

# VSA Assignment Description

<b>Assignment Title</b>	Production Animal Veterinarian
<b>Country</b>	Samoa
<b>Location of Partner Organisation</b>	Upolu
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries (MAF)
<b>Duration</b>	1 year
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	



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## 1. Partner organisation overview

The Agriculture Sector Plan (ASP) 2016 – 2020 is under review as Covid19 impacts and change of government last year, caused significant delays. This key document provides the framework to guide coherent programs and actions from key stakeholders to achieve the goal of increased food, nutrition and income security in Samoa. A primary aim of the plan is to strengthen government partnerships, particularly with the private sector, Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) and development partners, to leverage agriculture's potential to promote enhanced health, prosperity, job creation and resilience. Successful implementation of the plan will contribute to achieving the national vision of improved quality of life for all and to advancing Samoa's attainment of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

As the lead agency for the Agriculture Sector Plan implementation, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries under its Corporate Plan intends to strengthen its partnership strategy to manage and drive the implementation of the Sector Plan through a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). MAF's strategy focuses on;

- Increasing investment in food security and inclusive commercial agriculture and fisheries production and practises
- Increasing supply and consumption of competitively priced domestically produced food
- Sustainable production, product quality, value adding and marketing of agriculture and fisheries products
- Sustainable agricultural and fisheries resource management practices in place and climate resilience and disaster relief efforts strengthened.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) has identified the urgent need for support in the area of livestock health and wellbeing. It has been highlighted that the local staff require specific training and professional development in their knowledge, understanding and practical skills in this area, particularly with the number of regulations and processes to adhere to.

In 2017, the Samoan government signed off regulatory requirements for the Samoa meat industry which covers import and production through to purchase and export. MAF was given a three-year window to introduce the new regulations, which has been significantly delayed due to the effects of the pandemic. Much of the focus of the regulations are on creating a better local product, slaughtered with a humane and safe process, with improved hygiene.

It has been stipulated that animal producers and those involved in the slaughter of the animals will be subject to inspections to ensure they are performing to the expected clinical and regulatory level. The introduction of the regulations will also enable greater access to the domestic hospitality industry with a vision for future access to an export market. At the same time, the ministry has identified the need for upskilling and capacity building across the industry. In particular, the establishment of the humane, safe and hygienic slaughter of animals will require increased numbers of inspectors with skills in delivering to regulation. The inspectors will require greater knowledge and training that will be applicable and relevant to the Samoa context, in both regulatory and clinical obligations.



## 2. Assignment overview

The expertise that a Production Animal Veterinarian brings in this specialised area will significantly build the capabilities of the local staff and assist the Animal Health & Production Division (AHPD) in the ministry in ensuring our local product is of high value as we aspire to improve all processes in meeting all the obligations with a vision to export in the future.

The volunteer will be able to share specialised skills in this field and advice in the relevant areas of AHPD and therefore upskill and strengthen the capabilities of the local staff. This will be achieved through staff trainings (organised and on the job trainings), meetings, consultations, evaluations and workshops during the assignment period.

To achieve compliance with the regulations, the number of people and businesses involved in the meat industry will need to increase. In particular, meat inspectors, employed by MAF, will be required to inspect and guide meat producers and processors. These meat inspectors will require capacity building in animal husbandry, safe and hygienic slaughter and processing, and to understand other regulatory requirements. Private sector companies, set to establish slaughter houses that will require ongoing compliance, will seek growth in how to apply regulations and ensure safe and hygienic slaughter of animals. There is the opportunity for other MAF team members who are involved in this space to benefit from capacity building as required, particularly support in how to operationalise the regulations for their roles and team.

## 3. Goal/outcomes/outputs

### Goal

A strengthened meat production industry, where safe and hygienic animal production and slaughter is delivered to regulatory requirements.

### Outcome 1

Paravets and Animal Health Officers (AHO's) have the skills and knowledge to provide a quality animal health service to farmers appropriate to their role on both Upolu and Savaii

- Assess the skill level of paravets and animal health officers in terms of animal husbandry practices (castration, drenching etc.), recognition of abnormalities, disease diagnosis and prognosis, treatment and recommendations
- Identify key skills that need improvement or updating
- Provide on the job training and mentoring to improve the skills of paravets and animal health officers in identified key areas
- Assist all animal health staff in improving professionalism and communication skills
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for common husbandry procedures and disease processes e.g. uterine prolapse, cattle castration

### Outcome 2

Paravets and AHO's use veterinary drugs appropriately on both Upolu and Savaii

- Train paravets and Animal Health Officers regarding safe drug handling and safe restraint of animals for administration of injectable drugs
- Develop a field drug dosage guide appropriate for use by field teams
- Develop SOP's for appropriate storage and disposal of drugs
- Conduct training on the appropriate use of different drug types e.g. (which antibiotic to use for which disease) including contraindications



### **Outcome 3**

Paravets and Animal Health Officers on both Upolu and Savaii able to conduct a diagnostic post-mortem and recognise abnormalities.

- Train paravets and AHOs in relevant field post-mortem techniques for all livestock species in Samoa including cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens and horses
- Train paravets and AHO's in basic anatomy of all livestock species in Samoa as above relevant to conducting post-mortems
- Develop SOP regarding post-mortems for all livestock species in Samoa
- Train paravets and AHO's to recognise gross pathology on post-mortem and differentiate from post-mortem changes
- Train paravets and AHO's to record findings in a standardised PM report form and then to write a PM report with recommendations based on findings suitable for delivery to a client
- Train paravets and AHO's to recognise pathology of common diseases

### **4. Reporting and working relationships and capacity building**

The volunteer reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer and is accountable to the Assistant Chief Executive Officer of the Animal Production & Health Division (APHD). In addition the volunteer will work closely with the Animal Health Team, paravets and the lab technician to train them specific knowledge and skills in this work.

The volunteer and Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries will have an ongoing relationship with the VSA Programme Manager in terms of assignment monitoring, reporting, professional advice and personal support.

**As needs on the ground may change over time, the volunteer is encouraged to review and update the Assignment Description on arrival in consultation with the partner organisation and VSA Programme Manager. By their very nature, development situations can involve significant change, so it is advisable that the volunteer periodically review and reflect on the Assignment Description throughout the Assignment to ensure the best development outcomes are being achieved.**

### **5. Selection criteria/position requirements**

#### **Person specifications (professional)**

##### **Essential**

- Qualified Veterinarian
- Able to demonstrate a high standard of veterinarian skills with a solid understanding of farming systems
- Passionate about all aspects of production animal practice, particularly
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills

##### **Desirable**

- Database and reporting skills

#### **Personal specification (personal)**

##### **Essential**

- Patient and adaptable
- Ability to translate technical regulations to simple working instructions
- Ability to adapt NZ skills to a developing country context



- Resilient and kind nature
- Flexible approach to delivering project goals

### **Desirable**

- Experience working with Pasifika cultures
- Experience living in a developing country

## **6. VSA Essential Attributes**

- Commitment to volunteering, to VSA and to the partner organisation
- Cross cultural awareness
- Adaptability and a willingness to approach change or newness positively
- Able to form good relationships, both personally and professionally, with work colleagues and in the community
- Resilience and an ability to manage setbacks
- Initiative and resourcefulness
- An ability to facilitate learning through skills exchange

## **7. Country Context**

For more information about Samoa, see;

- [VSA in Samoa.](#)
- Samoan government website: <http://www.samoagovt.ws/>
- Economic overview: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/samoa>
- New Zealand Aid Programme in Samoa: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/our-work-in-the-pacific/aid-partnership-with-samoa/>

## **Additional information**

### **Residency status**

VSA volunteers must be New Zealand citizens or have New Zealand permanent residency status, and currently living in NZ.

### **Pre-departure briefing**

As part of the volunteer's contract, successful candidates will be required to take part in a pre-departure briefing course run by VSA in Wellington and complete all required pre-reading.

### **Final appointment**

Final appointment will be subject to satisfactory medical and immigration clearances (costs covered by VSA), partner organisation acceptance, and successful completion of the pre-departure briefing course.

### **Family status**

VSA supports partners to accompany volunteers on assignments of six months or longer. However volunteers with accompanying dependents will not be considered for this assignment.

### **Fundraising**

Volunteers are encouraged to fundraise at least \$1000 with the support of VSA's fundraising team. Accompanying partners are encouraged to raise the same amount. All funds raised will help VSA keep its programmes in action and support future volunteers.



## **Vaccination requirements**

Potential volunteers are advised that VSA's insurers require volunteers to be inoculated, prior to departure, in accordance with the instructions of VSA's medical adviser. VSA covers the cost of any required vaccinations.

## **Children's Act**

While on assignment, VSA volunteers may be required to work with children and/or may choose to participate in informal activities in their own time that involve interactions with children (such as coaching teams or teaching English). VSA is committed to the protection of vulnerable children and adults, which also includes meeting our commitment under the Children's Act 2014.

The information requested during the application process is necessary to assist VSA to determine applicant suitability to work and/or interact regularly with children, and is part of a series of pre-selection checks undertaken on all applicants for VSA assignments.

## **Volunteer package**

The volunteer's package includes the following:

### *Reimbursements and grants*

1. Volunteers will receive an establishment grant of NZ\$750 to help them set up in their country of assignment. For volunteers with an accompanying partner (whether or not that partner is also a VSA volunteer), VSA will pay an establishment grant of NZ\$1100 per couple.
2. A resettlement grant of NZ\$200 will be paid for each month the volunteer is on assignment. This is payable on completion of the assignment.
3. The volunteer will receive a monthly living allowance of \$1800 SAT.

### *Accommodation*

Basic, comfortable furnished accommodation will be sourced by VSA. In some circumstances volunteers may be asked to share accommodation.

### *Airfares and baggage allowance*

VSA will provide the volunteer with economy airfares to and from New Zealand for their assignment plus a baggage allowance.

### *Insurance*

VSA will provide travel insurance to cover baggage and personal property, and non-routine medical expenses for the duration of the assignment. Further details of the insurance cover will be provided during the volunteer pre-departure briefing.

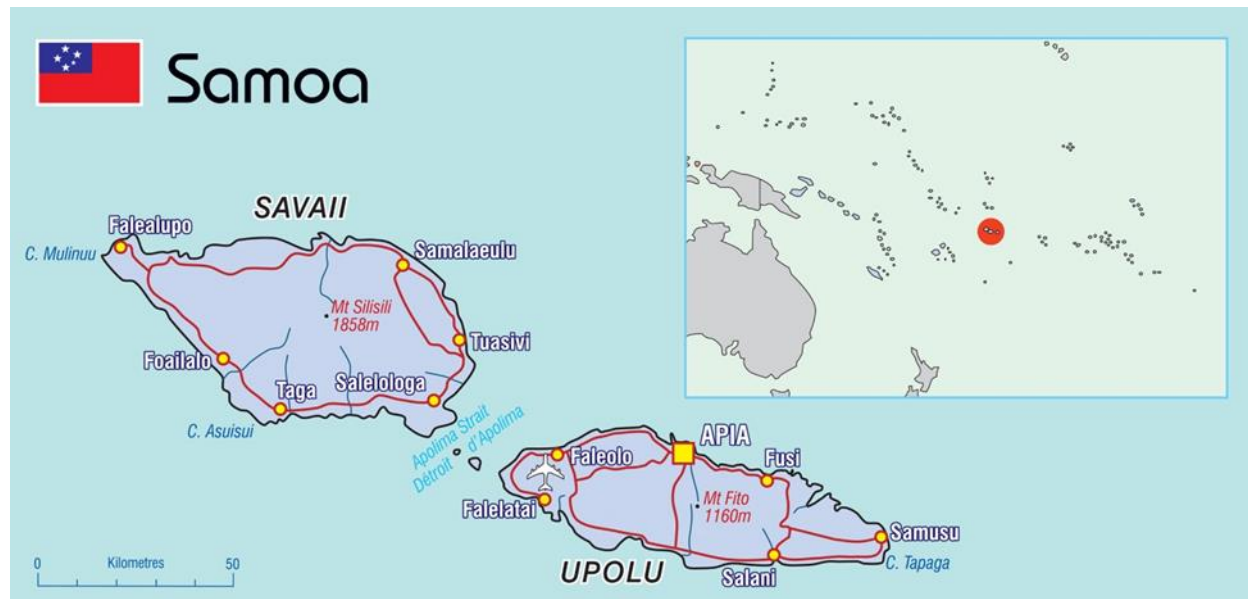
### *Utilities*

VSA will reimburse volunteers reasonable expenses for household utilities while on assignment.

**Final terms and conditions relating to the specific volunteer assignment will be confirmed in a personalised volunteer contract.**



## Additional Information on Samoa:



Migrants from Southeast Asia arrived in the Samoan islands more than 2,000 years ago, and from there settled the rest of Polynesia further to the east. Contact with Europeans began in the early 1700s but did not intensify until the arrival of English missionaries and traders in the 1830s. At the turn of the 20th century, the Samoan islands were split into two sections. The eastern islands became territories of the United States in 1904, and today are known as American Samoa. The western islands became known as Western Samoa (now the Independent State of Samoa), passing from German control to New Zealand in 1914. New Zealand administered Western Samoa under the auspices of the League of Nations and then as a UN trusteeship until independence on the 1st January 1962 (celebrated on 1st June every year). Western Samoa was the first Pacific Island country to gain its independence. Samoa celebrated 60 years of Independence in June 2022.

In July 1997, the Constitution was amended to change the country's name from Western Samoa to Samoa (officially the "Independent State of Samoa"). Western Samoa had been known simply as Samoa in the United Nations, since joining the organisation in 1976. Samoa graduated from a least developed country to a developing country in 2014. This upgrade in status had been delayed for some years after the devastating tsunami in 2009.

Since independence, Samoa has operated on a British based parliamentary system, which has been revised to accommodate local customs. Each village is comprised of extended families headed by a chief called a matai. In 1990, universal suffrage was adopted but up until then only matai were allowed to vote in elections. Matai (who can be male or female) represent the family on the village council. As this council is responsible for law enforcement in their village, discord can occur between the traditional system and the western system which is followed by national government. The Fa'a Samoa, or traditional Samoan way, remains a strong force in Samoan life and politics. Despite centuries of European influence, Samoa maintains its historical customs, social systems, and language, which is believed to be the oldest form of Polynesian speech still in existence. Christianity has been incorporated into Samoan tradition since the early 19th Century and forms an important and strong part of daily life.

Samoa has traditionally been dependent on agriculture and fisheries, but once-significant export crops of bananas and taro have declined in volume and value with overseas aid and remittances becoming more important as mainstays in the economy. Samoa has a large trade deficit. Tourism is the largest single activity, more than doubling in visitor numbers and revenue over the last decade and accounts for 25% of the GDP, prior to Covid19. A large proportion of the population is employed informally and works in subsistence agriculture or low-level commercial ventures. Over the years and more significantly since the pandemic, there has been a marked increase in the number of seasonal workers to NZ and Australia as people look outside for opportunities to financially support their families.





## Apia – Living Situation

Samoa's capital Apia is situated 14 degrees south of the equator on the main island of Upolu. It has a population of around 40,000 people with public transport being supplied by buses and taxis. Apia is a relaxed, safe town to live in with a wide range of recreational and sporting facilities available and a varied cultural and nightlife. The Apia CBD has the usual amenities to service the local people: a post office, banking services with ATMs that accept international bankcards, cafes and restaurant. It is also serviced by an international airport at Faleolo (a 40 to 50 minute drive from the CBD). Apia is surrounded by many small-urbanised villages spreading west down the coast.

The climate is warm all the year round with a hotter, wetter season occurring from November to April. Drier and comparatively cooler weather occurs in the remaining months. The temperatures range from 20 to 38C, depending on the time of year and location. The windward shores of Samoa get about 5000mm of rain each year but the capital, Apia, receives only about 2900mm. Samoa lies squarely in the notorious cyclone belt of the South Pacific and has received a number of devastating blows over the years.

The national hospital in Apia is well equipped to deal with tropical diseases and minor injuries; however, you cannot expect to find the equivalent equipment and expertise that is available in New Zealand.

VSA will provide the volunteer with a furnished house located in Apia. The house will have 24-hour electricity, running water, an indoor bathroom and cooking facilities.

## Work Situation

The volunteer will be based at the APHD office at Vailima and share an office there with the Principal Animal Health Officer (PAHO). The office is located on a roughly 10 or so acres of pasture which is used as a breeding station and point of sale for sheep, chickens, cattle and pigs. Transport is provided for the staff who have to bus into town in the mornings and evenings at 8am and 4.30pm respectively. There is a bus service on the main Cross Island Road and the work car can pick up and drop off here if necessary too. There is a taxi service close by and it usually costs SAT\$10 one way to town.

The office is looked after by night watchmen from 5pm to 8am daily and all day on weekends. Walking up and down the Cross Island road can be dangerous due to dogs and is especially not recommended at night. MAF will cover local travel and accommodation for training/workshop or Ministry events outside the workstation.

## VSA in Samoa

VSA's association with Samoa dates back to 1963, when its first volunteer took up an assignment in Apia. Assignments were initially focused primarily on education. In 2012, VSA began resending volunteers, who work in areas such as agriculture, small business development, tourism and special education. The Samoa programme has an in-country office with a Programme Manager who oversees the local programme, assisted by a Programme Co-ordinator who will support the volunteers during their assignments.

## General Security

Volunteers are required to be security conscious and adhere to the advice of their partner organisations, VSA, and the NZ High Commission in Apia on security matters. If there is a major emergency, or should security deteriorate, VSA has established emergency procedures and volunteers will be fully supported by staff in Apia and Wellington. The VSA field staff will go through the ground security measures with the volunteer on arrival in country and develop an individual security plan.

