



Somali Ecosystem
Rinderpest Eradication
Coordination Unit

SERECU II



AFRICAN UNION
**INTERAFRICAN BUREAU FOR
ANIMAL RESOURCES**

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL RESOURCES FOR AFRICA

Background

The African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is a specialized technical office of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) of the African Union Commission (AUC). AU-IBAR's mandate is to support and coordinate the utilization of livestock, fisheries and wildlife as resources for both human wellbeing and economic development in the Member States of the African Union (AU).

The SERECU project was established in 2006 as a specialized project within the larger Pan African Programme for the Control of Epizootics (PACE) to coordinate the final effort to secure OIE accreditation of freedom from rinderpest in the Somali Ecosystem region. As one of the major transboundary animal diseases (TADs) affecting Africa, the eradication of rinderpest is a success story that AU-IBAR will seek to emulate in other projects as it implements the new five-year strategic plan (2010—2014).

Rationale

Rinderpest ('cattle plague') is a deadly viral disease of domestic animals and wildlife. It has most notably afflicted cattle, spreading across sub-Saharan Africa as a pandemic during the 20th century.

The disease has been a serious threat to the livelihoods of millions of Africans and has been the subject of international eradication efforts since the 1940s. The first fully-coordinated mass vaccination

programme was known as Joint Project 15 (JP15) and lasted from 1962—1975. It was followed by the Pan African Rinderpest Campaign (PARC) from 1986—1998; a programme that eradicated rinderpest in many African countries but not in southern Sudan and the Somali Ecosystem (SES). By the end of the project, 17 countries had joined the OIE pathway by declaring at least provisional/zonal freedom from the disease.

PARC was, in turn, succeeded by PACE (1999—2007) which further assisted countries in progressing along the OIE pathway and which eradicated rinderpest from southern Sudan. SERECU is the last in this series of projects and has the specific aim of achieving OIE certification of freedom from rinderpest in the SES.

In 2002, the SES region was suspected of having the last remaining foci of rinderpest in Africa. The SES livestock population represents an epidemiologically homogenous group that moves relatively freely across national boundaries with seasonal migration and trade. Confirmation of SES countries' freedom from rinderpest is the final step in the global eradication of the disease.

SERECU II components

- **Animal disease early warning / response systems**
This component involved developing national Emergency Preparedness Plans (EPP) for rinderpest. An EPP includes 'passive' surveillance for rinderpest based on routine reporting by pastoralists and prompt reporting in response to any

Rinderpest is only the second disease after smallpox to be eradicated from our planet



suspected rinderpest outbreak in livestock or wildlife. This requires the national capacity to field sample, transport and test tissue samples to diagnose or refute rinderpest.

Another EPP feature is the availability of trained rapid response teams (RRT) at national level. In the event of rinderpest diagnosis, RRT take coordinated action to contain and stump out the outbreak.

- **Rinderpest freedom accreditation**

SERECU facilitated surveys for proof and verification of absence of rinderpest, leading to the preparation of rinderpest dossiers for the OIE. These dossiers had details of the disease history, control measures developed and results of rinderpest surveillance in each country. The dossiers also included details of national EPP and other measures for safeguarding against rinderpest re-emergence.

- **Communication**

Recognizing the importance of communication in rinderpest eradication, SERECU developed a communication strategy to help achieve the project's results and objective.

Based on a survey of knowledge, attitudes and practices of the primary audience (pastoralists and livestock traders), key messages were developed and the best channels/media to reach this audience were identified.

The use of Somali language radio broadcasts was a key SERECU activity in order to reach the ethnic Somali

pastoralists and livestock traders that constitute the primary audience for rinderpest eradication communication.

Achievements

- Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia accredited free from rinderpest by the OIE.
- Eleven other African countries (Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Niger, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Comoros and Sao Tome and Principe) supported and guided in the preparation of dossiers for the accreditation of freedom from rinderpest.
- Rinderpest eradicated from Africa with final verification by FAO-OIE experts underway pending global eradication declaration in 2011 by FAO and OIE.
- Exit strategy that includes emergency preparedness and contingency plans for rinderpest prepared.
- Epidemio-surveillance systems strengthened and now able to serve as the foundation and model for the control of other TADs.
- History of rinderpest eradication from Africa fully documented, including the lessons learnt and potential use as an advocacy tool for further investment in the control and eradication of other TADs.



Goal Reducing poverty of people involved in livestock farming by enhancing livestock development and trade opportunities

Objective Ensure freedom from rinderpest accredited by OIE for Somali Ecosystem (SES) countries

Main Expected Results

- National animal disease early warning and response capacities functional and coordinated at SES level.
- Rinderpest surveillance in SES coordinated and harmonised.
- SES countries' accreditation process guided and supported.

Geographic coverage

The SES region, which includes Somalia, north eastern Kenya and south eastern Ethiopia.

May 2008—December 2010

Project implementation period.

Beneficiaries

Pastoralists, other livestock owners and traders, national and regional authorities.

Stakeholders

National veterinary authorities of SES countries, FAO-GREP and World Animal Health Organisation (OIE).

4 million euros

Amount in the Financing Agreement signed by AU-IBAR and the EU.

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