For more information, contact:
Heifer International Nepal
Hattiban, Lalitpur-15
G.P.O. Box: 6043
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: +977 1 5250554, 5250841, 2121112
Email: heifer.nepal@heifer.org
Website: www.heifernepal.org

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On April 25, 2015, a massive 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal killing nearly 9,000 people. The earthquake brought down ancient heritage sites, destroyed infrastructure, displaced families and took the lives of many innocent people. In the aftermath of the disaster, electricity and cell phone networks were disrupted, causing a disconnection between families, friends and services.

Smallholder farmers were among the most severely hit demographics as 90 percent of the population outside of Kathmandu district were engaged in livestock raising and agriculture prior to the earthquake.
According to Post Disaster Need Analysis Report produced by the Ministry of Agricultural Development, Nepal, losses in livestock sector were as follows:

- 17,000 large animals
- 40,000 small animals
- 500,000 poultry

*In addition to loss of livestock assets, farmers lost animal shelter, feed and agricultural inputs.*
Madhu's buffalo was 5 months pregnant when the earthquake hit, after hit resulting in its miscarriage. She shares, “My family's major source of income is farming and livestock raising. When they suffer, my family suffers too.”
HEAL-Nepal sought to help earthquake-affected farmers maintain healthy livelihoods by restoring disrupted livestock service systems and protecting valuable livestock assets for revival of rural household economic activities and market linkage.

The 120-day project benefitted more than 15,000 families directly and 210,000 families indirectly in five of the 14 most affected districts.
Tin Bahadur Shrestha, 46, from Sindhupalchowk lost his entire life’s belongings in the earthquake. As soon as the earth started rumbling, the walls of his house collapsed, which then destroyed his livestock shed which was adjacent to his house. In absence of proper shelter, livestock were exposed to parasites and harsh weather conditions, making them prone to infections and diseases thus reducing their productivity. This had economic implications for farmers in the long run.
HEAL-Nepal project supported farmers in construction of 1,350 model temporary livestock shelters (TLS), which provide shelter to approximately 6,500 animals. The model TLSs can be constructed with low investment using locally available materials, are resistant to seismic activities and have been approved by Department of Livestock Services. In HEAL communities, other farmers are also replicating this model.
When the massive earthquake hit Nepal, millions of livestock were severely injured. With animal shelters destroyed and livestock services disrupted, injured livestock continued to suffer resulting in decreasing productivity. HEAL-Nepal collaborated with District Livestock Service Offices in its five project districts to organize 50 free animal health camps to ensure farmers could access veterinary services and protect their livestock assets.
Laxmi Shrestha from Kavre depends on her dairy buffalo for her family's survival, but after the earthquake her dairy buffalo stopped giving milk. She shared, "The doctors found it infested with worms and gave medicines and vitamins so it can get stronger." After getting it checked by a veterinary doctor in a free animal health camp organized by HEAL-NEPAL project, Laxmi added, "I think the harsh sunlight dried up her milk. I hope the medicines will help her so she can give milk like before."
With heavy losses incurred on livestock assets, feed and shelter, the situation of livestock management was in a dire state post-disaster. Degradation of animal health along with risk of zoonosis-transfer of diseases from animals to humans was rising.
HEAL-NEPAL sought to promote better management of livestock in the post-disaster scenario by disseminating comprehensible messages through community FM stations to avoid further losses of livestock assets and quick recovery of livelihoods. Through partnership with community based FM stations, smallholder farmers in five districts were informed regarding bio-security measures, reconstruction of temporary livestock shelters and scientific feed systems.
The project has trained 5,758 farmers on improved animal management practices such as proper housing, feed and nutrition and timely medication to help victim families "build back better" in the livestock sub-sector.
By mobilizing, training and coordinating animal health service providers, HEAL-NEPAL is restoring disrupted livestock and veterinary service systems to preserve livelihood assets and help farmers recover from the losses incurred during the earthquake. In Chainpur, Dhading district, Mohan Aryal, Community Agro-vet Entrepreneur (CAVE) provides veterinary services to around 600 households. He makes rounds in the village, visiting farmers door to door with necessary treatment and medicines.
Loss of draft oxen, breeding cattle and buffalo bulls in large numbers has long-term implications for farmers as majority of them practice traditional agricultural and livestock raising. Draft oxen are of critical importance to plow the rice fields during monsoon season, while breeding animals are necessary to reproduce. HEAL-Nepal placed breeding bull in 130 household in its project areas, which will benefit 19,500 household on average in the community. The project also placed a pair of oxen each in 43 households, which will benefit 210 household on average.
HEAL-Nepal project trained 251 veterinary service providers with Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) training to build their capacity to meet the needs of livestock farmers affected by the earthquake and help them be better prepared for future emergencies. In the picture, Mohan Basnet (far right), LEGS trained technician, follows up on a farmer’s progress from HEAL-Nepal’s support. He shares that he feels more confident in providing vet services to the earthquake-affected families.
Improving nutrition intake is vital in recovery of earthquake-affected livestock productivity. To address this need, HEAL-Nepal has trained 5,758 farmers to prepare feed and mineral blocks from locally available resources such as corn, rice, bran, husks, salt etc.
Rekha Maya Tamang received seeds for forage along with orientation on methods of planting it from HEAL-Nepal. She planted them just before the start of monsoon. Fodder/forage require very little care and attention, can grow on sloped barren lands and are nutritious for livestock. Now with the plants all grown, she says she has plenty to feed to her flock of goats.
Heifer’s 12 Cornerstones promote community values such as sharing and caring, sustainability and self-reliance, genuine need and justice, etc., in its project areas to strengthen social capital in the community. HEAL-Nepal provided the Cornerstones training to 1,125 project beneficiaries and stakeholders to promote solidarity in the earthquake-affected communities and accountability among the project stakeholders for sustainability.
As the majority of rural farmers cannot read or write, HEAL-Nepal used illustrations and posters to train them and spread awareness regarding bio-security measures and animal nutrition.
After the earthquake destroyed Bishnu Prasad Rimal’s house and livestock shelter, he had lost all hope of recovery. HEAL-NEPAL consistently provided him the support to construct an improved shed for his dairy cattle, and he also received orientation on improved animal management practices. Since then he has changed his livestock raising practices. He shares, “I have learned that by simply planting fodder and forages in fallow land, I can not only increase my livestock’s productivity but also save up to NPR 50,000 annually (approx. USD 500) on purchase of hay which isn’t even nutritious.” The shed is also keeping his livestock safe and healthy. Since joining the project, he has almost doubled his produce. Currently he sells 35 liters of milk each day and earns NPR 63,000 monthly (approx. USD 630). He hopes to build a house for his family soon.
Heal Nepal Achievement

- 15,145 Families served
- 95,676 Animals treated
- 5,758 Farmers trained
- 1,350 Temporary livestock shelter built
- 251 Vet service providers trained on LEGS
- 216 Oxen and breeding bull restocked
- 210,000 Individuals reached with PSA
- 15 District level coordination meeting
- 180 Village development level coordination meeting
- 176 Number of Community Agro-vet Entrepreneurs mobilized
- 55,000 Number of posters distributed
Heifer International's mission is to end hunger and poverty while caring for the Earth. For 70 years, Heifer International has provided livestock and environmentally sound agricultural training to improve the lives of those who struggle daily for reliable sources of food and income. Heifer is currently working in more than 30 countries, including the United States, to help families and communities become self-reliant.