

Speech for Indian representative at Rinderpest Side Event

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to have been invited to be a part of this celebration of the eradication of Rinderpest globally. I feel proud that we, the Member States, particularly in Africa, the Middle East and Asia have, with the assistance of FAO and IAEA, managed to rid the world of a great scourge.

Rinderpest was endemic throughout India until the mid-1950s, with about 8,000 outbreaks a year, killing over 200,000 cattle annually. It was early as in 1868, that the Indian Cattle Plague Commission was constituted and the detailed investigations made by it confirmed that the plague was identical to the disease then prevalent in Europe. The serious threat posed by Rinderpest led to the creation of the Indian Civil Veterinary Service and an institute dedicated to research, the Imperial (now Indian) Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) at Mukteshwar. Soon after independence of India, a National Rinderpest Eradication Programme was launched in 1955 – 1956, where cattle & buffaloes above 6 months age were mass vaccinated using Goat Tissue Virus Vaccine (GTV- Edwards Strain), through out the country.

Although mass vaccination controlled Rinderpest from vast areas of the country, the disease lurked on inter state borders, where vigilance units and check posts were established for developing immune Zones and for vaccinating bovines on livestock movement routes. From the early Seventies, Rinderpest tissue culture vaccine was used. In the mid Seventies a Rinderpest Surveillance and containment vaccination programme was launched which kept the disease largely under control. Nevertheless, sporadic cases in sub clinical form continued to occur with occasional fulminating outbreaks at one or two places.

In 1989, the Government of India, under bilateral collaboration with the European Union launched a project ALA/89/04 for Strengthening of Veterinary Services for eradication of Rinderpest as part of FAO's concept of South Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign (SAREC) as a component of world wide efforts for Global Rinderpest Eradication Program (GREP). Consequently the National Project on Rinderpest Eradication (NPRE) was launched in India in 1990. Implementation began in May 1992 and the project adopted the "OIE Pathway" towards Rinderpest eradication in 1993-94. By 1990 – 1995 the incidence got reduced to 1-2 seizures per million bovine population and was finally wiped out from India with the last case appearing in North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu in October 1995. We were greatly helped in our surveillance actions by employing FAO/IAEA diagnostic kits to confirm absence of infection. India was declared "free from Rinderpest disease" on May 22, 2004. On May 25, 2006, India was declared "free from Rinderpest infection"

The impact of eradication of Rinderpest on livestock production in India was colossal - FAO estimates that additional production from 1965 to 1998 was \$US289 billion. India is rightly proud of the success of its national Rinderpest eradication campaign but today I wish to acknowledge the vital role that the IAEA has played in the global eradication of Rinderpest and congratulate the Agency and the Technical Officers of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division on their dedication in assisting so many Member States globally to realize this dream, that has enabled so many poor people to share in the increased prosperity following the disappearance of the disease.

Thank you