

Heifer International's Dilip Bhandari to Receive AVMA Award for Outstanding Work in Animal Health

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Global development

organization [Heifer International](#) announced today that Dr. Dilip Bhandari, senior director of programs, has been selected as the 2026 recipient of the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) prestigious Global Veterinary Service Award in recognition of his

groundbreaking work to improve animal health care for smallholder farming communities.

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*Surita Sandosham, President
and CEO of Heifer
International*

AVMA [said the award](#), which will be presented at its annual convention in July, recognizes outstanding service by a member who has contributed to international understanding of veterinary medicine. The AVMA said Dr. Bhandari is being honored for his role in building community-based animal health systems that have become a model for delivering veterinary services in smallholder farming communities where knowledge, access and affordability are often significant obstacles.

“Dilip's commitment to ensuring access to quality

veterinary care for all has been a driving force in improving the livelihoods and nutrition of millions of smallholder farming households,” said Surita Sandosham, President and CEO of Heifer International. “This award recognizes not only Dilip's contributions to Heifer's programs but also to how his innovations and thought leadership in healthy and sustainably raised livestock have benefited the entire rural development sector.”

“I am honored to receive this recognition from the AVMA,” said Dr. Bhandari. “The award also reflects Heifer International's commitment to improving animal health and sustainable livestock development for smallholder farmers worldwide. I share this recognition with the communities, colleagues, and partners who make this work possible.”

Dr. Bhandari, a graduate of Tribhuvan University in Nepal, began his career training community-based animal health workers in his home country before joining Heifer International in 2006.

Currently based in the U.S., he leads animal health, livestock and One Health programs, guiding work across the more than 20 countries where Heifer operates. His singular focus has been on how to bring reliable, affordable animal care to smallholder farmers who live far from the nearest veterinarian.

He is a globally recognized expert and innovator in the Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) approach, which involves training village-level individuals to provide basic animal first aid, vaccination and preventive care, under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. At Heifer International, Dr. Bhandari led development of the Community Agro-Veterinarian Entrepreneur (CAVE) model, which equips locally rooted providers to deliver animal health services while earning a sustainable livelihood. Many CAVEs are women, providing an avenue for equal economic opportunity in these communities.

According to International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), at least 60 percent of rural households in low- and middle-income countries depend on livestock for food and income. In 2025, Heifer International trained more than 275,000 program participants – including 2,377 community animal health workers - on livestock management and animal health principles.

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Dr. Bhandari is a globally recognized expert and innovator in the Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) approach.

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