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Glimpses of Rinderpest eradication in India with mass vaccination

Rinderpest, also known as Cattle Plague, an ancient disease of cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, pig and other ungulates haunted human civilization for millennium. It has been often spread by trade and war. India's sero-surveillance work covering 480 million livestock population and involving 86,000 veterinarians and para veterinarians seems to be the largest in the world. Though India had a long campaign to conquer Rinderpest, but provided historic evidence to the world community that the stamping out policy as was adopted in Europe could be avoided. In India, because of the socio religious considerations, slaughtering of animals is considered inhumane and sentiments of Indian population are against the cow slaughter policy. FAO stated that Rinderpest eradication was instrumental in enabling the green revolution in India. It provided assured draft power for crop production before the mechanization of agriculture for crop production. The FAO estimated that India gained additional food production as a result of Rinderpest eradication up to 289 billion US dollars from 1965 to 1998. There has been augmentation in both meat and milk production. The milk production increased 2.99 times more from the year 1955 to 1995. The beef including buffalo meat increased 17.99 times from the year 1959 to 1995. The time when OIE granted Rinderpest freedom status to India, its economic impact has been substantial. There has been 102.06 times increase in income from milk and 193.96 times more from beef and buffalo meat from 1950-51 to 2005-06.

Biography

Mahendra Pal Yadav was a Vice Chancellor of Sardar Vallabhai Patel University of Agriculture & Technology, Meerut. He is also a Director for Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar and National Research Centre on Equines, Hisar. He is a Consultant for Haryana Farmers' Commission and President for National Academy of Veterinary Sciences (NAVS), India. He is also a President for Indian Agricultural University Association and Indian Virological Society.

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