



# Viva News

Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance  
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*supporting  
livestock farmers in  
the Developing World*



## VIVA flies pigs to Rwanda!



# The next generation of supporters

Dear Supporter,

VIVA is currently reviewing its strategy for the next three years. As part of this review we analysed our public fundraising since we were founded in 1999 and it turned out that about 100 supporters were responsible for almost 75% of this figure. This is an amazing achievement for such a small group of individuals. With a suspicion that our group was tending towards the “middle-aged” end of the spectrum we looked at the age of our core supporters and that turned out to be 55. VIVA, naturally, values its supporters, no matter what age they are! However, for VIVA to be successful it needs regular injections of enthusiasm and energy from the younger supporters in the veterinary profession and the wider agricultural field.

Therefore, we're calling on the younger members of the veterinary community to look at what they can contribute to VIVA. Our main role is as a funding agency for livestock initiatives in the Developing World and our regular fundraisers such as the golf classic and VIVA Wheelers group have a loyal support base. However, we really need some new fundraising initiatives that will bring fresh faces to VIVA. If you have an idea for an event we'd love to hear from you. We can provide administrative support and help you make your event a success. Naturally, we'd also love to see more people at our long-standing events.

We look forward to your continued support in 2017.

Pat Murphy (VIVA Chairperson) & Mike Burke (VIVA CEO)

## VIVA meets President Higgins

The President and Sabina Higgins hosted a Garden Party on June 9th to acknowledge the work being undertaken by various organisations in Ireland and globally to foster a transformative approach to global sustainable development and global social justice. VIVA was represented by Brendan Minnagh.



Brendan Minnagh (VIVA) and Niamh Mulqueen (Bothar) with President Higgins.

# National Ploughing Association (NPA) scholarship students get ready to graduate in Kenya



Solomon in the cattle shed in Adraa College.



Solomon working in a kitchen garden



Julius worked on bee-keeping projects during his placement – this is an example of a local bee-hive.



Julius with some young local beekeepers.

With our animal traction project in Uganda ending in 2016, VIVA is now concentrating on ensuring the sustainability of the project. To this end VIVA established an educational scholarship to send two farmers from the Co-Op (which runs the project now that VIVA's involvement is over) to the prestigious Baraka Agricultural College in Kenya to pursue a 16 month course in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development. On completion of the course the farmers will return to work in their communities mentoring other farmers in their community and helping to develop the Co-Op. This scholarship is being generously funded by the National Ploughing Association.

The two farmers selected by the Co-Op, Solomon Ajak and Julius Itiakorit, commenced their studies last summer and really enjoyed the course which encourages sustainable, environmentally-friendly agricultural practices which maintain soil fertility. They passed their final exams with flying colours and then moved to Adraa Agricultural College in Nebbi in northern Uganda. There is an Irish connection here in that the principal of the college is Br. Tony Dolan from Co. Leitrim.

According to Julius the objective of the placement was to apply the knowledge and skills gained in Baraka College to work with communities in agricultural production and community development activities. Some of the challenges faced by Solomon and Julius during their work in this region included the dilapidated road network and poor communication networks which caused difficulties in accessing some of the communities in rural areas.

# VIVA Co-Op in Uganda open their cassava milling plant

Last November, Brendan Mimmagh of VIVA visited Ngora district near Mbale in Uganda to officially open the cassava mill which is a cornerstone of the operations of the Co-Op set up by the farmers in our project. This is a very significant development as, in addition to adding value to the farmers produce, it will enable the Co-Op to begin generating an income. This income along with member's shares will allow it to begin to offer other services to farmers and help it develop into a commercial hub for the farming community.

In its first year the cassava plant processed over 60 tonne of cassava. Profits were small, however, as cassava yields were hit by drought. However, next year they hope to double the tonnage of cassava processed and eventually, as profits increase, they plan to buy their own site and build a new plant and office (as they are currently renting).



The cassava processing machine. The dried cassava chips are poured in to the machine on the right and the cassava flour emerges from the funnel on the left and is bagged.



Farmers gather at the cassava plant for its opening



A bucket of cassava flour



Some breads and biscuits made from cassava flour.



## Cassava

Cassava is a root tuber (like potatoes). Cassava is the third largest source of food carbohydrates in the tropics, after rice and maize and is a major staple food in the Developing World, providing a basic diet for over half a billion people.



# Sending Ronnie to Rwanda

This year our partners in Bothar, the Irish livestock aid agency, celebrated their 25th anniversary with a multi-species livestock shipment to Rwanda. This “Flying Ark” carried Irish dairy heifers, dairy goats, pigs, chicks and artificial insemination (AI) straws to Rwanda where their Rwandan partner organisation will use them to kick-start several livestock initiatives.

To mark our long relationship with Bothar, VIVA undertook to fund the transport of the 260 pigs on the “Flying Ark”. Our “Send Ronnie to Rwanda” campaign kicked off in June when we took a stand at the International Pig Veterinary Society (IPVS) congress in the RDS where 3000 pig vets from across the globe had gathered. The IPVS President, Pat Kirwan, led the

initiative, raising €1,100 over the three days of the congress. Shane McAuliffe (Swine Technical Manager with Interchem Ireland) then partnered with Truly Irish Country Foods (a commercial venture by Irish pig farmers) and with the help of his fellow farmers and colleagues in the industry raised almost €13,000 for Ronnie’s flight.

On Monday, October 10th, Bothar’s “Flying Ark” took off from Shannon Airport for Kigali in Rwanda. The pigs will give struggling Rwandan farmers the keys to a successful business. 130 families will get two pigs each and will then pass on a piglet from the first litter of these animals to another farmer in their community. This ripple effect will continue on long after the



Pat Kirwan (IPVS President – 2016), the inspiration behind our campaign visits Ronnie at our stand at the IPVS Congress



Brendan Mimmagh (VIVA) & Shane McAuliffe fly the flag at Roscrea Mart where the pigs gathered for the Flying Ark shipment.



(L to R) Alan, Shane McAuliffe, Dan Murphy, Maria O'Brien and her baby Maurice, Jim Gavin (Dublin GAA Manager who took part in the airlift), David Ronan, Mike McAuliffe and Niamh Mulqueen (Bothar)



Nyakagabo Straton (age 33) is married with 2 children and lives in Nyamiyaga village in western Rwanda. He has just taken delivery of his Irish pig.



This is Yvanne Kandayisenga, mother of 3, who is excited about receiving her new boar who will start working soon. The other new pig farmers in Nyahafunzo village will bring their gilts (female pigs) to mate with Yvanne's boar. In lieu of payment, each client will give Yvanne the pick of their litter, allowing her to expand her farm or sell to other breeders.



Chantelle Mukamugenzi (aged 29) is pictured with her 4 children in Nyagisozi village. They are standing in front of their new pig shed. Inside they have a branch hanging down to keep flies from bothering the pig.



# Mike O'Leary Trust

From 2005 to 2014 the Mike O'Leary Trust sponsored a veterinary student each year to spend a month visiting one of VIVA's overseas projects. The Mike O'Leary Trust was established to honour the memory of Kerry vet, Mike O'Leary, who died tragically of cardiomyopathy in 2003 at the age of 39. His family and friends have undertaken a number of fundraising initiatives over the years to raise funds for the Travel Bursary in addition to supporting the Irish NGO, GOAL, and cardiomyopathy research.

To mark the 10 years of the Bursary, VIVA and the O'Leary family recently

hosted a function in the Veterinary College in UCD. This event also heralded a new direction for the collaboration between the Trust and VIVA with a farmer mentoring programme in Rwanda being launched on the day.

Over 40 friends and family members gathered on the day which kicked off with a tour of the Veterinary Hospital hosted by Dr. Rory Breathnach. Eithna O'Leary (Mike's wife) and Frank O'Leary (his father) both spoke on Mike's life and experiences and how his death led to the establishment of the Trust. Mike's classmate, John Osborne, who was instrumental in

setting up the Trust, shared his memories of Mike and how the idea for the Trust came about. Two Bursary winners, Ciaran Gobl and Charlene Grice, talked about the lasting impression their experiences in Uganda left on them. Brendan Mimmagh (VIVA) then described how the Bursary is now to be used to fund a farmer education programme in Uganda. Run in conjunction with VIVA's partner, Heifer Rwanda, this will involve training farmers to mentor and train other farmers in their community. The morning concluded with a presentation to the O'Leary family of a book of the reports submitted by the Bursary winners over the years.



Family & friends of Mike O'Leary gather in the Vet College. Front Row (L to R) Mike Burke (VIVA), Rory Breathnach (UCD), Charlene Grice (Bursary winner - 2014), Frank O'Leary (Mike's father), Donagh O'Leary (Mike's brother)



(L to R) Eilis O'Leary, Eithna O'Leary, Frank O'Leary, Minnie O'Leary, Mike Burke, Brendan Mimmagh





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## The VIVA Wheelers

The VIVA Wheelers are a group of cyclists of all ages and abilities who have raised over €250,000 for VIVA's projects worldwide since 2005 with fundraising cycles and hikes in Vietnam (2005), Morocco (2007), the Burren (2009), Bantry (2010), Westport (2011), Dungarvan (2012), the Glen of Aherlow (2013), Leitrim (2014), Westport (2015) and Kilkenny (2016).

This year's "Bike 'n Hike", based in the historic city of Kilkenny, was a landmark one in that the €9,700 raised on the day took the VIVA Wheelers fundraising total to just over a quarter of a million Euro (€255,700) which is an amazing achievement.

Our hosts this year were the Marble City Cyclists, whom I think you will all agree did a very professional job in shepherding us around the route. The efforts of Pat O'Brien in co-ordinating all this is much appreciated (as indeed is the contribution of his wife Marie and sons in manning the food stops along with Pierce Comerford).

The weather gods again smiled on the event with glorious sunshine being enjoyed by both cyclists and hikers. The cyclists had their lunch in the panoramic surroundings of Mount Juliet golf course and they even squeezed in a pub stop near the end when the Pound pub in Ballycallan opened up especially for its cycling visitors. The hikers walked from Graignamanagh to Inistioge over Brandon Hill, the highest point in Co. Kilkenny.

Finally, a special word of thanks to our sponsors, Zoetis (who sponsored our dinner) and Veterinary Instruments Ltd (who sponsored the food breaks).



The elite Department of Agriculture team, Karen Mulherin and Jim Higgins ready for the off.



The lead group of hikers – (L to R) Niall Burke, Cathy Waddell, Conn Kavanagh, Karen Mulherin (holding selfie stick) and Joe Kavanagh.

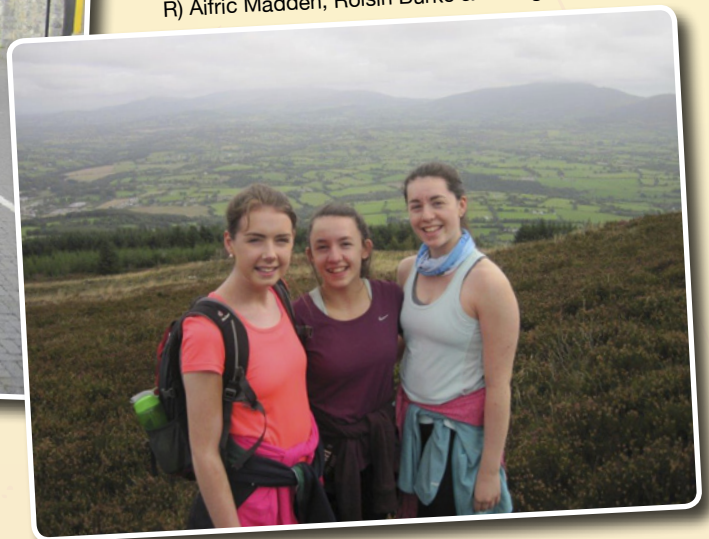


The hikers (L to R): Tom Meehan (guide), Shane McAuliffe, Con Kavangagh, Niall Burke, Joe Kavanagh, James Madden, Celine McPartland, Brendan Madden, Paula Bergeson-Quinn, Aisling Burke, Aifric Madden, Roisin Burke.



“Team Fabby” from Westport get their bikes in order.

The “Bike ‘n Hike” admin team on the hike – (L to R) Aifric Madden, Roisin Burke & Aisling Burke





Cathy Waddell & John Henry at the summit of Mount Brandon.

Ascinta Kilroy & Mary Sadler on their eighth VIVA cycle



How do the cyclists always manage to find a pub????



The cyclists enjoying a food break at Windgap picnic stop

The cyclists bunch up at a level crossing



## Heifer Draw 2016

Our annual Heifer Draw raised almost €10,000 for VIVA's projects. The winners are as follows:

- The Limousin Heifer – Stephen Harrison, Riverstick, Co. Cork (Seller's Prize – Sean Coffey, Cappamore, Co.Limerick)
- €500 – Sean Brady, Hyde Park, Killucan, Co. Westmeath.
- €250 – John Bourke, Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick.

Our 2015 heifer, Altamira Jordan, who has been living in Westport since her move from the herd of Brendan & Joan O'Connor in Co. Cork. Her owner, Liam Garavan, recently sold Altamira to a neighbor and she is due to calve next April.



## The "Univet" and "C & M Vetlink" Golf Classic

The 2016 VIVA golf classic returned to its usual haunt, Tullamore Golf Club's mature 18-hole parkland championship course, in July. VIVA would like to thank Tony McManus for organising the event and to all the competitors who played on the day with over 30 teams competing for an array of prizes. Once again the VIVA classic was sponsored by Univet and C&M Vetlink. Without their valued support it would be very difficult to stage this most successful annual competition that has raised over €80,000 for VIVA's projects. Special thanks also to the following for their sponsorship:

Liam McEldowney, Donal Brady and Anthony Sweeney.



The winning team – (L to R) Tony McManus, Sean Collins, Brendan Mimmagh (VIVA), John Smith, Frank Kelly.

## Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International

VSF International is a network of non-profit organizations working all over the world in the field of agriculture and livestock production, animal health and welfare, to support small scale farmers. Its 11 members – the different VSF organizations in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland – have a common vision: to improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations in the world through veterinary and agricultural services.

VIVA has now applied to join VSF International and hopes that we can bring some of our experience and expertise to the network and also collaborate on some of their initiatives.



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