



## Eradicating Priority Animal Diseases in West Africa

***From 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022, the Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC) is organising with its partners, the 8th Annual Meeting of the ECOWAS Regional Animal Health Networks (RAHN) in Praia, Cabo Verde.***

Despite West Africa's livestock potential, the region remains dependent on external imports for red and white meat, milk and milk products. While some countries have made efforts to limit or even ban imports of poultry, for instance, and favour local production, others have seen their imports increase exponentially, with population demand steadily rising by around 4% each year.

Among the many causes that hinder the development of the livestock sector, stand out animal diseases, the majority of which are endemic in West Africa and must be notified to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The annual meeting of the animal health networks is therefore institutionalised and organised by the RAHC in collaboration with FAO, AU-IBAR and Brooke and their financial partners (European Union, World Bank, Swiss Cooperation) to serve as a framework for exchanges, evaluation of the level of implementation of the past year's activities and the results obtained, discuss the challenges and plan future activities.

The subject of the 2022 meeting is: *"Horizon 2030: situation, stakes and prospects for the eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants and Rabies and the control of Foot and Mouth Disease and Contagious Bovine Peripneumonia, priority animal diseases in the ECOWAS space"*. The main objective is to assess the progress made by ECOWAS Member States in the process of eradicating or controlling PPR, rabies, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and CBPP, and follow up on the implementation of action plans for RESEPI and RESOLAB.

Given the negative impact of these priority diseases, eradication or control strategies have been developed at the global level, committing countries to efforts to control them, under the aegis of FAO, and WHO in the case of zoonoses. In 2015, the Global Programme for the Eradication of PPR by 2030 was launched. According to FAO, the monitoring of the progress of infected countries towards stage 4 (final stage of eradication) shows that in 2021, only 15% of countries were at stage 3. Two countries have indicated to be at stage 4, i.e., the final stage, whereas in 2015 no country was at stage 4. Other global eradication commitments concern rabies "zero cases by 2030", control of foot and mouth disease (FMD) or CBPP.

At ECOWAS level, the Strategic Orientation Framework (SOF) 2025 has defined the orientations of the Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) for the period 2016-2025 through the Regional Programme for Agricultural Investments and Food and Nutritional Security (RPAIFNS) and its objectives of securing pastoral and agropastoral systems. Among the actions that should contribute to the achievement of this objective are (i) securing cross-border pastoral mobility, (ii) promoting livestock feed supply networks, (iii) strengthening veterinary and animal health services and (iv) combating epizootics.

For the Executive Director of RAHC, **Ms Vivian Iwar**, *"good management and exploitation of the livestock sector should satisfy basic needs and contribute to the well-being of the rural populations who massively practice it"*.



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This meeting which will be facilitated by ECOWAS experts under the chairmanship of the ECOWAS Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture, **Ms Massandje Touré-Litsé**, with their partners from the African Union, FAO, WHO, Brooke WA, etc., in the presence of executives from Member States and management staff of national veterinary associations, will be held in two phases. The first phase will last for three days and will involve the networks (RESEPI, RESOLAB and CVO) working on specific subjects related to the 2030 objectives and around four priority diseases: PPR, Rabies, CBPP and FMD, while the second phase of two days will use the results of the first consultation in addition to the conclusions of the Regional Incident Coordination Group (ICG) meetings for West Africa on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza as a basis for exchanges to identify solutions to the major problems identified.

To recall, the ECOWAS Specialised Centre for Animal Health (RAHC) was established by Supplementary Act in 2012 with the mandate to (i) coordinate actions that contribute to food security and nutrition, (ii) improve livelihoods by improving animal health and welfare, (iii) develop animal resources by ensuring the formulation of relevant regulations, and (iv) coordinate actions on the prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses. Since its operationalisation in 2018, the Centre has developed and adopted various regulatory texts and regional strategies, including the Regional Animal Health and Welfare Framework Strategy, the Regional Livestock Identification and Traceability Strategy (ECOLITS), the Regional PPR Eradication Strategy, the Regional Rabies Control Strategy and the Regional Trypanosome and Tick-borne Disease Control Strategy and Action Plan. With the support of financial partners, the Centre is implementing its strategies through the implementation of several projects to support national actions in disease control and livestock development.

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**For further information, contact:**

Email: [fdabire@araa.org](mailto:fdabire@araa.org), Web Site : [www.araa.org](http://www.araa.org)

**Facebook: [araaraaf](#), [ecowas.agriculture](#), Twitter: [ARAA\\_CEDEAO](#), [Ecowas\\_agric](#)**

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**Directorate of Communication, ECOWAS Commission**

Telephone: +234 8102507938 - Email: [soulate@ecowas.int](mailto:soulate@ecowas.int)

Twitter: [@ecowas\\_cedeao](#) - Facebook: [Ecowas\\_Cedeao](#)

[www.ecowas.int](http://www.ecowas.int)