

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

ASSIGNMENT 115

PEACE CORPS: CREATING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

The Peace Corps was established through the vision of President John F. Kennedy who challenged Americans to join a grand and global alliance to promote peace, friendship and better living conditions in the world. Since the first Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Ghana in 1961, more than 148,000 American men and women have responded to the challenge. Volunteers have served in over 100 countries. Volunteers continue to respond today and 6,500 are currently serving in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Pacific Islands, Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you help translate host country development plans into community level action, thus improving the lives of local people. You arrive, not with funds or equipment, but with skills and knowledge as well the willingness to adapt them to your community. A successful project is one that continues to function effectively even after you have left.

Before starting your two-year assignment, you receive up to three months of training that focuses on language, cross-cultural, and technical skills. It is usually provided in the country where you serve. Language and cultural training- an understanding of the country's political system, cultural norms, and interpersonal relations- helps you become an integral member of the community. Technical training gives you the ability to effectively transfer your skills and knowledge to host-country people.

YOUR WORK AS A PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER

In many of the countries where Peace Corps Volunteers work, the economic base of rural communities is founded upon agricultural enterprise. As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you help communities achieve greater food security and increase earning potential. Animal production is essential to many communities for production of meat, milk and hides. You work in coordination with host country agriculture extensionists or other local or international organizations that provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers. You may also work directly with small farmers and micro-entrepreneurs or with local cooperative groups. The technical focus of your work may include animal nutrition, veterinary training, or range management. You may conduct workshops to

train farmers and ranchers or establish demonstration projects. Depending on your assignment and your initial community assessment, your responsibilities may include:

Small or Large Animal Production: Increase the production of cattle, goats, pigs, poultry, or small animals, as well as indigenous species for home consumption and sale. Select breeds for particular purposes. Introduce basic veterinary techniques. Advise on selection and production of forage crops; ordering and purchasing stock; and building proper shelters using local construction materials.

Herd Health: Work with ranchers to minimize the incidence of diseases that reduce animal fertility, prevent normal weight gain, and in some cases, pose a threat to people who live in close proximity to their animals or consume animal products. Work with pastoral people to reduce unnecessary loss of animals that represent a family's only savings.

Range Management: Work with agricultural extensionists and the community to achieve a more productive and sustainable use of open or controlled rangelands. Activities include: promoting range management associations to establish grazing schedules on open pasture; planting alternate forage species; experimenting with intensified use of smaller enclosed pastures; and introducing silvo-pastoral systems that incorporate trees to provide a source of animal feed and enrich soil fertility via nitrogen fixation.

Dairy Farming: Improve dairy production through efforts such as: advising regional milk collection centers on sanitation and proper milk handling and designing extension materials for dairy farmers that utilize locally available resources. Advise farmers on dairy herd management, such as improved housing designs, more nutritious feed formulas and routine vaccinations. It is vital that you understand not only the myriad of technical problems, but also the cultural views and social and political context in which you operate. Your assignment may have little or no established structure or schedule. You continually define your role in response to the needs of the local people. Your willingness to integrate into your community and help your hosts find appropriate solutions can encourage people to participate. You learn and teach by doing-you could raise your own gardens or keep chickens or rabbits as a demonstration project. Your ability to organize and motivate others is at least as important as your technical knowledge and

experience. Your ultimate success depends greatly on the relationships you forge and the trust you inspire.

EXAMPLES OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PROJECTS

Ecuador: The problems associated with traditional animal production in Ecuador include a lack of appropriate technical assistance and insufficient and/or inappropriate credit to initiate projects. Peace Corps Volunteers present alternatives to individual ranchers, farmers and cooperatives through direct technical assistance, plus through training in demonstration centers. They work with a variety of animals: cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, llamas, rabbits and guinea pigs. They also conduct projects to improve genetics and animal husbandry practices, and experiment with silvo-pastoral systems.

Morocco: Poor agricultural production in Morocco is due in part to increasing population pressures, overstocked rangelands, and consequent destruction of range habitat. Several years of drought have caused further deterioration. Peace Corps Volunteers work in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform at regional agricultural offices and training institutions where they experiment with techniques to provide more sustainable agricultural and livestock production.

Philippines: Agriculture in small islands is beset by low productivity and economic returns. Constraints include limited market and credit access, frequent typhoons and drought, depleted soils, lack of water and inadequate rural infrastructure. Peace Corps Volunteers work in a small island municipality, under the supervision of the municipal agriculture officers, promoting livestock improvement and disease prevention. They also provide guidance in production of high value crops, bio-intensive gardening, organic farming, integrated pest management, and pesticide safety.

Niger: The need for wood, increased agricultural production, and erratic rainfall has resulted in land degradation in Niger and throughout the Sahel. The Peace Corps has responded with the Africa Food Systems Initiative (AFSI), which addresses problems identified by local people. Since animal production is essential to food security, Peace Corps Volunteers with animal husbandry skills have frequently been requested to assist breeding and fattening programs for sheep, goats, rabbits, and poultry. They have also provided their advice on which forage crop varieties are appropriate to local conditions.

A REWARDING EXPERIENCE

Service as a Peace Corps Volunteer offers you a unique opportunity to learn about critical development issues from the inside by helping people address the problems they have identified. You can make a tremendous contribution to the lives of others. At the same time, you discover that your experience is as much about your learning as it is about teaching.

Volunteer service develops your professional abilities and enhances your personal growth. Virtually all returning Volunteers agree they have received far more than they have given. Recent college graduates discover a focus for their career goals. Others confirm their commitment to their profession and receive career-boosting international experience. Retirees bring their accumulated life experiences to those that need and respect them most.

Many employers place great value on the Peace Corps experience. You will find that your worldview, resourcefulness, and cross-cultural skills set you apart. You can have easier access to federal government jobs or earn college credit or scholarships because of your Peace Corps service. Whatever you decide to do after Peace Corps, you will bring with you a rare knowledge of the world, of people, and of yourself.

There may be days of frustration and disappointment, but a lifetime of satisfaction as well. The courage, patience and fortitude you call upon helps you understand why Peace Corps is still the toughest job you'll ever love.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PEACE CORPS ASSIGNMENTS IN ANIMAL HUSBANDRY:

- A. BS/AS Animal Husbandry, Animal Science, or Poultry Science, OR
- B. Three consecutive years farm experience working with livestock, OR
- C. BS/BA any discipline with 18 months farm experience working with livestock.

GOALS OF PEACE CORPS

1. To help the people of interested countries and areas in meeting their need for trained men and women.
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.