

9th Meeting of Empowered Committee for Animal Health (ECAH) Charts Roadmap for Strengthening Animal Health Systems in India

ECAH : Reviews Progress on Vaccination, AMR Awareness and Veterinary Reforms

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The 9th meeting of the Empowered Committee for Animal Health (ECAH) was held today in New Delhi under the aegis of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD). The meeting was chaired by Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, and vice-chaired by Mrs. Alka Upadhyaya, Secretary, DAHD. Key stakeholders from office of the PSA, ICMR, CDSCO, DBT, Ministry of Ayush and other leading institutions participated in the deliberations to review and chart the path forward for animal health landscape in India.

Chairing the meeting, Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood commended the Department's proactive efforts and stressed the importance of enhancing awareness among livestock farmers—particularly through media campaigns—on critical issues such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccination and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). The Department also provided updates on key regulatory reforms and ongoing programmatic initiatives aimed at strengthening animal health governance nationwide. These measures included simplifying regulations related to veterinary drugs, vaccines, biologicals, and feed additives, as well as improving access to high-quality animal health products.



Strengthening Animal Health : Key Milestones Achieved So Far

Significant progress has been achieved under the National Disease Control Programmes for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis, Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), and Classical Swine Fever (CSF). **To date, 124.10 crore doses of FMD vaccine, 28.89 crore doses of PPR vaccine, 4.77 crore doses of Brucellosis vaccine, and 0.88 crore doses of CSF vaccine have been administered.** Animal vaccination records are being digitally captured through the Bharat Pashudhan application. In support of FMD eradication, the Department is actively working to establish FMD-Free Zones across nine States, and has initiated pilot efforts

for real-time monitoring of vaccine cold chains through the Animal Vaccine Intelligence Network (AVIN). **All vaccines used under the national control programmes are indigenously developed and manufactured, making India self-reliant in animal vaccine production.** India also exports vaccines to other countries, reaffirming its commitment to *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and global cooperation in animal health.

In a major breakthrough, India's first Equine Disease-Free Compartment (EDFC) has been endorsed by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) on 3rd July 2025. Located at the Remount Veterinary Corps (RVC) Centre & College, Meerut Cantonment, this international certification paves the way for the global movement of Indian sport horses, in full compliance with prescribed biosecurity and health standards. In the poultry sector, 44 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) compartments have been approved by the Department, reinforcing India's ability to maintain export-ready biosecure production systems.

Further, facilitated by DAHD, ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal has recently been recognized as a Category A Rinderpest Holding Facility (RHF) by WOAH and FAO. With this recognition, India joins an elite group of only six such institutions globally, reaffirming India's leadership and preparedness in post-eradication surveillance and containment of high-impact transboundary animal diseases. India's reference laboratory capacity was further bolstered with WOAH recognition of: ICAR-National Research Centre on Equines, Hisar for Equine Piroplasmiasis, and ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources, Lucknow for Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome caused by *Aphanomyces invadans*.

Under the Pandemic Fund Project, two major laboratory networks have been established:

- a. the Indian Network of Genomic Surveillance (INGeS) with 11 laboratories, and
- b. the Indian Network on Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) and Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs) with 19 laboratories. Efforts are underway to secure NABL accreditation for six CDDLs/RDDLs and 17 State Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratories. A digital platform for self-assessment of laboratories titled "Rate My Lab" is also being developed to promote transparency and benchmarking in diagnostic services.

About ECAH

Established in 2021, the Empowered Committee for Animal Health (ECAH) serves as the apex think tank of DAHD. It provides strategic guidance and policy inputs on animal disease control, emerging threats, One Health initiatives, and regulatory issues concerning veterinary pharmaceuticals and biologicals.

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