

Release of Animal Health Disease Control Plans – Peste des petits Ruminants (PPR), Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD), National Influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan (NIPPRP)



Livestock diseases cause devastating socio-economic losses and serious damage to the livelihoods, food security and nutrition of, especially, the small-scale farmers. Bhutan with about 60% of its population living in rural areas and depending on agriculture and livestock farming, livestock diseases are a potential threat to their livelihood. When these diseases are

zoonotic in nature, it can be a potential public health concern. In order to avert the untoward consequences, it is essential to have prevention and control plan documents to guide effective management (prevention and control) of disease outbreaks. Bhutan remains in the forefront in effective management of livestock and zoonotic diseases. This is largely due to the excellent coordination among the different stakeholders and the advance efforts that Bhutan puts in preparing management plan for any potential disease outbreaks. In view of the evolving disease epidemiology and the country's progression in management of livestock diseases, National Centre for Animal Health, Animal Health Division, Department of livestock has developed National Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) Prevention, Control and Eradication Plan 2020 and updated the National foot and mouth disease prevention and control plan (NFMDPCP) and National Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Plan (NIPPP).

PPR is been sporadically reported in the country and most of the outbreaks were associated with incursion through import of live animals. As part of the global effort to eradicate the disease by 2030, Bhutan has been actively implementing various strategies to prevent, control and eradicate the disease. The NPPR-PCEP (2020) document outlines the strategies and activities to eradicate PPR from Bhutan by 2028 through adoption of Global Strategy for Control and Eradication of PPR.

Although there is an effective system to prevent and control FMD outbreaks in Bhutan, as part of the global effort to eradicate the disease, the earlier edition of plan has been updated incorporating the progressive control pathway (PCP). With the endorsement of this official control plan, Bhutan will achieve stage 3 of the progressive control pathway. This document outlines strategies and activities to gear Bhutan's progress towards next stage and eventually achieve elimination

of FMD.

Since the publication of the first NIPPP document in 2011, Bhutan has recorded at least 13 outbreaks of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza at district level which was successfully contained from further spread into the interior parts of the country. The virus has also evolved necessitating changes in the prevention and control strategies. With the emergence of cases of Avian Influenza H7N9 in humans in China and subsequent isolation of the virus from poultry, it was necessary to incorporate strategies for preparedness for H7N9 into the NIPPP document so that all stakeholders are aware of the additional requirements for surveillance and control for this novel virus.

These documents will be useful as a ready reference to all those involved in the prevention, control and elimination PPR, FMD and avian influenza from the country. These documents will also directly contribute in bringing down the incidence of the listed disease in the country, thereby improving the livelihood of the rural population.

