

INDIA: Veterinary Study Tour February 25 - March 11, 2006

Recovery from Natural Disasters

This trip to India will give study tour participants insight and knowledge of Heifer's sustainable development model in areas of natural disasters. When the 2004 tsunami hit, the coastal regions of Tamilnadu and Pondicherry were severely damaged causing destruction to infrastructure, property, livestock and human lives.

In this coastal area participants saw rehabilitation work being done by the Society for Education, Village Action and Improvement, a voluntary service organization working for the development of the poor.



Using the Heifer model, SEVAI is implementing an innovative livestock program for 2930 tsunami affected families in order to develop an alternative source of livelihood security. Community nurseries are being raised to reestablish fodder production for reestablished goat herds. Family participants are livestock and fisher folks and members of the dalit (untouchable) caste who have lost their main sources of income.

Knowledge and Skill Development

During the Study Tour, participants visited the state of Orissa. Orissa, located along the eastern coast of Bay of Bengal, is a very picturesque state in East India. Orissa is well known for its ethnic groups, temples and tigers and is also known as the poorest state of India. It's coastal and western belt is the most impoverished where almost 80% of the coastal project area is below the poverty line.

In the Orissa area the Cooperative Outreach of India (COI) is a local community non-governmental organization established in 1993. This project provides services to approximately 3,078 families who have never had the opportunity to live their lives with dignity by reestablish livelihoods with goats, sheep and poultry production using Heifer's model.

Orissa is rich in local breeds of livestock. The goats and sheep are Black Bengal and Ganjam meat breeds. The chickens are called Naked-neck, and are raised for their good production characteristics.

Due to lack of good management skills and effective veterinary services, productivity of the livestock is poor. COI helps improve both the quantity and quality of livestock by developing cost effective technology methods to transfer knowledge and skills on livestock management and to provide adequate animal health care.

Tour hosts

Terry Wollen, DVM - Director of Animal Well Being at Heifer International, email at terry.wollen@heifer.org.

Dr. Wollen has been working in international development programs for almost nine years, five with Heifer International. He has led veterinary study tours to SE Asia, Central Europe, southern Africa and now to the India sub-continent. He will provide the Heifer perspective to our experiences in these projects in India.

Marie Suthers-McCabe, DVM, email at msuthers@vt.edu.

While on this trip, Dr. Marie Suthers-McCabe was an associate professor of human-companion animal interaction in the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine and Director of the Center for Animal Human Relationships. At the July 05 AVMA meeting, she was honored with one of the top honors of the organization: the Leo K. Bustad Companion Animal Veterinarian of the Year Award - for outstanding work in increasing understanding of, preserving and protecting human-animal relationships. In June 2006, Dr. McCabe was hired as the Director of Community Education for Heifer International.