

Village of Hope

Feb 2006 Activity Report

Lon spent the month of February in Ethiopia, working on the NGO designation, the joint venture with World Wide Sires, and the High Risk Children's Center. He was very happy with the progress that is being made.

Daryl Gibb has trained a local villager (Kedir Tuna) to carry on with the building, while Daryl Gibb comes home to experiment with some improvements in the design. Now that Daryl has actually been on site and is familiar with the availability of materials, tools and labor, and suggestions of the government. All in all, it is going to be a wonderful facility for rescuing high risk children.

Pirko Gibb, R.N., has been having clinic each day and in the four months has seen literally thousands of patients. We cannot thank her enough for her valiant effort in behalf of the sick of the Kersa Illala area.

We have just been awarded our Non-governmental Organization license in Ethiopia, which will allow us to do things in Ethiopia, with this project, that we would otherwise not be able to do. For example, we have been asked by the government, to change our focus from exclusively orphans, to high risk children. That means this "High Risk Children's Center (HRCC)" will be dedicated to kids whose lives and well being is severely threatened with major medical, nutritional, physiological, psychological/psychiatric or sociological problems. We are in the midst of working with the Ethiopian government on a plan that will result in formal approval for this very important activity. Steffanie Reeder, along with Abu and Aman, has been doing amazing work in getting the HRCC organized and approved by the government. We will likely begin admitting our first children around the first of April. Hats off to Steffanie and her team.

Speaking of Steffanie, the 15,000 books that she collected and shipped, finally arrived in Ethiopia during February. They will be distributed shortly to the Kersa Illala School, Yosef Woticha's school in Arsi Negelle, and to the Village of Hope HRCC. We are so happy to have the books in our hands again, after waiting almost a year for the shipping to be complete.

We have also been awarded exclusive distribution rights to all World Wide Sires semen in Ethiopia. This is the first American semen to be approved by the Ethiopian government, and at the present time is the only foreign semen that is authorized to be used in the country. We are working very closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, and VOH is joint venturing with a consortium consisting of USAID, Land Of Lakes - Minneapolis, Minnesota, and World Wide Sires - Visalia, California. The intent is to bring the best dairy and beef semen into the country to improve the national herd and provide a better protein resource for the population. We will be fostering cooperative dairies in many villages, including Kersa Illala, working closely with government and commercial dairies throughout the country. We will also be hiring field extension agents

that would work Ethiopia-wide with farmers, peasants, and agriculture professionals. Megersa has been hired as the first full time employee of the World Wide Sires/Village of Hope joint venture and is beginning the marketing activities, as we speak.

Coordinating this entire effort is being done by our Ethiopian Governing Council and this coordination is no small feat. Pastor Tigro and Hagi Hamid, the chair and vice-chair of the committee, deserve a great deal of credit for everything moving a smoothly as it is. Thanks again to these two great men and their council members.

Our next expedition is April 15th, followed by June 17th medical expedition and an October 14th expedition. All of these expeditions will be focusing on the above projects, as well as the health clinic, fruit tree and orchard production, food preparation and storage, development of a commercial district, sanitation and first aid, improved animal husbandry and feed production for dairy, beef and small animals.

Thanks for everything everyone is doing to contribute to the success of the VOH effort to help Kersa Illala develop in self-sufficiency.