



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

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### **£5.5m initiative bids to boost farm livestock health in Africa**

Vet experts are delivering a £5.5 million initiative to improve the health and productivity of farmed animals in sub-Saharan Africa.

The scheme aims to boost the livelihoods of livestock farmers by delivering evidence-based technologies that offer sustainable solutions to the challenges they face.

The Supporting Evidence Based Interventions initiative (SEBI) has received funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Three programmes have been established to help address different challenges.

The first programme aims to identify evidence-based interventions to cut death rates and reproductive losses in dairy cattle in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania.

Sub-grants will be provided to enable research groups to investigate the causes of these losses. The first of the grants has been awarded to University of Glasgow to build a disease surveillance platform in Tanzania.

A second programme will facilitate data gathering and the development of analytical tools to better track livestock performance.

Researchers are setting up an international network of practitioners – the Livestock Data for Decisions (LD4D) community – to standardise systems of data management across borders.

The third strand of the initiative will fund researchers to evaluate innovative veterinary interventions for their use in developing countries.

SEBI has already awarded £125,000 to the University of Guelph to fund field trials of a hand held device that can detect animal diseases. The portable sensor allows dairy farmers to rapidly diagnose specific diseases in cows from a small volume of blood or milk.

A team of eight has been recruited to drive forward the SEBI initiative, which is based at the University of Edinburgh's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.

Researchers are working with a range of partners to meet their targets, including Scotland's Rural College, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in Australia and the International Livestock Research Institute in Kenya.

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Project lead Professor Andy Peters said: “SEBI is a pilot project but we anticipate that, if we are successful, it will expand to become the ‘go to’ organisation for the evaluation of novel veterinary technologies and livestock improvement interventions in Africa.”

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