

“Impact of FMD Control, Knowledge & Technology Input During Recent years”

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) affects cloven-hoofed domestic and wild animals, such as cattle, buffalo, pig, goats, sheep, mithun, yak and several wildlife species. The disease is contagious and economically important. FMD is a high-priority transboundary illness that is on the WOAHA List A. The government of India supported FMD control programme initiated at pilot scale with 54 districts in the year 2003/04 has reached to a crucial juncture where the entire country is being covered under mass vaccination along with associated measures nowadays. Over the time disease incidence has reduced considerably. Those states vaccinating sincerely twice a year using quality controlled vaccine are making strides towards building high herd immunity. As a result of this for the 1st time, the number of reported FMD outbreaks have reduced in two digits for three consecutive years (2022, 2023 & 2024) from the initial 4 digit outbreaks experienced before beginning of 21st Century. This has motivated the stakeholders towards going for more aggressive & planned approach on disease control & elimination so that the reported disease incidences can be brought down to “single digit” at national level in short period of time in a sustainable manner but without any suppressed or under-reporting. The intermittent epidemics previously observed every 2-4 years seem to have disappeared now. To sustain all these achievements and to further reduce outbreak substantially to a “single digit” and to eliminate virus from environment it will require adapting all existing practices along with new innovative approaches for disease prevention & elimination. This will also require extensive and continuous capacity building of all veterinarians and awareness among other stakeholders, most importantly veterinary professionals and livestock farmers of the country. In addition to others, some of these could be synchronized pulse polio mode vaccination by dividing the country into zones (zonal approach), following combing vaccinations, establishing emergency vaccine banks, zero-tolerance towards deployment of poor quality vaccines, testing of vaccines collected during surprise visit from field for antigen quality and integrity, cold chain strengthening and audit, sentinel surveillance, environmental surveillance, regulated animals movements, extensive capacity building and stakeholder’s involvement and motivation of vaccination teams for repeat vaccinations and transparent disease reporting etc.

