

# **Case Study:**

**Md. Akbur Hossain, Rural Animal Doctor**

**Jonail Bazar, Baraigram, Natore, Bangladesh**

**Cell: 01730633478**

## **Lessons for plant health from veterinary services**



Mr. Akbur Hossain is about 55 years old and studied for 10 years in primary and secondary school. After fighting in the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, he decided to help his people by working as an assistant for two local doctors (Dr. Gulzar & Dr. A. Gofur). Because the doctors were not always around, neighbours began stopping by his home for first aid and emergencies, and Mr. Hossain would diagnose their problems, prescribe and sell them medicine. Hossain worked as a para-professional human doctor from 1973-89 in Jonail union and its surrounding villages in Baraigram upazila of Natore district. As formal medical services became more available, in 1990 Mr. Hossain stopped treating human patients and started providing animal health care. He found that there was a critical lack of committed and devoted care for animals in Jonail Bazar and Jonail union of Baraigram upazila.

Mr. Hossain had a talent for working with animals and he soon found that his monthly income was greatly increased. A respected community member from a solid family, Mr. Hossain became a popular rural animal practitioner around Jonail union. He established a livestock clinic at Jonail Bazar with support from the upazila livestock office, in an old, unused local livestock clinic of the Department of Livestock Services (DLS). He received four major training courses from the upazila livestock

office, DLS on animal health services and management and has received at least one training every year on animal health management services since 1990.

Upazila and district-level officers of the DLS are highly committed and have provided Mr. Hossain with support to treat complex and strange health problems, especially of cattle and poultry.

His monthly income is at least Tk. 6000 (\$ 75) per month and he is expecting better income in the future. He feels proud to provide services for animal health and enjoys an enhanced level of personal happiness and social respect. Presently he is popular as a rural animal doctor in several unions covering three upazilas of Natore and Pabna districts. Local people call him as Dr. Akbur Hossain.

Mr. Hossain makes house calls and normally charges Tk. 100 (about \$1.25) per animal, although he may charge more if he has to walk long distances, two to five kilometers or even more. He adds 10% (or more) to the medicines he sells. Normally, he does not charge the poor for the prescriptions and services. He treats an average of five animals a day.

Mr. Hossain's son, Mr. Sarowar Hossain, a graduate in Commerce has joined his father as a rural animal doctor. The younger Mr. Hossain is also committed to improving animal health and looks forward to having a respected profession, like his father's. Currently, the son is earning as much as his father from private animal health care services and bought a motor cycle in January, 2012 in order to provide better livestock health services.

**Links with plant clinics:** Mr. Akbur Hossain is quite impressed with the plant clinic operations in Jonail areas and he participated in a few Going Public events on Banana and Betel Vine at Jonail Bazar. The Going Public events were conducted in front of his animal clinic at Jonail Bazar. He is fully aware of the involvement of Jagoroni Somaj Unnayan Sangsta (JSUS), a local small NGO in running the plant clinic in Jonail union of Baraigram upazila. He likes the Going Public method for providing plant health services for targeted crops with specific health problems at the market place.

After comparing the plant clinics with his own experience in animal health, Mr. Hossain recommended charging for plant health services, with quality diagnosis and recommendations for the plant health problems. He strongly suggested providing such plant health management services as a business. He also suggested linking local pesticide dealers with skilled and knowledgeable persons for diagnosis and prescription of plant health problems.

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### **Case study conducted by:**

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