NIRS Fecal Sampling Technology – Using E-learning to Encourage Proper Implementation in International Setting

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Abstract
eLearning offers tremendous potential for ensuring timely and effective training in both domestic and international settings. In fact, it offers advantages such as consistency of content, opportunities for review and reference, and dual-language delivery, which is not always possible in face-to-face settings. Near Infrared Reflectance Spectroscopy (NIRS) fecal sampling technology is currently being implemented as part of the Pastoral Engagement, Adaption and Capacity Enhancement (PEACE) Project in Afghanistan (http://www.afghanpeace.org). The project requires that an NIRS lab and Livestock Nutritional Management system be operational and institutionalized by 2010. Approximately 75 people must be trained to build capacity for NIRS fecal sample collection and processing, and successfully promote and maintain this technology in Afghanistan. However, providing training on proper collection procedures, processing samples, and equipment use is not always easy. The development of eLearning
modules to provide this training was determined to be an effective means of meeting this challenge.

The poster will visually depict the eLearning course entitled “NIRS Fecal Sampling Technology” and provide insight into the development of the training. A course overview, description of the audience, and plan for implementation will be shared. Strategies to address language issues, Internet access, and security controls will also be addressed.

Proper training on the NIRS system will ensure that knowledge transfer will continue once the PEACE project concludes. Future international adoption and training efforts involving the NIRS system can be facilitated through the use of the eLearning course through translation into additional languages as needed. This will allow pastoralists to benefit from diet quality information as soon as NIRS labs are set up in host countries.

The educational importance of this poster focuses on three distinct areas: 1.) a description of the current use of eLearning to address an international training need, 2.) a summary of potential opportunities, applications, and challenges for eLearning in international settings, and 3.) sharing of a specific technology that is being implemented in both domestic and international settings. eLearning is a tool that has the potential to advance efforts of those working in international development. This poster seeks to inform those working in international development of NIRS technology and the way in which eLearning is being utilized to meet training needs.

**Keywords:** Technology, elearning, training, best practices, NIRS