Engaging with partners in R4D to enhance animal health in the Uganda smallholder pig value chain

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**Background**

Value chain assessment to identify animal health and gender related constraints like;
- High burden of diseases (African swine fever, parasites)
- Poor access of farmers to quality drugs and other input services
- Poor biosecurity measures along the value chain
- No enforcement of disease control policies

**Key lessons**

- Local partners are key in connecting the researchers to the community
- Partnership should be formalized through an MoU or any other document in order to clarify roles and establish trust among both parties
- Project exit strategies should be always embedded in research proposals to ensure sustainability
- Research should be aligned with local priorities

**Capacity building**

- Trained postgraduate students in pig disease research
- Worked with Makerere University and the Ministry of Agriculture laboratories and built capacities of technical staff on disease diagnostics
- Refurbished district laboratories and built capacities of local technicians
- Trained local government staff on participatory research tools, disease survey and gender-sensitive training

**Activities**

- In-depth value chain assessment of animal health constraints
- Identification/selectio of best-bet interventions in animal health and food safety
- Pilot testing of best-bet interventions in animal health
- Monitoring of best-bets interventions and learnings with VC actors and partners

**Results**

- Prevalence and risk factors of 15 pig diseases
- IHH and gender disaggregated KAP surveys on biosecurity with 1500 VC actors
- Participatory training (PT) of farmers and other value chain actors on biosecurity and best practices in pork handling
- RCTs with 960 farmers and 45 pork butchers to test the effectiveness of PT of VC actors on disease burden and biosecurity

**Outcomes/achievements**

- Animal health constraints and opportunities identified and prioritized
- Pig disease and zoonosis map for Uganda established
- Disease control and farm management info-material (training manuals, leaflets) for value chain actors developed
- “Best-bet” interventions identified, pilot tested and refined together with actors, stakeholders and partners
- Capacity building of more than 4000 farmers and other value chain actors.
- Established a Pig Multi-stakeholder platform for learning and exchanging experiences
- Future priority research areas in pig health and zoonosis for Uganda identified and documented

**What when well**

- Strong enthusiasm and willingness of partners to collaborate
- Built trust between the ILRI researchers and partners
- Contribution from both parties to achieve goal

**Challenges**

- Lack of long-term commitment with partners due to short projects timelines and small funding’s
- Fatigue of VC actors when too many researchers work in the same sites
- High expectations of the communities
- Local partners not able to fully take at scale technologies by themselves

**Opportunities for research**

- Engagement with local partners on a CRP linkage fund project with US Veterinarians Without Borders and University of Georgia to work on proof of concept for use of mobile phone for diagnostic of pig diseases
- Effectiveness of the established platforms to scale out animal health interventions and advocate for favourable policies

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