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Seasonal disease incidence in the Sanaag region of Somaliland

David Hadrill and Haroon

- **Introduction**

Participatory research methods were used with herders in the Sanaag region of Somaliland to build up a detailed picture of their lifestyle. This research was initiated by ActionAid and designed and supported by VetAid as part of a pastoral development programme.

- **Seasonal disease calendar**

One of the techniques used by the project management team was to draw a seasonal disease calendar with a village elder and a

group of interested herders, based on the local calendar (Figure 1). The calendar provided the following information:

- An indication of the different types of disease that are prevalent in the Sanaag;
- The diseases which the herders consider to be important or less important. Up to three stones were placed on the calendar to indicate the importance of each disease; and,
- The seasonal incidence of individual diseases.

Figure 1. Seasonal calendar: disease incidence

- **Conclusions**

The project team members were able to use this information to plan a Primary Veterinary Assistant training programme (see Hadrill and Yusuf, this issue of *RRA Notes*).

Only the most common diseases and those that were most important to the herders were addressed during training. Information on the seasonality of disease incidence, together with knowledge of the herders' grazing movements, enabled more effective drug distribution.

The team were surprised to discover that common ailments that cause loss of production, e.g. helminths, were considered by the herders to be less important than infrequent, but often terminal, infectious diseases.

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NOTE

This paper was extracted from a report written by David Hadrill for ActionAid, on the Sanaag Livestock Health Programme, November 1992.