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THE BELGIAN ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL PROJECT IN CHIPATA, ZAMBIA: AN EXAMPLE OF RESEARCH APPLIED TO A FIELD SITUATION

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The Belgian Animal Disease Control Project started in 1982, aiming at the control of the most important cattle diseases in the Eastern Province of Zambia. The diseases are East Coast Fever (ECF), caused by *Theileria parva*, and trypanosomiasis. At that time, ECF prevention was based on the control of its vector, *Rhipicephalus appendiculatus*, by means of regular acaricide treatments. Trypanosomiasis was controlled by a combination of aerial spraying and chemoprophylaxis.

The project was proposed by veterinary officers, who had worked in the area and had been confronted with the local situation with regards to animal health in general and ECF in particular. This allowed for a very detailed initial project proposal, since the relevant facilities, constraints and problems were known. The proposal evolved gradually after continuous contact between the Belgian representatives in Zambia and the local veterinary authorities. As such, there were never any problems to ensure the acceptance of a mutually agreed upon project proposal. However, very soon it became clear that the situation had changed drastically since the inception of the project, so that profound changes in the project's technical file were deemed necessary, immediately after the implementation of the project: it was decided to approach the ECF control through a mass immunization program instead of continuing the acaricidal treatments. This example serves to underline the importance of the large degree of flexibility required when drawing up a project proposal.

The positive ECF immunization results, achieved so far, are the undeniable proof of the successful implementation of the project. Since the start of the project, its results have been evaluated on an annual basis. Once again, appreciating new problems, arisen because of the achievements of the project, was and remains essential when evaluating the project's impact and viability. It must be remembered that no antecedents exist against which to compare the results, and no previous experience from which to draw when anticipating the future evolution of the project. As such, an evaluation should preferably be conducted in an open, positive way, to ensure that the available data are used optimally and furthermore to ensure that the project's initial objectives remain feasible and unhampered by decisions, that may seem correct at this time but may prove considerable constraints in the future.

As the project is currently in its second phase, and this until the middle of 1992, it is still managed jointly by the Zambian and Belgian authorities, with the continued presence of Belgian experts.