

## ICAR transfers vaccine technology to Sanvita

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**New Delhi:** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Sanvita Biotechnologies of Hyderabad for commercialization of Bluetongue Multivalent Inactivated Vaccine.

The MoU was signed on July 17, 2012, in presence of Dr S Ayyappan, secretary (DARE) & DG, ICAR, Dr R Prabhakaran, vice chancellor, Tamil Nadu Veterinary & Animal Science University, Dr K M L Pathak, DDG(AS), Dr Gaya Prasad, ADG (AH), Dr Krishnamachari from Sanvita Biotechnologies and other experts dignitaries from ICAR and TANUVAS.

In February this year, the technology was licensed to Indian Immunologicals, Hyderabad, and Biovet, Bangalore, for commercial production through an MoU with TANUVAS and ICAR under a public private partnership program.

The ICAR has initiated the All India Network Programme on Bluetongue during Xth Five Year Plan, which is continuing in XIth Five Year Plan (2007-2012) with a total budget outlay of approximately \$1.3 million (Rs 7 crore). It will continue in XII Plan Period in order to develop effective control programs for bluetongue.

The network program is functioning at 11 centers in various states of India. Bluetongue multivalent inactivated vaccine is successfully developed by TANUVAS Centre in collaboration with the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University (Andhra Pradesh), Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals (Karnataka) and Lala Lajpatrai University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (Haryana).

BTV serotypes 1, 2, 10, 16 and 23, which are prevalent in India, are incorporated in the vaccine. The vaccination of sheep needs to be done one month before the onset of monsoon. The usefulness of bluetongue vaccine is tested extensively in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. There is wide appreciation from the farming community regarding effectiveness of this vaccine.

Bluetongue, which is transmitted by culicoides, was first reported in India during 1964. Now the disease is present throughout India, mainly affecting sheep. The disease is more severe in southern states (Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka). There are also reports on the occurrence of bluetongue in goats, cattle and wildlife. Currently, bluetongue is causing huge losses in temperate regions (Europe) due to climate change.