

Pandemic Preparedness: Uganda demonstrates how a “One Health” partnership between the Public and Private sectors can deliver preventative health benefits

“Stamp Out Sleeping Sickness” initiative has managed to contain one deadly disease from becoming even more lethal

Libourne, 07 July 2022 - Sleeping sickness or Human African **trypanosomiasis**, a deadly disease, which threatened the lives of millions of people throughout Africa has been brought under control in Northern Uganda, thanks to a consortium of veterinarians, doctors and Government agencies working together with the private sector and venture philanthropists. The WHO (World Health Organisation) confirmed last month that 3 countries, Uganda, Rwanda, and Benin had eliminated at least one form of the disease.^(*)

The story begins almost 20 years ago in a remote region of Northern Uganda where two strains of the human form of sleeping sickness were converging, prompting the WHO to warn of a public health emergency across Africa. The disease is spread by tsetse flies, which act as the host, feeding on both humans and animals. In an area where health facilities already struggled to provide correct diagnosis and treatment, not knowing which strain to treat, would potentially have caused catastrophic effects on people’s health.

The WHO estimated that at the time, 500,000 new human cases of trypanosomiasis were being detected in sub-Saharan Africa each year. Cases that, unless treated rapidly, normally prove fatal, especially in areas with an absence of quality medical care.

The campaign to fight the potential crisis in Uganda was named “Stamp Out Sleeping Sickness” bringing together a spontaneous “One Health” alliance including Ugandan government agencies, human and veterinary health researchers from Edinburgh University, Scotland, and Makerere University Veterinary College Uganda, together with the global veterinary health group, Ceva Santé Animale and the venture philanthropy operated charity, IKARE Ltd, funded by the private equity group, IK Partners. The initiative also came to include a network of private veterinary businesses, the “3 V Vets”, set-up and still operated by some of the graduate veterinarians from Makerere who were involved in the initial treatment of over 200,000 cattle

The treatment itself is simple and inexpensive. An antiparasitic medicine is used to “clean” cattle of infection and then tiny amounts of insecticide applied every few months will keep the tsetse flies from reinfesting herds. The difficulty was that in these remote areas, very few farmers had ready access to either these medicines or the veterinary services needed to keep the disease in check. This is where the 3V vets filled the gap, providing service to the communities whilst building sustainable businesses. The results speak for themselves with a year-on-year reduction in sleeping sickness cases and, in the last 12 months, the region was declared free of the disease for the first time in over 100 years.

More actively implicating local communities in building preventative health strategies, like SOS, may be one way that the world can start to head off any future pandemics.

We invite you to view the background to this story in the available videos and podcast:

Long version video



Short version video



Podcast



- Ends -

(*)<https://www.who.int/news/item/24-05-2022-benin--uganda-and-rwanda-eliminate-human-african-trypanosomiasis-as-a-public-health-problem>

About Ceva Santé Animale

Ceva Santé Animale is a French multinational veterinary pharmaceutical company created in 1999. Chaired by Dr. Marc Prikazsky, Ceva specializes in the research, development, production and marketing of pharmaceutical products and vaccines for livestock (ruminants, swine, poultry) and companion animals. Ceva is present in 110 countries and employs over 6000 people worldwide.

2021 turnover: €1.4 billion.

Website: <http://www.ceva.com>    

About IKARE Ltd

IK Aid and Relief Enterprise Ltd or IKARE (pronounced "I care") is a UK company limited by guarantee and a registered UK charity, founded in 2006. IKARE is a for impact investor, operating according to the Venture Philanthropy principles. IKARE's main donor is the Private Equity (PE) firm IK Partners. IKARE engages with a limited number of strong social entrepreneurs, contributes funding and non-financial support over a number of years. IKARE sees itself as a catalyst for change, de-risking and piloting innovative solutions that have potential to scale and effect systemic change.

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