Dear Friends,

Let me present to you the July-December 2019 edition of our newsletter which highlights our latest news and updates during this period. In our 22nd year of service in Nepal we have been working diligently to strengthen rural economies whilst caring for the Earth at the same time.

Many remarkable achievements have been made during this period. We have been able to join our hands with the local government and many banking and financial institutions to work together to increase the spirit of Livestock as an enterprise and reduction of hunger and poverty in Nepal.

MoU’s have also been signed with five local governments of Pokhara, Biratnagar, Bharatpur, Butwal and Kohalpur for the development of modern abattoir using the public-private-producer-partnership model.

Heifer supported Cooperatives have done a remarkable job of marketing their products in this time period, an example of which can be read in this issue where smallholding farmers have sold 500 goats to the government of Nepal’s Food Management and Trade Limited [Former Food Corporation of Nepal].

I hope this issue will be an interesting and insightful read to all. To learn more about our work, please find us on Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, YouTube and our website.

Thank you

Dr. Shubh N. Mahato
Country Director
Heifer International Nepal
MOU signed with Banks for Capital Deployment

Heifer Nepal have signed MoU with 3 A-class commercial banks and National Cooperative Bank Limited during July-December 2019. Heifer has raised over 25.2 million USD as Capital Deployment for farmers owned agribusiness and other enterprises engaged in Goat, Dairy, Back Yard Poultry (BYP) and vegetables value chains in the form of loans, mostly collateral free, at concessional rates (2.6-7.5% per annum) from A-class commercial banks and other government initiatives.

Heifer Nepal and Laxmi Bank signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a commitment to deploy USD 1.7 million targeting 1,000 dairy farmers. Similarly, Heifer Nepal and government owned Rastriya Banijya Bank have signed an MoU committing USD 8.19 million to support 1,050 households with subsidized loans for small-scale farmers. Rastriya Banijya Bank will provide NPR 0.5 to 1.5 million for 900 women entrepreneurs without collateral, as well as NPR 1.5 to 50 million for 150 small- and medium-sized enterprise’s based on commercial agriculture and livestock business. Also, Heifer International Nepal and Agriculture Development Bank Limited have signed an MoU to deploy around 9.09 Million USD to women entrepreneurs and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) engaged in livestock and agriculture value chains.

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Heifer Nepal has been working with 14 financial institutions and is successful in establishing MoU with 6 A class bank plus 1 Nepal Cooperative Bank Limited to achieve the objective to increase access to finance for farmers.

Heifer partners with Nepal Government for Abattoir development using 4P Model

The long awaited memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the development of five modern abattoirs was signed between Heifer Nepal and five local governments of Pokhara, Biratnagar and Bharatpur metropolitan cities, Butwal sub-metropolitan city and Kohalpur municipality.

Developed under the Public-Private-Producer-Partnership (4P) Model, the public sector will be investing in the establishment of the abattoir infrastructure as a part of its social responsibility of ensuring the availability of hygienic meat for consumers. The farmers/producers and the meat entrepreneurs will form investment companies and establish a private company with the maximum share ownership by the investment companies of the producers. The private companies will manage and run the abattoirs. As of now, the provincial governments have allocated $3 million USD while the producers and meat entrepreneurs’ investment companies have committed 2 million USD.

Representative from several areas attended the event that took place in August in Kathmandu including federal, provincial and local government, donors; INGOs; banks and financial institutions; the private sector; a consumer forum; producer cooperatives; the media; and Heifer.
Nepal program celebrates the journey of entrepreneurs under the Enterprise Facilitation Project

Heifer Nepal recently celebrated the journey of entrepreneurs within the Enterprise Facilitation Project (EFP) — a joint initiative of Heifer Nepal and the Sirolli Institute. The pilot project is helping people in Kaski, Chitwan and Lalitpur districts to start or improve their businesses through enterprise facilitation services.

Attended by community leaders, ward chairpersons, media personnel, Heifer employees and local entrepreneurs, the event’s chief guest was Director of Sirolli Institute Francesco Sirolli. Nine local entrepreneurs, who represented a variety of enterprises from Chitwan and Kaski districts, shared their success stories and were felicitated for their dedication and setting an example in the community. These enterprises included fishery, poultry, retail shops, a women’s cooperative and commercial vegetable farming.

Equipped with the Trinity of Management guidelines, the enterprise facilitators are introduced into the community with the help of a resource team made up local volunteers willing to help link entrepreneurs with needed resources, as well as to understand the dreams and ambition of the local community. Enterprise facilitators then work toward finding the experts and resources needed to transform these dreams into a viable and sustainable business. To bridge the gap between the community and their dreams, the enterprise facilitators seek help and guidance from the community resource teams.

Nepal pilot project engages students to mentor entrepreneurs

Heifer Nepal recently partnered with Antarprerana, “a private company providing mentorship and investment to Nepali entrepreneurs.” The collaboration will provide customized mentorship for 60 model goat entrepreneurs — who have more than 20 does in 10 cooperatives in Chitwan and Nepalgunj — through the engagement of 30 undergrad and postgraduate business students.

A first of its kind in Nepal, a prototype project Strengthening Capacities of Model Goat Entrepreneurs through Student Engagement envisions to use academic institutions and their students to provide enterprise and business knowledge to entrepreneurs and enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nepal. The students will work as business mentors to help the entrepreneurs develop business plans, pitch ideas and connect them to various stakeholders who can support them in improving their business profitability. They will be supporting both the cooperatives and the goat entrepreneurs to better diagnose their business model and develop bankable business plans, as well as provide assistance for strengthening their business development capacity.

With this pilot intervention, Heifer aims to enhance the business operation and financial literacy of the goat entrepreneurs by linking with upstream actors, business development service providers, and banking and financial Institutions.
Heifer Nepal’s experience capitalized in Regional Goat Conference

Heifer Nepal successfully co-organized the Asian Regional Conference on Goats (ARCG 2019) together with the Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) in association with International Goat Association (IGA). The conference was held in Chitwan, Nepal from 20 to 23 Oct 2019 with 300 participants from 17 countries across the globe. The participants included experts and professionals from universities, government officials, scientists, students, private sector, etc. The conference showcased 65 oral presentations and 43 poster presentations shared during policy, socio-economic and technical sessions.

Heifer Nepal presented 9 technical papers (7 orals and 2 posters) based on Heifer’s experience and findings on Goat market system development in Nepal. The knowledge contribution of Heifer Nepal team was instrumental as the presenters covered wide arrays of technical papers in goat market system which includes food security, livestock insurance, Carcass percentage study, Business Development Services (BDS) through cooperatives, Public Private Producer Partnership (4P) model for abattoir development, Cooperative led goat marketing, Access to Finance, upscaling goat intervention and Possible strategies for Goat breeding in Nepal.

Heifer Nepal also made a strong presence at Roundtable Discussion on scaling of goat-based interventions to benefit the poor. Dr. Keshav Sah presented some proven interventions based on Heifer Nepal’s experience that can be scaled in Nepal and beyond. It included Farmers Field School, Community Agro Vets Entrepreneurs (CAVE), Community Initiatives for Genetic Improvement of Goats (CIGIG), Accessibility of Livestock Insurance through coop, establishment of live goat fair pricing system, etc. The conference provided a platform to increase Heifer’s visibility as an expert organization in goat market system development in Asia.

International Goat Associations’ team appreciates the impact of Heifer Nepal

Heifer Nepal organized a field visit for Dr. Beth Miller, President and Dr. Lucia Sepe, Vice president of International Goat Association joined by Rauri Alcock and Marisia Geraci from Goat Agribusiness Project, South Africa. The households visit, interaction with self-help groups, CAVEs, resource centers, and cooperative gave them an overview on the current role of small holder goat farmers in establishing healthy goat value chain in Nepal. The team highly appreciated the way Heifer has been able to bring long lasting impact at the community level.

Heifer Nepal co-organizes conference on Sustainable Animal Agriculture for developing countries

Heifer Nepal Co-organized the 7th International Conference on Sustainable Animal Agriculture for Developing countries which was held in Pokhara in November. Organized by the Veterinary Association of Nepal this event gathered more than 400 participants from 20 countries with the theme of eco-friendly animal production for profitable smallholder farming. The major objective of this conference was to provide a platform for scientists, farmers and other stakeholders involved in the field of animal agriculture and allied disciplines to share their experiences and discuss on the challenges of eco-friendly animal production system and identify mitigating measures.

Dr. Mahendar Nath Lohani- Senior Director of Program, Heifer International gave a presentation on the Sustainable Livestock Supply chain while Dr. Shubh N. Mahato gave a presentation on the farmers perspective on sustainable goat production in Nepal. The 4-day program saw many interactive discussions that ranged from issues such as the role of genomics in developing the country animal agriculture, fishery and aquaculture in Nepal, feed and fodder/forage development in Nepal and so on.
Heifer Nepal launches online market for agriculture and livestock

Heifer Nepal launched the Samuhikbazar.com, an online trading platform for marketing agricultural produce in partnership with Pathway Technologies. Samuhik Bazar (literal translation - Collective Market) acts as a bridge between traders and producers, coordinated by cooperatives to market commodities produced by the farmers in a collective manner. The website also provides business-to-business (B2B) platform where farmers’ surplus, and buyers’ demand for crops and livestock, are advertised and traded.

Self-help groups and cooperatives can log in to the site and provide the production of their output with a tentative price as an advertisement for potential traders. The bulk buyers and traders can directly contact the producers to make a deal. This ensures the establishment of a cooperative market chain for high-value crops and livestock to increase farmers’ income.

During Dashain, the Samuhik Bazar listed supplies of goats from 50 cooperatives, considering the demand of goat during the festival time. Traders and businesses related to goat meat from across the country can contact cooperatives in their locations that are most suitable for them. We expect the online platform to revive local economy by promoting efficient supply chain business operation.

Heifer Nepal and 6 municipalities partner for Community Development Project

Heifer Nepal has joined hands with local level offices of four municipalities and one rural municipality in Gulmi district (Musikot Municipality, Dhurkot, Madane, Isma & Malika Rural Municipalities) and one in Palpa, Tansen Municipality for a community development project to promote goat value chain. The local government in Gulmi has also initiated a subsidy based on production to goat farmers for those selling through cooperatives with the subsidy amount NRs 100 per Kg.

In this Community Development Project partnership model, the local govt will provide 75 percent of the financial support, while Heifer will provide the remaining quarter. The total fund allocated for this project is US$2,215,765. The project is committed for 2 years, where each Local govt has allocated 7.5-10 million NRs and will be implemented through local development organizations active in the municipality. The MoU with the local government has been signed and the project has officially started from December 2019. The project will contribute to increase living income by training small-scale women farmers in goat enterprise. This project will benefit an additional 11,837 families and generate employment opportunities to 400 youths in the region.
Heifer cooperatives save the day: sell more than 120,000 goats across Nepal.

The biggest festival of the Nepalese is characterized by worship of nine goddess and is incomplete without the consumption of copious amounts of meat. On an average Kathmandu valley consumes 50,000 goats during the festival, most of which used to be imported from India. This automatically translates to a time when goat entrepreneurs reap maximum benefits for the year. During previous years this demand was met by imports from India, but this year due to strict quarantine imposed by the government, the import decreased radically, and uncertainty loomed among trader and consumers alike regarding the availability of meat goats.

A great opportunity for the Nepalese product to enter the local market, Heifer Nepal had been coordinating with women goat farmers, their cooperatives and traders to make sure more than 80,000 heads of meat goats enter the market to make up for this gap. In order to achieve this, multiple campaigns were held across project sites to motivate and encourage smallholders for collective live weight goat marketing. The goats are being gathered at local collection centers and sold in bulk.

With over two decades experience of working in the field of livestock development, the data of Heifer International Nepal showed that Nepal itself has ample production to suffice the need and that it was the perfect time for Nepalese goat to tap the market. Cluster offices of Heifer International situated in Bharatpur, Pokhara, Kohalpur and Itahari were perfectly positioned to utilize cooperative led Collective Live Weight Goat Marketing strategy to bulk goats and transport them to the Kathmandu valley.

By utilizing various marketing techniques, campaigns and involving the local government, goat markets were run throughout the country to ensure ample number of animals were sent to terminal markets such as Kathmandu. As a result, 149 Heifer led cooperatives were able to sell more than 120,000 goats which accounted for 14 million USD. Moreover, collective marketing based on live weight for the goat ensures that farmers get better price in comparison to the traditional method based on estimation.

Co-ops Sell 500 Goats to Government of Nepal Amidst Festivities

Karmath Social Entrepreneurs Women’s Cooperative (SEWC), along with the members of Deepan SEWC, Samunnati SEWC and Neelkamal SEWC sold 500 goats produced by smallholder farmers to the Nepal Government’s Food Management and Trade Limited [Former Food Corporation of Nepal] through the cooperative. In the previous years too, the food corporation of Nepal bought goats from smallholder farmers of this area to send to the terminal market in Kathmandu. The Chief District Officer (CDO) of Rihat sent out circulars to the smallholders to request them to opt for selling goats in a live weight approach and support Heifer’s mission. The highest number of goats sold by an individual was 12. The trade for this day accounted for NPR.60 lakhs (approx. USD $53,000).
Cooperative committed to fodder/forage and feed production

Established in 2014 in Rautahat district, Parishramik Social Entrepreneurs Women Agricultural Cooperative has 271 members from 16 self-help groups. Initially indecisive about Heifer’s intervention in their region, the community settled on creating Hariyali self-help group and received trainings from Heifer, including the 12 Cornerstones, self-help group management, nutrition, gender and more.

After being organized into a group and receiving animal well-being training, the cooperative immediately realized the need to have a constant supply of fodder and forage for their animals to increase productivity and make their goat enterprise a profit-generating entity. Literally translating to “greenery” in English, the cooperative is staying true to their original group’s name and is making sure to plant and supply much needed fodder and forage to their smallholding members.

Parishramik received 32 hectares of land from Community Forest Users Group (CFUG) three years ago and is using it as a source of fodder for farms, as well as a resource center to expand the fodder/forage coverage. Cooperative members have dedicated this year to the plantation of fodder/forage and are determined to sow every piece of barren land with some species of plants, making them brilliant advocates of Heifer’s aim to care for the Earth. The cooperative sourced some saplings of Mulberry from Chitwan and now have their own Mulberry nursery and have been making added income from selling the saplings. Recently the cooperative has also received 45 kilograms of seed from the Department of Livestock services and have distributed it to the farmers. With more feed being made available, the cooperative is also eyeing toward establishing a milk collection center of its own.

The cooperative also is involved in goat feed production and are branding and marketing their produce to the local farmers. Till now they have been able to sell around 696 kilograms of this feed. Their “either barren or green” movement has saved them a considerable amount of time for the farmers who previously had to venture deep in the jungle to fetch grass. The nutritious and delicious fodder/forage available in their own backyard has made it much easier for farmers to increase their animals’ productivity, which leads to better income and standard of living.

Rupa Rai, 52, a member of the Hariyali Cooperative and owner of 10 does and 10 goats of marketable age, said,

“I had little knowledge about nutritious feed for animals and I used to spend all day in the forest grazing them and never thought that planting fodder/forage in my own backyard was possible.”

With the improved seeds she received from Heifer, today she has 8 Katthas (2,709m2) of land brimming with nutritious plants for her livestock. She claims,

“I spend just one hour in the field and gather enough greens for my livestock. This has saved me a lot of time and I am able to concentrate on my vegetable garden and home.”

As regularly buys the feed produced by the cooperative as she said, “I realized that if I mixed the nutritious grass with the feed produced by the cooperative, my animals become healthy and gained good weight within two weeks.”
Another happy farmer from the cooperative, who has been able to reap maximum benefits from fodder/forage, is Shanta Shrestha who said, “Heifer’s philosophy to teach a man how to fish is exactly what we needed, and that is exactly why I am where I am today. After receiving animal well-being training, I gave my animals the much-needed nutritious diet and was able to maximize my productivity and my profits.”

Once living under huge debt, Shanta has made great strides after joining Heifer’s initiative. For the past few years she has made an annual income of more than $3500 to $4000 solely from her goat enterprise. She started with just four goats and today her flock size has reached 68, which she has been housing in improved sheds.

Heifer Nepal has helped cover more than 10,000 hectares of land with more than 40 types of nutritious fodder and forage, which has not only led to an increase in productivity but also in land preservation. With the problem of continuous supply of nutritious fodder/forage/feed being minimized, the farmers and the cooperative now can focus their attention on more pressing needs. By understanding the needs and requirements of their members and filling the existing gap, farmers and cooperatives can prosper and reach new heights — boosting the socioeconomic status of families.

Heifer led cooperative establish a Goat Resource Center

The members of Milansar SEWC of Tansen Municipality have successfully registered Baughagumha Community Goat Resource Center. First of its kind this resource center will aid in the production of seed animals (Goat) and is the fruit of six year-long Community Initiative for Genetic Improvement of goats with technical and institutional support from Heifer International Nepal that engaged farmer self-help groups (SHGs) to produce genetically superior seed goats (Jamunapari and Khari cross) through selection. This one of its kind initiatives was a part of the project “Strengthening Smallholder Enterprises of Livestock Value Chain for Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth in Nepal” (SLVC I). The project started with 821 base flocks of breeding does from 272 households. Currently, trained community members are maintaining production performance record cards of 1,500 goats in 500 households. Under this scheme, performances of the nannies and kids are maintained in the card, and the data is processed using a software. The resource center is a great platform for goat entrepreneurs and aspirants to buy high quality breeding bucks and does and is a great local alternative to importing from foreign nations. The resource center in itself is a new enterprise enterprise in the goat sub-sector in Nepal.