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# Final report

Small research and development activity

SRA

## Identifying research priorities for development of the beef industry in Cambodia and Lao PDR with special reference to animal health interventions

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*prepared by*

Peter Windsor  
Associate Professor Ruminant Health & Production  
Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Sydney

*co-authors/  
contributors/  
collaborators*

Dr Suon Sothoeun  
Department of Animal Health & Production, Kingdom of Cambodia

Dr Syseng Khounsey  
Department of Livestock and Fisheries, Lao PDR

*approved by*

Dr Peter Rolfe

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# 1 Acknowledgments

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## 2 Executive summary

Opportunities to address rural poverty by improving smallholder cattle health and production systems have emerged in Laos and Cambodia in recent years, due to the rapidly increasing demand for meat in south-east Asia. Adoption of forages technology for improved cattle and buffalo nutrition, particularly in northern Laos, offers enhanced returns from fattening through intensification of large ruminant production. This has led to major livestock development and extension projects commencing, aimed at improving smallholder returns from large ruminants. This is particularly the case in Laos, with the focus in Cambodia being initially on poultry and pigs but increasingly on cattle. It has been observed that these improved returns have led to smallholder farmers seeking additional interventions to improve and safeguard their increasing productivity through disease risk management. However disease and poor husbandry remain major constraints to expansion of large ruminant production and there is a need for research to examine solutions to many issues that need to be overcome to facilitate the development programs.

This research was proposed to better define disease and husbandry limitations in the large ruminant village production system and then implement a suite of 'best practice' interventions for testing in both countries. To support this research proposal, SRA AH/2006/077 was undertaken between August 2006 and February 2008, with the objectives:

1. Confirm that the key concepts and research issues including economic drivers and producer receptivity for enhancing large ruminant productivity are captured in the 'best practice' proposal.
2. Define the role for ACIAR within the suite of current projects occurring in each country and identify the key partners, personnel, preferred locations and budgeting details required to progress the proposal.

The SRA findings were used to strengthen the 'best practice' proposal for both countries, resulting in development of AH/2005/086 for Cambodia commencing in July 2007 and AH/2006/159 for Laos, commencing in May 2008.

Activities to meet the SRA objective included workshops in Cambodia and Lao PDR in September and October 2006, accompanied by staff from CIE (Centre for International Economics), to define the economic drivers and establish a role for ACIAR research. It observed that fattening for the Vietnamese market is creating significant increases in returns to some Lao producers. This has resulted in increased demand for health and other interventions to improve production and protect increased investments, particularly with scaling out of forage technologies commencing. The role for ACIAR was seen as identifying and testing additional interventions that meet the increasing demand for risk management by producers as increasing adoption of improved nutrition for fattening and ultimately improved productivity ensures

The SRA also determined the capacity to deliver the project in both countries. The infrastructure through the Department of Animal Health & Production (DAHP) was considered appropriate in Cambodia, although improving nutrition will need to be a major focus of the project. Capacity for delivery in Laos through the Department of Livestock and Fisheries (DLF) is progressing now that a large ADB extension project has commenced. Additional support for the project through other agencies such as CIAT may be appropriate. The SRA also reviewed existing national animal health needs and what other agencies and current projects are doing. Opportunities to engage potential project participants from government and non-government beef industry stakeholders plus potential villager research co-operators in the research were identified.













