two of the poorest countries in South East Asia. Both have large rural populations, and in both cases a significant percentage of that population is poor and suffers from food insecurity.

Eighty per cent of Lao households rely on smallholder agriculture as their primary means of support and an estimated 40 per cent of Lao children are malnourished. In Cambodia, 90 per cent of the poor live in rural areas and 1.6 million rural households face seasonal food shortages every year. Both countries suffer from a lack of veterinary capacity—Laos has only 80 veterinarians in the entire country. Both countries are considered high risk for zoonotic disease transmission.

Since 2012, with generous funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Veterinarians without Borders has been working in 11 villages in the Xaythany District of Laos and 8 villages in Battambang Province in Cambodia to improve agricultural productivity and reduce livestock morbidity and zoonotic diseases. The project has three main foci: 1) Training Community Animal Health Workers—28 so far. 2) Providing accessible education on community and environmental health through community health days which include rabies



vaccination clinics. More than 1,000 people participate each year. 3) Improving livelihoods by increasing food productivity through activities such as introducing simple greenhouse technology, cricket farming, and poultry vaccination.

Insects for Nutrition

In Laos, traditional diets rely on rice and low protein foods. As a result, protein energy malnutrition (PEM) is common. With funding from the International Development Research Centre and in partnership with Healthbridge, Guelph University, and the Faculty of Agriculture of the National University of Laos, Veterinarians without Borders is exploring insect farming as a culturally appropriate way to reduce food insecurity. Insects are an efficient source of protein, fat, vitamins and minerals, they reproduce rapidly, and produce low greenhouse emissions.



Recipe—Jaew Crickets

1kg Crickets
3 cups grilled shallots
30 grilled chillies
15 grilled green onions
40 cloves, grilled garlic
3 teaspoons salt

1. Wash and boil crickets and allow them to dry.
2. Stir fry crickets with oil until crispy.
3. Pound the shallots, chillies, green onions and garlic together. Combine with crickets and serve with vegetables.

VOLUNTEERING: GETTING BEHIND THE CAMERA



Ilima Poultry Project

Volunteer Project Leads–

Drs. Roger Thomson
and Adam Little

VWB/VWF Interns, 2014–

Elizabeth Brown Okruhlik,

Julie Must **Local Partners–** Sokoine University of Agriculture, the Uyole Agriculture College, and the Open University of Tanzania.

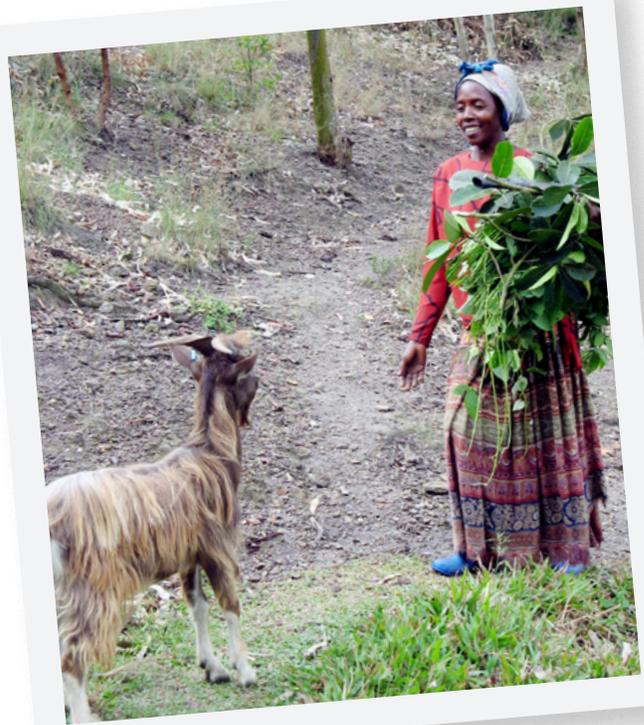
Poultry, with their low initial investment and quick returns are the perfect entry level livestock for small farmers—particularly women—looking to improve family income and nutrition. This project is built around a train-the-trainer program. With the addition of a third village in the summer of 2014, the program now includes 150 farmers including 20 “teacher” farmers who help train others in their villages on poultry health and husbandry.

Enhanced Guinea Fowl Production in the Upper West Region of Ghana

Volunteer Project Lead– Dr. Trace Mackay

Volunteers 2014– Stephen Woeller, Dr. Kirstin MacDonald

From 2011 to 2014, this project, funded by the Ghanaian Ministry of Food and Agriculture and led by the Faculty of Agriculture, from the University of Development Studies summer of 2014, has helped guinea fowl producers, particularly women, realize much greater returns from their efforts. It has also improved food security in a region where poor rural people often experience food shortages.



Uganda – Goat Pass-On Project

Volunteer Project Lead– Dr. Claire Card

Volunteers 2014– Dr. Laura MacDonald, Dr. Ursula Perdrizet, Danielle Gauthier-Kratz

VWB/VSF Interns 2014– Jaimee Gardner and Mary-Claire Sanderson

Global Vet Student Volunteers 2014– Jennifer Hay, Megan Jurasek, Arafah Ravanbakhsh, Elyse Salpeter, Sarah Zelinski

Local Partner– *Foundation for AIDS-Orphaned Children*

Since 2006, the “Goat Pass-on” project, under the volunteer leadership of Dr. Claire Card from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) has engaged the volunteer services of more than 40 student interns as well as 6 Canadian vets to support goat rearing as a way to improve the livelihoods of deeply impoverished AIDS-affected households around the city of Mbarara in Western Uganda.

New Volunteer Opportunities

Over the next five years a new partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development will allow VWB/VSF to dramatically expand its offering of international volunteer opportunities. There will be ample opportunities for veterinarians and vet techs, but there will also be a need to recruit lab technicians, clinic managers, animal nutritionists, specialists in integrated rural development, food safety specialists, researchers, and horticulturalists. If you are interested in seeing the full list of opportunities, please contact VWB/VSF.

Kenya Dairy Production



Volunteer Project Manager –
Dr. John Van Leeuwen
Professional Volunteer 2014 – Dr. Shauna Richards,
UPEI Graduate School
VWB/VWF Interns 2014 –
Nancy Brochu and
Anika Mueller
Canadian Partner – Farmers
Helping Farmers
Local Partners – Wakulima
Dairy Coop

Since its launch in 2006 more than 1,000 farmers, mostly women, have received training in various aspects of dairy production and 41 Community Animal Health Workers have been certified. As a result of the program, co-op milk production has nearly doubled and women have gained greater control over their work, increasing their ownership of cows, handling the marketing of dairy products, and controlling the income from dairy sales.

Canine Health in Canada's North

Volunteer Project Coordinators – Drs. Susan Kutz and Frank van de Meer, University of Calgary, Dr Josiane Houle, University of Montreal

Professional volunteers 2014 – Dr. Carolyn Hours (Zoetis), Tanya (RVT)

Student Volunteers 2014 – Jessie (RVT), Jessie, Kylie, Andrea (veterinary medicine)

VWB is a partner in two canine initiatives in Canada's north: with the University of Calgary Veterinary School in the Northwest Territories, and with the University of Montreal Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Kuujjuak, Nunavik. Both areas have large dog populations and limited access to veterinary services. In 2015, the U of Calgary team visited five communities in the remote Sahtu region to vaccinate and deworm dogs, and provide sterilization clinics, general consults, and home visits. Zoetis sponsored the program in both 2014 and 2015.

Internships

Internships

The VWB/VSF student intern program offers a unique learning opportunity to students from Canada's Veterinary colleges who spend three months working with local partners on a VWB/VSF development project in the global south. Funded by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the program exposes the next generation of veterinarians to a wider range of animal health issues than they would normally encounter in Canada, and offers an eye-opening immersion in sustainable development.

2015

Maggie Grover, Mira Kelada, Guylene Kheirhkah, Sarifa Lakhdir, Brittany Smith, Sarah Zelinski

2014

Mary-Claire Sanderson, Jaimee Gardner, Nancy Brochu, Anika Mueller, Sarah Edwards, Michelle Lam, Elizabeth Brown-Okruhlik, Julie Must

2013

Jodi Boyd, Ilse Dedden, Kellie Haggett, Geneviève Luca, Katie Nicol, Jessie Wilkins

2012

Graham Ellingsen, Andrea Pellegrino, Rebecca Jackson, Corinne Letendre, Catherine Nicolou, Colin Taylor, Shona Kowtecky, Tara Plante, Morgan Findlay, Jennifer Huizen, Jerome Papillon, Steve Kruzenski

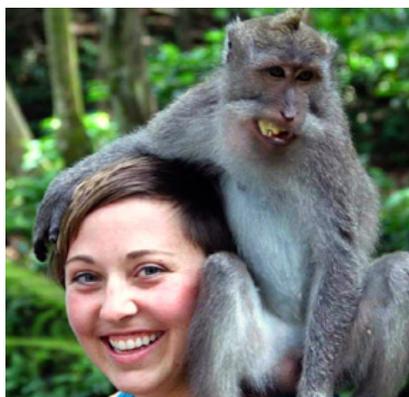


VOLUNTEERING WITH VWB/VSF

VWB/VSF runs on the power of volunteers. Some guide the organization as members of the Board of Directors, some share their skills with partners overseas, others help with fundraising or communications, but in every case they contribute to VWB/VSF's success and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Volunteers of the Year – 2015

Two individuals were honoured this year for their outstanding service to the organization. This award is sponsored by Aeroplan.



Katie Manoogian began volunteering for Vets without Borders in February 2014 while she was living in Vientiane, Laos.

Katie, who has a background in journalism and healthcare management, has done a remarkable job supporting Vets without Borders' social media, donor communications and reporting, and fundraising campaigns. In December 2014, Katie and her husband returned to their home in Portland, Oregon, where she continues her excellent communications work on behalf of VWB/VSF. A long time animal lover, Katie independently worked to rescue several street dogs and cats in Laos and found them safe, loving, and permanent homes.



Dr. Laura McDonald is a small animal vet in Regina, Saskatchewan who has had a long-standing interest in global health and international

development. She started her volunteer work with VWB/VSF in 2009 as a student intern with the Goat Pass-On project in Mbarara, Uganda, and has returned to Uganda to offer her skills and support almost every year since. Laura works for the Animal Clinic of Regina, and credits their support for allowing her to maintain her involvement with VWB/VSF. Laura has three rescue cats and a rescue dog. She comes from a family of 10 siblings, including her identical twin who is also a vet and has volunteered with the Uganda project.

Previous Volunteers of the Year

2014 – Patricia Lechten 2013 – Adam Little and Robin Payton 2012 – Claire Card

Volunteers 2012-2015

Brian Ausman, Tessa Baker, Vicky Cansino, Claire Card, Monique Charron, Lauren Classen, Katie Clow, Tracy Cornish, Anne Drew, Thom Drew, Lindsay Durbano, Natalie Flammia, Nessa Forde, Elena Garde, Jackie Greenwood, Doug Jack, Carol Johnson, Patricia Lechten, Adam Little, Jeanne Lofsted, Amy Lowe, Meg Lunney, Trace Mackay, Katie Manoogian, Laura McDonald, Adil Nazarali, Stacey Nell, Stacey Ness, Melissa Payne, Guillermo Pérez, Vannaphone Putthana, Senani Ratnayake, Kirsten Reilly, Shauna Richards, Lindsey Rogers, Stephanie Silva, Leah Stephenson, Enid Stiles, Colin Taylor, Roger Thomson, John Van Leeuwen, Kelleigh Waters, Thomas Weigel, Stephen Woeller



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Board Members

John Vanleeuwen (Chair), Cliff Friesen (Treasurer), Joanne Owens (Secretary), Enid Stiles (Past-chair), Jessica Bedford, Nikki Jamieson, Duane Landals, Adam Little, Sylvain Quessy, Roger Thomson, David Waltner-Toews

Completed Terms – 2013 to 2015

Hazel Dickie, Jim Fairles, Jack Gewarter, David Hall, Josiane Houle, Scarlett Magda, Trace McKay, Barry Stemshorn, Craig Stephen

Advisory Council

Joseph Bata, Brian G. Bedard, Theresa Bernardo, Lloyd Dalziel, Jeff Davidson, Brian Evans, Dorothy Geale, Ralph Goldman, Alden Hadwen, John McDermott, Chas Povey, Senani Ratnayake, Alastair Summerlee, Stephen Woeller

Staff

Erin Fraser (Executive Director), Monique Charron (Senior Program Administrator), Margot Camoin (Veterinarian and Livelihoods Officer), Sonia Fèvre (Asia Regional Director), Hiu Tung (Heather) Ho (Junior Program Officer), John Bosco Wale (South Sudan Program Manager)

Front Cover photo: Ernest Goh
www.ernestgoh.com

Financial Statements

Audited financial statements for fiscal year 2014-2015 will be available on VWB/VSF's web site by September 2015.

Thank You

Veterinarians without Borders Canada is grateful for all of the individuals and organizations that support our efforts to work for and with communities in need to foster the health of animals, people, and the environments that sustain us. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the on-going support of the following organizations:



Foreign Affairs, Trade and
Development Canada

Affaires étrangères, Commerce
et Développement Canada

IDRC | CRDI

International Development Research Centre
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

Canada



zoetis



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HEALTHY ANIMALS, HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY PLANET