



Bio Security Points Survey

ALLIANCES CAUCASUS PROGRAMME

July 2017

Introduction

After identifying the Animal Movement Route (AMR) as a key constraint for the development of the Georgian sheep sector and as a lynchpin for the development of a national animal disease control strategy, the Alliances Lesser Caucasus Programme (ALCP) has advocated the improvement of the Animal Movement Route (AMR) at all levels of government, civil society and private sector stakeholders through the programme Advisory Committee since 2012. As a result, an MOU was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and National Food Agency and Mercy Corps in March 2015 to co-finance six AMR Bio Security Points (BSP's). In May 2016 two BSP's financed by the ALCP started operating in Rustavi and Marneuli municipalities and in spring 2017 two more BSP's financed by the National Food Agency (NFA) started operating in Dedoplistskaro and Signaghi municipalities, Kakheti. Overall the NFA is responsible for the construction of 4 BSP's and management of all 6 BSP's and the ALCP with the construction of 2 BSP's and ongoing facilitation. In spring 2016, the Veterinary Department of the NFA took responsibility for the management of the BSP's. 33,302 cattle and 343,910 sheep were showered & dipped in spring and autumn 2016. This spring 252763 sheep and 8112 cattle were treated. See *Annex 1* for results to date.



Methodology

ALCP has gathered quantitative information regarding the number of showered cattle and sheep dipped in the BSP's to date. However, there was a lack of qualitative information about advantages/ disadvantages of the new NFA BSP's for users. The research was conducted in Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions during May 2017.

20 non-formal in-depth interviews were conducted with 9 male sheep owners and 3 shepherds¹ of the sheep dipping facilities and the NFA BSP's, 3 NFA vets at BSP's, 2 sheep dipping facilities' owners, the Head of Georgian

¹ The men hold a dominant role in the sheep breeding sector. The sheep owners make decisions on choosing the route and the dipping/showering places. For large flocks owners hire shepherds to dip the sheep and take sheep to the pastures. Owners might hire up to 6 shepherds (depending on the number of sheep) for 2500 sheep and pays 1200 GEL/each/season.

Shepherds Association, the President of International Association of Agriculture Development, and the Head of the Veterinarian Department at the National Food Agency .

Findings

The majority of the sheep owners have switched from using the private sheep dipping facilities to using the NFA BSP's². The quality and use i.e. dosage and safe administration of the medicines comply with the standards applied in the EU. The new BSP's have been directly situated at key points of the AMR thus making the process more efficient in time and energy. In many cases private sheep dipping facilities were situated away from the route and also required passage of flocks through villages and conflicts with the local population have been reduced. The new BSP's are registering the number of their dipped sheep and cattle and also registering sheep flocks and approximate number of sheep that pass by the new BSP's.

Cost and Time efficiency

- J) **The Owners have saved 190-285 Gel per 1000 sheep as the NFA BSP's are currently free of charge**, while when using the private sheep dipping facilities³ their costs could include payment for medicines 60-85 GEL, water transportation for the bath 80-100 GEL and fee for bathing sheep 0.05- 0.1 GEL/ sheep depending on the area and conditions at the showering/ dipping point.
- J) **The Owners have saved the cost of labor**, they need about three times⁴ less labor help during and after animal dipping / showering process at the NFA BSP's than at the private sheep dipping facilities. The livestock handling system, fencing and the entire construction of the NFA BSP's made controlling sheep herd easier for shepherds and labor: livestock is not scattering, fences make it easier and faster to dip sheep, the whole sheep flock can enter the BSP at the same time.
- J) **The owners/shepherds/livestock have saved time and energy related to travel**: up to two days travel have been saved by avoiding going to the private sheep dipping facilities located far from the AMR, while the NFA BSP's are located on the AMRs. This is a significant saving of energy for livestock, with knock on implications for their health and productivity in reducing the negative impacts of an on an already grueling journey.
- J) **Access to the watering points at the new BSP's make animals healthier and decreases the risk of spreading diseases**. Before, there was no proper source of water on the whole length of AMR, sheep drank water from the river, or rain water, or, in some places, from village watering points which was another reason for conflicts between villagers and shepherds. Thirsty animals move slow, lose weight and get exhausted. Watering points are located at the existing BSP's which has considerably improved the situation at and around these locations. However, a consistent system of watering points covering the entire AMR is necessary .

Trust and Quality of the Service

The owners trust the NFA BSP's more than the private sheep dipping facilities as they consider the NFA vets as more knowledgeable and qualified in animal treatment and they are sure that the quality and proper usage of chemicals/medicines ensures healthier sheep and less fleas and parasites. According to the President of the

² There are also some large scale farmers who operate their own (animal showering, dipping facilities) facilities at their farms. However, the number of such farmers is very small.

³ Private sheep dipping facilities are usually situated near the villages, where sheep breeding is the main source of income. These dipping facilities are small in size, without fences and no waste management system.

⁴ According to some of the owners interviewed, up to 20 people were required (including the 6 shepherds whose salary included dipping the sheep and 14 workers) to dip the sheep at private sheep dipping facilities. In return for their help owners were arranging feasts or paying 15-30 GEL/day/worker. Those owners who live close to the private sheep dipping facilities still use them and receive in kind help from their friends/relatives. In return for their help owners arrange feasts for them.

International Association of Agricultural Development (IAAD),⁵ in the previous years the dipping at the private sheep dipping facilities used to ensure only 10% protection of the sheep from disease/ticks due to the low quality of dipping/showering and chemicals; now the new NFA BSP's ensures 100% protection.

Waste management at the BSP's and private sheep dipping facilities

Waste management at the NFA BSP's is processed by a licensed environment protection company hired by the NFA in compliance with the newly adopted Code of Georgia on Waste Management. The waste water from the dipping/showering at the NFA BSP's (water with chemicals) is collected into 10 tonnes concrete waterproof tanks and when it is full the NFA BSP vets contact the hired company, which collects the waste liquid. At the private sheep dipping facilities, the waste was not managed and the liquid with chemicals was poured to the artificially excavated pond, with no environment protection tank. The waste water was directly going to the soil which was causing pollution of the environment and the groundwater.

Shaping the public sphere

The new BSP's have been highlighted in official governmental documents, particularly in the Rural Development Strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia and EU reports. In addition, on May 16, 2017 the National Animal Health Program (NAHP) of the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia devoted one whole meeting to discussion of biosecurity and the BSP's of Georgia.⁶The Georgian Government has received positive feedback from the representatives of the EU and other countries towards the NFA BSPs, with the NFA organizing study visits to and presentations about the sites. The NFA intends to use the BSP's as key organizational and operational components in its strategy for improving national animal health control, traceability and registration building them into initiatives such as the NFA/FAO National Animal Health and Identification System (NAITS) programme.⁷ The NFA is even considering renaming them in future to emphasize their importance as veterinary treatment and control centres.

Market distortion

The research found three cases of displacement: two private sheep dipping facilities were closed in Iormughanlo Village and one in Akhalsopeli due to the NFA BSP's. The private sheep dipping facilities' owners lost income from renting of their dipping facilities.

⁵ IAAD is going to conduct an impact assessment of NFA BSP's in August, 2017; more detailed information will be seen in that report.

⁶Meeting on Bio Security arranged by the National Animal Health Program (NAHP) of the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia

⁷ Funded by SDC, the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADA) and the government.

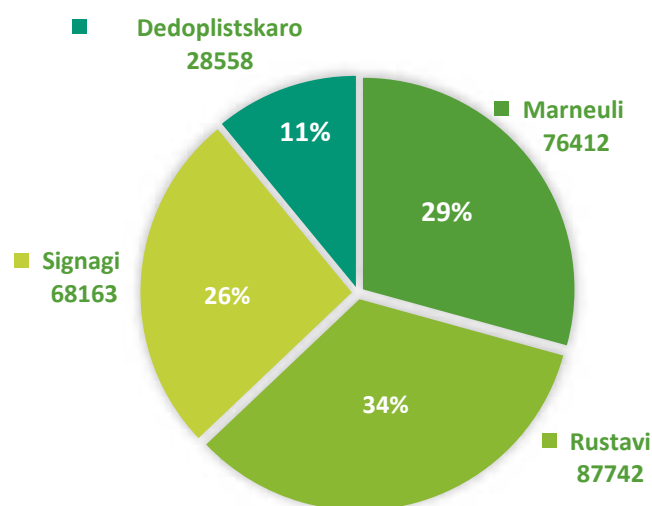
ANNEX 1

OPERATION OF THE BIO SECURITY POINTS DURING THE SPRING TRANSHUMANCE SEASON 2017

Summarized Results

The Bio Security Points successfully completed Spring 2017 operating season treating thousands of sheep and cattle against external parasites on their way to summer pastures. From May 5th to July 5th four BSP's served nomadic farmers in Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti Regions. In total **260 875** head of sheep and cattle were treated at Marneuli, Rustavi and two newly opened, the NFA built BSP's in Signagi and Dedoplistskaro municipalities.

NUMBER OF ANIMALS DIPPED/SHOWERED IN SPRING 2017



55% of migrating livestock that moves on the South part of the Animal Movement Route were dipped/showered at Bio Security Points ⁸

From Spring 2017 the NFA started issuing certificates at the BSP's as proof that livestock were treated against parasites. Each BSP has its own, different colored certificate.



NUMBER OF ANIMALS DIPPED/SHOWERED AT BSP'S SINCE THE OPENING IN 2016

| | Marneuli | | Rustavi | | Signagi | | Dedoplistskaro | | Total # of Livestock |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------------|
| | # of Cattle | # of Sheep | # of Cattle | # of Sheep | # of Cattle | # of Sheep | # of Cattle | # of Sheep | |
| Spring 2016 | 13 821 | 24 400 | 2 250 | 20 100 | - | - | - | - | 60 571 |
| Autumn 2016 | 3 941 | 71 780 | 13 290 | 227 630 | - | - | - | - | 316 641 |
| Total # of Livestock in 2016 | | | | | | | | | 377 212 |
| Spring 2017 | 1 552 | 74 860 | 3 562 | 84 180 | 2 085 | 66 078 | 913 | 27 645 | 260 875 |
| Total #of livestock on three seasons at all four BSP's | | | | | | | | | 638 087 |

THE INFRASTRUCTURAL GAPS AT BSP'S

During May-June 2017 several visits were conducted to BSP's in Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions to observe operation of the BSP's and ensure that they are functioning properly. Some infrastructural gaps were identified at all the BSP's that need to be overcome. Therefore, a list of issues existing at the BSP's was sent to the NFA. The Head of Veterinary Department stated that the agency will announce a tender on repairing works and they will ensure that all issues are solved before the next transhumance season. The BSP's will be reopened for the Autumn migration back down from the summer pastures.

⁸ The NFA collects the data not only on treated animals on the BSP's but also registers the migrated livestock that passes through the points. In Spring 2017 in total 472 361 heads of migrated animals went through/passed by BSP's from which **260 875** (55%) heads of sheep and cattle were treated at the BSP's.