

1. What kind of disease is PPR?

Peste des petits ruminants (PPR), sometimes referred to as sheep and goat plague is a highly contagious animal disease. Some wild ruminants are also susceptible to the virus. While the PPR virus has been detected in other animals, it only causes illness in small ruminants. Once infected, goats and sheep exhibit fever, anorexia, nasal and ocular discharges, difficult respiration, sores on the gums, lips and tongue, erosions on the nasal mucosa and profuse diarrhea. Affected animals become depressed, very weak and severely dehydrated in a matter of days. The virus can infect up to 90 percent of a flock of which 30 to 70 percent of infected animals may die.

2. Does PPR affect people?

The PPR virus does not infect humans, but its infection in animals has serious impacts on livelihoods, food and nutrition security and gender equality.

High mortality and the actions to contain the disease, such as depopulation of diseased flocks, movement restrictions and bans on the trade of small ruminants, their by-products, or even other agricultural goods hurt vulnerable farming communities and stifle the economic growth of all communities.

3. What impact does it have on smallholder livelihoods, food security and nutrition?

Some 500 million family farmers rely on small ruminants for food such as meat, milk and other products for income generation. Sheep and goats also represent an investment poor families use in times of crises like natural disasters. Women's livelihoods are particularly threatened, since women make up the majority of those caring for and raising small ruminants.

By causing the loss of millions of small ruminants, PPR pushes millions of smallholder families deeper into poverty, increases their levels of malnutrition and exacerbates hunger, and food insecurity.

4. What countries/regions does PPR affect?

PPR is currently present in around 70 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, representing more than 75 per cent of the 2.1 billion global small ruminant population.

5. What factors favour its eradication?

Several technical factors favour the prospect of achieving global eradication of PPR:

- i) only one strain of PPR exists and therefore only one vaccine type is needed;
- ii) no animal species carries the virus and eliminate it from its body, without showing any clinical signs (carrier state)
- iii) the absence of virus reservoirs outside of the small ruminant population;
- iv) the availability of a vaccine which confers long-lived immunity after a single dose has been delivered and is relatively inexpensive to produce;
- v) the availability of diagnostic assays for serological monitoring of vaccination programmes and detection of virus circulation.

6. Why eradicate it?

Economic analysis has shown that it is in the long run more profitable to eradicate the virus than to continue to live with it and try to control it. Sheep and goat production is also very important to increase the empowerment of women and to provide milk and meat products, crucial especially for child nutrition and maternal health.

7. How can PPR be eradicated?

PPR can be prevented and eventually eradicated principally through vaccination as a very powerful tool and by joining together as a global community united against a common threat. By solidifying the world's political will, financial commitment and technical expertise, the international community will eliminate PPR as a threat to vulnerable people's food security, nutrition and livelihoods, paving the way for a future with less hunger, more opportunity and improved wellbeing. Support to national veterinary services to comply with OIE standards and guidelines enables the success of any national PPR control programme.

8. Do we have the right vaccine readily available?

A safe, potent and acceptable vaccine is now widely available. Unfortunately, this vaccine is sensitive to warm temperatures and should be kept between + 2°C and 8°C, protected from light. It requires a consistent cold chain to ensure its stability and efficacy from production to vaccination. This adds additional costs to the eradication campaign. There have also been several reports on preliminary but promising results from vaccines that are more thermo-tolerant, but they have not yet been registered or commercialized in countries.

9. By when will it be eradicated?

Building on the experience gained from the successful rinderpest eradication campaign, the international community is aiming to successfully eliminate PPR by 2030. The eradication campaign will have to overcome challenges such as high mobility of small ruminants, access to remote areas, occasionally under armed conflicts and the safe delivery of vaccines. The campaign will require the full political commitment of each affected country and efficacious national veterinary systems.

10. What will it cost to eradicate PPR?

During the initial stages it is estimated that the annual costs will be around \$0.5 billion. These funds will be used for activities in 98 countries and to better manage the looming threat of PPR to nearly 2 billion sheep and goats.

Eradication makes economic sense as it will permanently eliminate the negative socio-economic impacts of the disease and result in savings of USD 1.8 billion a year. The entire investment in this initiative is expected to be recovered within the first five years of PPR eradication.

11. Who is involved in its eradication?

The tools and knowledge are available to eradicate the disease – what we need now is the dedication of everyone, from veterinary practitioners and the official veterinary authorities, individual farmers,

experts and policy makers to the world community of governments, regional and international organizations, and civil society. The private sector - who has the strongest interest in developing the small ruminant industry - will have a pivotal role in implementing and supporting the eradication plan on the ground.

12. What are the lessons learned from the Rinderpest eradication campaign?

The eradication of rinderpest – led by FAO and OIE, with the determinate commitment and action from regional organisations (particularly AU-IBAR in Africa) and donors such as, European Commission, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States of America, was achieved in 2011. It showed that with political will, economic commitment and full cooperation, countries could eradicate a disease from the face of the earth that was not only devastating but entrenched across more than 120 of countries in Africa, Middle East and Asia.

13. What role do FAO and OIE play?

FAO and OIE are co-leading the eradication of PPR in strong collaboration with regional organisations, including AU-IBAR in Africa and SAARC in southern Asia.

Based on their technical knowledge and presence in the field, FAO and OIE are in a unique position to successfully coordinate the Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of PPR from local level to international and regional engagement, and tap into their network of international reference centres and ensure the international political will to eradicate this disease.

FAO's extensive field experiences are crucial for the successful eradication of the disease. This is not only based on the successful eradication of rinderpest and the management of other animal diseases of high impact, but also thanks to its experience and close collaboration with grassroots stakeholders particularly small livestock holders and pastoralists, even in very remote and poor areas. The joint division between FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) historically has been paramount in technology development and transfer to countries in need of assistance, and are ready to contribute to PPR control and its final demise.

In May 2014, the World Assembly of OIE national delegates adopted a Resolution with regard to global PPR control and eradication strategy, which is considered a global public good, and carries weight in seeking greater political commitments.

OIE, working closely with national chief veterinary officers in 180 countries set up intergovernmental standards on PPR control method with the support of the OIE-FAO reference centre network and has the system to officially declare countries that are free of the disease as PPR-free, as well as officially endorse the validity of national control programs that infected countries wish to implement. In May 2014, 48 countries were for the first time recognized as "Free of PPR". The OIE also manages regional vaccine banks in Asia and Africa.