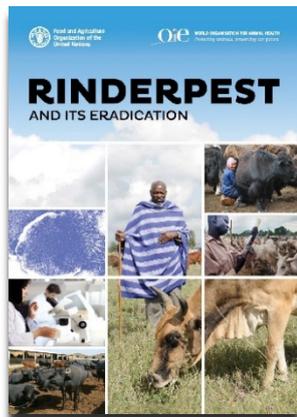


Rinderpest and its Eradication

The World Organisation for Animal Health and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations jointly publish this monumental work



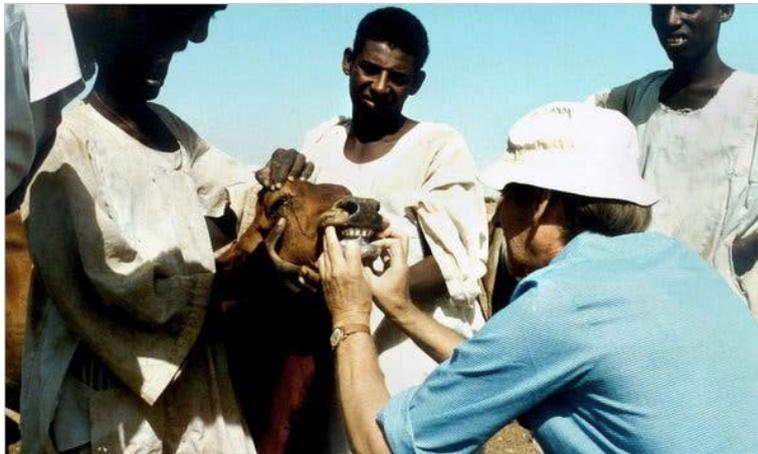
‘Summer days in Rome are invariably hot and; as the sun rose over the Apennines to the east on 28 June 2011, for the average Roman it presaged another typical summer day.... This was the day when FAO, jointly with its sister organisation the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), was to announce.... that the world was free of the scourge of rinderpest.’

**William Taylor, E. Paul Gibbs, Santanu K. Bandyopadhyay & Protus Atang,
Introduction, *Rinderpest and its Eradication***

© FAO & OIE

This year, on the tenth anniversary of the disease’s eradication, the OIE and FAO, who are frequent co-publishing partners, will jointly release what will arguably be their most important co-publication to date: *Rinderpest and its Eradication*.

Since the disease’s eradication, with typical scientific rigour, the editors – William Taylor, E. Paul Gibbs, Santanu K. Bandyopadhyay, Paul-Pierre Pastoret¹ & Protus Atang – have worked tirelessly to document the story of how, where and by whom this achievement was realised.



William Taylor examining a cow for rinderpest in 1987 in Sudan. From a Donald G. McNeil Jr article, ‘Rinderpest, scourge of cattle, is vanquished’, published in the New York Times on 27 June 2011. © FAO/F. Paladini

The timeline for an average book is one to two years, depending upon a variety of factors such as the book’s length, the number of authors and illustrations, etc., but *Rinderpest and its Eradication* is not an average book. It runs to 800+ pages split into nine parts with 122 chapters and subchapters, 152 authors and approximately 200 images.

Luckily, it has been a labour of love for the editors and authors alike furthered by the sustained spirit of coordination between the OIE and FAO. It includes a foreword from the Directors General of the OIE and FAO, Dr Monique Éloit and Dr Dongyu Qu, a preface from Nobel Prize-winning veterinarian and immunologist Prof. Peter Doherty as well as an introduction by the editors.

¹ Sadly, Paul-Pierre Pastoret died in 2015, but his contribution is gratefully acknowledged.



The publication not only documents for posterity the history, evolution and clinical signs of the disease but also how it was controlled, who were the stakeholders, how this was coordinated globally, the lessons learnt from rinderpest's eradication, the work of the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP) and importantly how global freedom from the disease can be safeguarded.

Layout of the opening of Part 3 of the book. © FAO & OIE

'I put together four vaccination teams and headed south, picking up vaccine, diluent and ice at Debre Zeit on the way to the southern border of Shoa province [Ethiopia], where I had been initially assigned. I cannot remember where I got other equipment (syringes, needles, ear notchers, ices boxes, refrigerator, beds and tents) but I managed somehow.'

Tony Wilmore describing his work on the ground in Ethiopia to combat rinderpest from 'Joint Programme 15 – Life as a team leader', *Rinderpest and its Eradication*

As the editors and authors were heavily involved in the story of the disease's eradication,² personal testimonies are intrinsic to the book. It also details the disease's eradication by region through chapters on individual countries with eyewitness reports, and provides overall regional timelines.

The aforementioned information would always have been relevant but is even more so in a climate where we all – scientists, veterinarians, politicians and the general public – have been seeking to understand how to control a pandemic.

As has oft been said of late, diseases know no borders

Covid-19 is ignorant of borders as was rinderpest, but what this comprehensive work teaches us is that there is hope. As humans, we have a capacity to learn and adapt, and importantly cooperate to achieve common goals. Let us not forget the lessons rinderpest taught us, rather let us examine them closely and seek to build upon them.

The book is currently in the final stages of production and is scheduled to be available on the OIE and FAO websites this autumn – date to be confirmed – with a limited-edition print run being anticipated.

■ OIE News – June 2021

² Listen to [Dr Protus Atanag's remarks](#) at the ceremony to mark the eradication of rinderpest.