

# Review of: "Enhancing Veterinary Services for Smallholder Farmers in Zimbabwe: A Comprehensive Literature Review"

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This article is a good summary of the veterinary services situation in Zimbabwe. Like almost all African countries, but perhaps more than most because of hyperinflation, veterinary services in Zimbabwe suffer from inadequate resourcing. Limited funding for the public veterinary sector (DVS), lack of attention to smallholder farmers who make up the majority of livestock owners, and a disinclination to develop a workable system for paraveterinarians means that veterinary services remain poor throughout the country but especially in rural areas. WOA has given the DVS poor reviews for the past few years. The authors propose the development of public private partnerships with a decentralized approach to better serve rural areas while also raising awareness among smallholder livestock owners.

Paravets, or community animal health workers (CAHWs) who are appointed by their communities, could fill in the gaps in public veterinary services. Currently, there is no official training program for CAHWs; most are trained through donor funded livestock vaccine campaigns.

Based solely on experience in Uganda, a call for public private partnerships has to be backed by support from policy makers, ministries of livestock and veterinary services (at the national level), and willingness at district and local levels to collaborate. Additionally, the national veterinarians association and universities teaching veterinary medicine have to come on board with supporting the use of paraveterinarians to fill gaps. A curriculum/training program needs to be developed and approved and such program needs to include training in business and communication skills. Champions (e.g., policy makers at several levels) are needed to get these deep institutional changes established.

The paper is a good review, as noted, but stops short of noting the policy environment in Zimbabwe and whether there is any willingness for change in the DVS or other veterinary stakeholders. Without that, the situation will remain as it is, with sporadic donor funded support and continued gaps in services to livestock owners.