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**EGYPT**

## CASE STUDY

# Herd Management Improves Income

### Small farmers adopt new techniques for feeding and managing herds



Photo: ACDI/VOCA

The cows of Gabala suffered from poor health before farmers improved their management.

***Through better herd management, small farmers reduced their feeding costs by 31 percent and decreased the fattening period by two months.***

### Challenge

In Gabala, a village in Egypt's Fayoum governorate, cows and buffalo were generally unhealthy and suffered from high death rates due to a lack of vaccinations and imbalanced feeding. Rations given to the animals during their fattening period consisted only of ready-made pellets and some ground corn. This lack of protein limited their daily weight gain to about 1 kilogram a day, extending the fattening period from a standard five months to six or seven months. Farmers also used to purchase their animals from the market not knowing their exact weight and not relying on specific criteria.

### Initiative

USAID worked with Abu Bakr el Sedeek, a group of 30 small farmers in Gabala, to improve the process they use to fatten their 68 calves. The farmers were shown how to purchase calves by weight, manage disease and maintain pens. USAID also demonstrated how to feed each animal a nutritionally balanced ration, according to weight, to improve health and reduce waste. With this knowledge, the members of Abu Bakr el Sedeek began to purchase their animals more shrewdly, vaccinate them, feed them balanced rations and dry and disinfect their pens.

### Results

The new ration techniques reduced feeding costs from \$57 per head per month to \$39 per head per month — a 31 percent decrease. In addition, the fattening period dropped to five months, and the average animal daily weight gain increased 20–30 percent to 1.2–1.3 kilograms a day. The vaccination program helped lower death rates and, consequently, the cost of veterinary treatments. In total, these new techniques save each farmer approximately \$70 a head, and the shorter fattening period frees time for the farmers to start fattening another set of calves.

#### Telling Our Story

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