

## Empowered Committee for Animal Health reviews progress in strengthening animal health systems

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The 10th meeting of the Empowered Committee for Animal Health (ECAH), a think tank on animal health was held on 16th April 2026 in New Delhi under the aegis of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD). The meeting was chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India, Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, and vice-chaired by Secretary, DAHD, Shri Naresh Pal Gangwar. Dr Parvinder Maini, Scientific Secretary, O/o PSA, Dr Rajiv Bahl, Secretary, DHR, Dr. Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary, DBT and other Senior officials from ICMR, CDSCO, DBT, ICAR, O/oPSA, Veterinary Council of India and domain experts participated.



During the meeting, the Secretary, AHD highlighted India's progress in building a robust, technology-driven animal health ecosystem under the One Health framework and emphasized the need to move from disease control to eradication, particularly for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR). He also underscored improvements in vaccination delivery and verification through digital platforms such as NDLM and Bharat Pashudhan, enhancing transparency and accountability. Dr Naveena B. Maheswarappa, Animal Husbandry Commissioner, Government of India, delivered a detailed presentation highlighting the Department's key achievements and the way forward. The Committee reviewed progress across vaccination programmes, regulatory reforms, laboratory strengthening and surveillance systems.

The members were also briefed on the progress in disease control programmes, including administration of over 133 crore vaccinations against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) since 2020, leading to a significant reduction in disease prevalence and outbreaks. Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) outbreaks have declined from 98 in 2019 to 29 in 2025 due to sustained nationwide vaccination efforts. Strengthening of laboratory infrastructure, including Central and Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratories, to support disease surveillance and diagnostics under the Pandemic Fund project was also highlighted.

On regulatory reforms, the Committee welcomed measures to expedite approvals for veterinary drugs and vaccines through process reforms and integration with the NANDI-SUGAM portal, resulting in significant reduction in processing timelines. The Committee also noted that the Department is working towards development of a national framework for animal feed regulation to address existing legislative gaps. The Committee further emphasized the need to expand WOAAH-compliant compartmentalisation in the poultry sector to strengthen biosecure production systems and enhance export potential.

The Committee emphasized key priorities including preparedness for exotic FMD strains and African Swine Fever, mapping of veterinary infrastructure on the NDLM portal to identify critical gaps, and conduct of a national mock drill on animal disease preparedness. It also stressed strengthening of public-private partnerships in vaccine development and diagnostics, exploration of a dedicated surveillance coordination mechanism within DAHD, and integration of data across human, animal and environmental health sectors under the One Health framework for improved monitoring and response.

The Committee reaffirmed India's commitment to building a transparent, farmer-centric, and globally aligned animal health system that supports Atmanirbhar Bharat and enhances export potential.

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