



**Inauguration of a new Animal Health Centre and
Ceremonial hand over of pregnant cows, veterinary supplies and equipment**
18 December 2006, Lhoknga, Indonesia



As part of a joint effort between FAO, Government line ministries and services, the Bureau for the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (BRR) of Aceh and Nias and the NGO Plan International, the Lhoknga Animal Health Centre was officially inaugurated today by Mr Usman Budiman, Second Assistant for Economic Development to the Governor of Aceh. The Centre, constructed by Plan International and supported by FAO with medicines, supplies and equipment from the European Commission (ECHO) and the Government of Belgium, is capable of serving thousands of livestock owners and their households in three subdistricts (i.e. Lhoknga, Leupung and Peukan Bada) by providing veterinary care for buffaloes, cattle, small ruminants and poultry. The Centre is the twenty-seventh of its kind in Aceh province.

Mr Ted Burke, Deputy Coordinator of the FAO Rehabilitation Support and Coordination Unit in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, praised the combined efforts of FAO, the Government Livestock Service (e.g. Dinas Peternakan), BRR and Plan International in making high-quality,

accessible veterinary care a reality for the tsunami-affected livestock owners of Aceh Besar. All stakeholders agreed that collaboration was a main factor in developing such a comprehensive response to vulnerable farmer needs.

The Animal Health Centre will be staffed by four full-time personnel from Dinas Peternakan: one veterinarian, two para-veterinarians and one administrative assistant. FAO provided motorbikes with Belgian and ECHO funding to facilitate their visits in support of farmers in the field. Extension services from FAO implementing partner Syiah Kuala University also complemented animal health protection efforts by working in concert with Dinas Peternakan to build veterinary capacity and farmer knowledge. Furthermore, thanks to both Belgian and ECHO support, FAO equipped the Centre with various veterinary medicines, equipment and supplies, including essential antibiotics and vitamins to keep animals healthy. “The lack of animal health services in post-tsunami Aceh, combined with the traditionally high demand for livestock in the region, has led to a shortage of animals and meat,” Mr Yusya Abubakar, BRR Director of Agriculture Development said. “This structure’s purpose of maintaining the health of animals is, therefore, extremely important.”

In conjunction with animal health protection, FAO has also focused on replenishing the livestock population for vulnerable farmers, as demonstrated by the ceremonial hand over of 500 pregnant cows from FAO with Belgian and ECHO funding and an additional 100 pregnant cows from Plan International. Part of a FAO-inspired, rotational sharing scheme, the resulting 600 beneficiary owners represent the second phase of the programme. The initial recipients are now in possession of newborn calves. Moreover, both first phase and second phase livestock benefactors can now rely on the new Animal Health Centre for veterinary care.

Current and new funds permitting, FAO plans to continue assisting the tsunami-affected population of Aceh province through livestock and veterinary supply distributions as well as support to the Lhoknga Animal Health Centre and others like it to facilitate the Government’s long term plan of establishing one centre in each of the 400 subdistricts of Aceh.