

Combating Zoonotic TB

Why in news?

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Recently road map to combat zoonotic TB was launched at Mexico.

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What is TB?

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- A potentially serious infectious bacterial disease caused by tuberculosis bacteria that mainly affects the lungs.

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- The bacteria that cause TB are spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

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- Most people infected with tuberculosis don't have symptoms, they usually include a cough (sometimes blood-tinged), weight loss, night sweats and fever.

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- Patients with active symptoms will require a long course of treatment involving multiple antibiotics.

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What is zoonotic TB?

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- Bovine TB or Zoonotic TB is caused by *Mycobacterium bovis* it affects cattle, threatens people's livelihoods and results in major economic and trade barriers.

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- It spreads to human through consumption of contaminated untreated meat or non- heat treated dairy products from diseased animals.

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- In India, consumption of raw milk and living in close proximity to cattle has been attributed to high incidence rates of bovine TB in the central Indian populations.
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- There is no cure for bovine TB and it threatens animal welfare and those with livelihoods based on livestock.
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- WHO estimates that over 140,000 people fall ill and more than 12,000 people lose their lives each year to zoonotic TB mostly in Africa and Southeast Asia.
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What is the road map about?

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- The first-ever road map to combat animal tuberculosis (bovine TB) and its transmission to humans was launched at World Conference on Lung Health in Mexico.
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- The World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease have joined forces to develop the road map.
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- These experts suggests that for countries to achieve the global TB elimination targets, interventions addressing zoonotic TB must be introduced in the national programmes.
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- Implementation strategies based on international standards by every nation will enable improved surveillance and diagnosis of the disease in animals and consequently reduce the risks for humans.
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- The priorities outlined in this road map highlight the need for multi-sectoral action to tackle this neglected form of TB and achieve the targets of the UN Sustainable Developmental Goals.
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Source: The Hindu

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