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Newcastle Disease Control Consolidation Project, Malawi

The Newcastle Disease Control Consolidation Project is a follow-on from the Southern Africa Newcastle Disease (ND) Control Project (SANDCP) which covers Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania. In Malawi SANDCP focused primarily on the introduction and testing of I-2 ND vaccine and ensuring sustainability of distribution activities of the vaccine. Interim funding for one year from February 2006 to January 2007 is providing an opportunity to continue the good work done under SANDCP with the Department of Animal Health and Livestock Production and to develop a more comprehensive approach in Malawi in making vaccine production, and ensuring the sustainability of distribution activities.

The focus of SANDCP in Malawi was primarily on the introduction and testing of I-2 ND vaccine. The Newcastle Disease Consolidation Project was prepared in consultation with the Malawi SANDCP Country Coordinator in the Department of Animal Health and Livestock Production, and incorporates recommendations made by national consultants that future activities focus on the sustainability of ND control activities, including refining vaccine production, quality control, distribution, field usage and cost-recovery mechanisms so that ND control can be established on a sustainable basis.

The rationale for a pro-poor livestock development policy to incorporate village poultry production is logical as it is closely correlated with the poorest household. The identification of farmers whose only livestock is poultry can be, in many cases, a tool for targeting very poor farming households. Village chickens can be of utmost importance for poverty alleviation as the poorest households and families affected by long-term disease such as HIV/AIDS find chicken raising an easy activity that can contribute to household food security and income. Given that women are the main carers of sick people and that chickens are usually under women's control, chickens can play an important role providing them with additional resources to carry out their important task of supporting people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Impact studies have demonstrated that income from the sale of eggs in South Asia is used to educate children and begin the process of asset accumulation. In addition, the sale of poultry products allows investment in other livestock such as goats, cattle, expanded poultry production and other business enterprises.

Newcastle Disease (ND) is endemic in Malawi and every year outbreaks occur which kill up to 90% of the chickens, making it a major constraint to village chicken production. The SANDCP project successfully established I-2 vaccine production at the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL) in late 2003, who conducted laboratory and field trials in 2004, and then conducted the first two ND vaccination campaigns in trial villages in 2005 with assistance from SANDCP.

The expected outputs of the Newcastle Disease Consolidation Project are that the I-2 ND vaccine will have been registered; sustainable ND control activities, including distribution of copies of the ND training and extension materials will be ongoing in SANDCP pilot areas and expanded to at least two new areas beyond the SANDCP pilot sites; vaccine production will be increased to three million doses/year; and more NGOs will become involved in ND control activities, especially those involved with HIV/AIDS mitigation activities. Having achieved these goals, the project will ensure that a locally produced, quality thermotolerant ND vaccine is available for use at an affordable price by trained community vaccinators working under the supervision of competent extension workers.