SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING

MAINTAINING GLOBAL FREEDOM FROM RINDERPEST

REGIONAL MEETING FOR AFRICA

5-6 AUGUST 2015, SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGYPT

In collaboration with:

FAO

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

OIE

World Organisation for Animal Health

Protecting animals, preserving our future

IABRA

African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources
Global rinderpest freedom was officially declared in 2011 at the World Assembly of Delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and at the 37th Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

At these meetings the Member States of each organization directed the two organizations to work jointly in managing all aspects of rinderpest in the post-eradication era. The agreed strategy is to reduce the number of laboratories holding the virus whilst ensuring global, regional and national preparedness in case of an outbreak of the disease.

In 2011, the Member States of the African Union (AU) recommended that all African countries should destroy their rinderpest virus stocks or send them to the AU-Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (AU-PANVAC) in Ethiopia for safe keeping. In 2015, AU-PANVAC was recognized as a Joint FAO-OIE approved Rinderpest Holding Facility (RHF). Although some countries in Africa have destroyed their rinderpest-virus containing material and/or sent material to AU-PANVAC, questionnaires by FAO and by OIE showed that rinderpest virus is still kept in at least five countries in Africa.

To accelerate the process of rinderpest virus destruction and sequestration, FAO organized a Regional Meeting for Africa on Maintaining Global Freedom from Rinderpest. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Republic of Egypt and held on the 5-6 August 2015 at the Sheraton Sharm Hotel in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt.

Representatives from nine countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda), FAO, OIE, AU-PANVAC, Pirbright, AU-IBAR, rinderpest joint advisory committee and Los Alamos National Laboratory attended the 2-day meeting (See annex 1 for list of the 28 participants).

**Meeting Objectives:**
Recognizing the potential threat posed by laboratory stocks of rinderpest virus the meeting’s objectives were:

- To share information on the current situation of rinderpest virus in the region and review the progress of each country towards their obligations to destroy or safely relocate (sequester) their stocks of rinderpest virus in a FAO-OIE approved RHF;
- To illustrate the risks and possible impact of not destroying or sequestering stocks of rinderpest virus in an FAO-OIE approved RHF;
- To support countries in their commitment to destroy or sequester their stocks of virus in an FAO-OIE approved RHF;
- To emphasize the need for continuing awareness and preparedness for an outbreak of rinderpest.

**Day one:** presentations and discussion addressed the following

- Activities of international and regional organizations on their commitment to maintaining global freedom from rinderpest;
- An overview of the global and regional rinderpest situation.

A breakout session of three groups of participants discussed different aspects of the current threat of rinderpest in Africa and how it can be reduced. Five of the participating countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria Senegal and Sudan, declared that they still have stocks of rinderpest virus-containing material...
(RVCM) including vaccine. All the participants agreed that there are no justifiable reasons for keeping RVCM and those holding the virus are considering destroying or sequestering their stocks. However, some countries remained uncertain on transferring their national reserve of vaccine stocks to an RHF.

The day’s outputs were summarized by His Excellency Professor Musa Tibin Musa Adam, Federal Minister of Livestock, Fisheries and Rangelands, Sudan. Drawing on the presentations and their discussions and on his own experience with the disease, Professor Musa stated that it must be an absolute priority not to keep any virulent strains of rinderpest virus for any reasons. These viruses should be disposed of by destruction or sequestration. Vaccine stocks and vaccine virus seed are still necessary as part of a comprehensive preparedness plan for a possible outbreak of rinderpest but even these viruses should only be kept “under lock and key” in a small number of approved RHFs. Africa’s livestock is an important and growing resource that should never be at risk from a terrible disease that has already been eradicated.

**Day two**: presentations and discussion addressed the following

- Preparedness planning to reduce the impact of a possible outbreak;
- Countries ’commitment to destruction or relocation of national virus stocks;
- Technical and financial support by FAO to remove RVCM from laboratories and raise public awareness at stockholder and veterinary professional levels.

A breakout session of three groups developed lists of the essential components needed in global, regional and national preparedness planning for rinderpest. The key issues raised by all three groups are the importance of suitable and accessible regional and global emergency vaccine stockpiles and the necessary funding for their management. The development of international rinderpest preparedness plan in the post-eradication era is also essential. With rinderpest no longer a concern to the farmers, any new programmes to raise awareness for rinderpest should be combined with other major diseases of livestock such as foot-and-mouth disease and peste des petits ruminants.

At the end of the meeting, participants completed a questionnaire to provide feedback on the most suitable approach for their countries to reduce the risk of rinderpest in regards to raising public awareness on rinderpest at the level of the frontline responders and stakeholders and their requirements from FAO for assistance in the removal of virus stocks to AU-PANVAC.

**Conclusions:**

During a final plenary session, the participating countries agreed on the following conclusions for the way forward:

1. All participating countries holding RVCM committed themselves either to destroy or sequester their stocks at AU-PANVAC before 2018.
2. Rinderpest awareness raising for livestock owners, stakeholders and for frontline animal health staff will be carried out in selected countries in Africa by FAO in 2015 and 2016.
3. Global preparedness plans will be completed by the end of 2016.

**Acknowledgement**

The participants are grateful to the Government of Egypt and FAO for the support extended to them during the preparation and the conduct of the meeting.
# Annex 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**Maintaining Global Freedom from Rinderpest – Regional Meeting for Africa**  
5-6 August 2015 - Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

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