

WORLD FOOD PRIZE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
Risks to the World Food Supply in the 21st Century

Impact of Livestock Disease on the Lives and Livelihoods of the Poor

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Livestock disease is headline news with public concerns for Mad Cow disease, economic consequences of Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks in the British Isles, and, most recently, worries about biological warfare. These headlines primarily reflect the concerns of the relatively affluent in developed countries. Livestock disease has much greater and longer lasting impact on the poor in developing countries. Livestock are important to the livelihoods of 70% of the world's poor, primarily in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where more than a billion persons survive on less than one US\$ per day. In these developing regions, disease severely constrains meat and milk production, quarantines limit access to profitable markets, and zoonoses threaten the health of poor families. Priorities for pro-poor research include determining the causes and consequences of disease; effective control strategies; affordable technologies for disease diagnosis, prevention and therapy; and policies and regulations which benefit the poor. The case for investing in livestock disease research for developing countries is straightforward. First, there are the humanitarian needs to reduce poverty, ensure food security and improve family health of the poor. Next is the enlightened self-interest of developed countries served by eliminating the economic losses from diseases such as foot and mouth, ensuring food safety, avoiding resistance to drugs and minimising the effect of migrant zoonoses such as avian influenza. But most important, is the urgent need to bring hope for better lives through productive livestock to the millions of the poor families in developing countries. Hope is the antidote for despair which poisons the minds and spirits of those who see no future for themselves and their children.

