The OIE and its partners

epidemiology & animal disease control programmes

The OIE launches a pilot project to establish efficient control methods for peste des petits ruminants, a disease affecting goats and sheep with devastating results

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has received funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to tackle peste des petits ruminants (PPR), a viral disease of goats and sheep also known as goat plague. This disease is prevalent in Africa and is spreading to other continents.

The vaccination of small ruminants (goats and sheep) is a keystone of the Foundation’s new livestock strategy. Goats are the economic bridge between chickens and dairy cows in the livestock development ladder, and goats can have an enormous positive impact on the lives of poor farmers. Millions of sheep and goats can die from this disease during epidemics. This is the first ‘goat grant’ and signals the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s interest in goats to others within the development community.

The new project, ‘Vaccine Standards and Pilot Approach to PPR Control in Africa,’ seeks to establish a Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) Vaccine Bank and develop a pilot strategy to control and progressively eradicate the disease in two to three African countries. The pilot nature of this project will facilitate the updating of OIE standards in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code and Manual. This project will rely on active collaboration with the Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre of the African Union (AU-PANVAC), African national Veterinary Services and other relevant partners and stakeholders.
Countries selected for the pilot strategy will be given preference for the progressive control/eradication of PPR, in that approximately 85% of the available vaccines will be used in the target countries, and up to 15% of vaccines may be made available for members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and possibly other African countries for emergency PPR vaccination. If this 15% is not needed to address emergency outbreaks, it will be reallocated to the target countries in order to reinforce their vaccination campaigns.

The PPR Vaccine Bank will have a virtual rolling stock; this means that vaccines are not stocked physically, but are produced as needed and renewed on a rolling basis, under the terms and conditions contractually agreed by the OIE with the selected providers.

In October 2012, the OIE launched an international call for tender to establish an operational PPR Vaccine Bank in Africa. Seven tender offers were received in total and, after thorough review by the Selection Committee (composed of international experts and a representative from the Gates Foundation), a winning supplier was selected in December 2012.

In keeping with the overarching objective of the grant from the Gates Foundation, the PPR Vaccine Bank will not only ensure the timely supply of high-quality vaccines that comply with international standards, but also facilitate harmonisation of control methods.

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