

UN award to scientist for helping protect world's livestock

The Director of the Australian Animal Health Laboratory, Martyn Jeggo, was recently awarded a medal from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).



Credit: CSIRO

The CSIRO scientist received the medal for his outstanding contribution to the global campaign that rid the world of the deadly rinderpest, or cattle plague.

The successful 50-year campaign, described as one of the biggest achievements in veterinary history, was celebrated during the biennial FAO Conference at its Rome headquarters in June.

The Conference adopted a resolution declaring global freedom from rinderpest, which killed millions of cattle for more than a thousand years as the plague spread across all of the world's continents threatening human livelihoods and food security.

Dr Jeggo's role during his 17 years of involvement in the eradication campaign was to develop and support a global network of rinderpest diagnostic surveillance laboratories.

'I was responsible for ensuring that around 35 laboratories in some 30 developing countries had the correct equipment and training and could conduct quality-assured testing to provide continuous data on the eradication effort over a 25-year period', Dr Jeggo said.

'And while I played a part in it, the pleasure I got was from the part played by the scientists in the most difficult situations, delivering a genuine outcome – the eradication of the second disease from this planet.'

Rinderpest is only the second disease, after smallpox in humans – and the first animal disease ever – that has been successfully eradicated on a global scale, thanks to human efforts and international cooperation.

The FAO Director-General, Jacques Diouf, added that, 'The strong commitment shown by veterinarians, scientists, farmers, national and international institutions has showcased the way to containing and ultimately eradicating other high impact animal diseases, providing similarly lasting benefits for generations to come.'

From **ECOS** online <http://www.ecosmagazine.com/?paper=EC11016>