

## The importance of vaccination in livestock

Estimated reading time: 8 minute(s)

Farm animals are highly susceptible to diseases caused by *bacteria*, *viruses*, *fungi* and *parasites*. Therefore it is important to look out for the animals and ensure that they are protected from any threats of diseases. **Animal health is one of the most important factors in farming especially if you are keeping livestock**; however, that aspect is often neglected.

**Vaccination is vital in promoting both animal health and animal welfare (Morton, 2007).**

Vaccination helps provide for sustainable and economic stability for farmers and the communities they serve (Kaasschieter et al., 1992). **When animals are not well cared for it leads to a reduced resistance to diseases and leads to the development of clinical diseases.**

Vaccines contain an agent that resembles a disease-causing microorganism and is often made from weakened or killed forms of the microbe, its toxins and one of its surface proteins.

**Vaccinating animals helps in stimulating an immune response without causing the disease itself.** This creates early exposure to disease-causing organisms, where the animals' immune system is able to recall the infectious agent to which the animal is vaccinated.

## Different types of vaccines

1. Live (attenuated) vaccines.
2. Killed (inactivated) vaccines.
3. Biosynthetic, genetically engineered vaccines.

An effective **vaccine** needs to be highly “antigenic”: it **must strongly stimulate the immune system to respond rapidly in the correct way**. Consult the veterinary about when the best time is and which animals you should vaccinate.

**Don't vaccinate animals, in poor health, poor body condition or stressed because the vaccine will not be effective.**

Ensure that you use the right needle when vaccinating your livestock and enter the vaccine bottle with a sterile needle and never re-enter the bottle with a used needle.

**Vaccines play a vital role in the long-term solutions for effective prevention of existing and developing infectious diseases.**

Vaccines are used to protect animals from a wide range of diseases that affects the *production, fertility and economic losses* to the farmers. This is done by stimulating a defensive environment and preparing the animal to resist the impact of a pathogenic microorganism it may encounter later in life. **They are efficient in preventing the transmission and spread of contagious animal diseases (zoonotic diseases) from animals to people and from animal to animal.**

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Vaccines ensure that the products such as *meat, eggs and milk* from animals are safe for consumption. They also help in the conservation of food and water into animal proteins and other essential nutrients.

A vaccine is a cost-effective method used in preventing animal diseases; they are generally **safe, efficient and are associated with few severe side effects** (Roth, 2011). They are good for long-term prevention because you get to avoid diseases and illness that may cost you more than what the vaccines cost. However, it is important for the farmer to have knowledge and ability on different methods of administering vaccines.

It is always vital to have a vaccination program in place to ensure that livestock herds and profits are well managed. Vaccination increases immunity, reduce the impact of subclinical disease, reduce the spread of disease and eradicate disease.

**Vaccinating animals also helps in reducing morbidity and mortality in farms and contribute to improving animal welfare.**

### References

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