

First phase of PPR global eradication effort taking shape

FAO and OIE conclude successful peer review expert meeting to gather feedback on workplan for first five year programme for PPR eradication



©FAO

The first five-year phase of the global programme to eradicate Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) has taken a step closer to finalization, following a two day strategy session (11-12 July) at FAO's Rome headquarters that brought together animal health experts, government representatives, livestock professionals and other stakeholders from around the world. (agenda | meeting concept note).

Convened by FAO and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), through their Joint PPR Secretariat, the aim of the meeting was to present participants with a workplan for the first five years of the global effort to completely wipe out PPR by 2030 and gather their feedback and input. Now FAO and OIE will incorporate that feedback into the plan, which they will finalize by September and begin mobilizing resources to implement it.

Peste des Petits Ruminants - PPR for short - is a highly contagious viral disease affecting small ruminants, like sheep and goats that can kill as many as 90 percent of the animals it infects within days.

The disease has severe implications on the livelihoods of pastoralists and farmers across the globe. The world's population of 2.1 billion small ruminants are critical assets for poor rural households in developing countries, providing quality protein, milk, nutrition, fertilizer, wool and fibre as well as income opportunities

and financial flexibility. Around 80 percent of those animals are found in regions where PPR is present -- the virus is now present or expected to exist in more than 70 countries and causes an estimated \$1.5 to 2 billion in financial losses each year. PPR eradication is linked to other global challenges like poverty alleviation, food security and nutrition, and resilience building, in particular for small holder farmers and women. It will also contribute to strengthen security and to build peace in the affected countries and regions.

Moving forward with the global strategy for eradication

Following the successful eradication of Rinderpest – a similarly devastating livestock disease – in 2011, FAO and OIE began mobilizing support for a similar effort aimed at wiping PPR off the map. In 2015, the international community agreed on a global strategy for PPR eradication, setting 2030 as the target date for elimination of the disease in the world.

The five year plan discussed at this week's peer review meeting aims to move the strategy into action, focusing on those countries where PPR is known to exist or where its status has never been assessed. It was drafted following a series of regional consultations organized by FAO and OIE during 2015 and 2016.

An inexpensive, safe and reliable vaccine against PPR does exist, as do simple diagnostic tests, while the virus has a relatively short infectious phase and does not survive for long outside a host. So the eradication effort will involve a combined approach of strengthening countries' veterinary health services and systems for disease surveillance, vaccination campaigns, and awareness raising and capacity building.

Full details of the initial five year PPR eradication work plan will be released in September by FAO and OIE.