



Global Recognition for ICAR-NRC Equine

Why in News?

Recently, the **Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD)** under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has facilitated the designation of [Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Research Centre on Equines, Hisar \(ICAR-NRC Equine\)](#) as a [World Organisation for Animal Health \(WOAH\)](#) Reference Laboratory for **Equine Piroplasmiasis**.

Key Points

- **Equine Piroplasmiasis:**
 - Equine piroplasmiasis, **caused by the tick-borne protozoan parasites *Babesia caballi* and *Theileria equi***, affects **horses, donkeys, mules, and zebras**, posing serious health and economic challenges.
 - The disease shows a seroprevalence of 15-25% in India, with up to **40% in high-risk areas**, causing economic losses due to health impacts, productivity decline, and trade restrictions.
 - NRC Equine has developed advanced diagnostic tools for equine piroplasmiasis, including **ELISA, Indirect Fluorescent Antibody Test, Competitive ELISA, blood smear examination, MASP in-vitro culture system, and PCR for antigen detection**.
- **Equine Population in India:**
 - As per the [20th Livestock Census](#), India has approximately **0.55 million equines (horses, ponies, donkeys, mules)** contributing to livelihoods and various industries.
 - Out of which 0.34 million are horses and ponies, 0.12 million are donkeys, and 0.08 million are mules, with **major populations in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Haryana**.
- **NRC Equine's Role as a WOAHO Reference Laboratory:**
 - As a WOAHO Reference Laboratory, NRC Equine will **collaborate globally, providing diagnostic services, sharing technical expertise, and advancing research on equine piroplasmiasis**.
 - NRC Equine is now the **fourth Indian lab to achieve WOAHO status**, joining labs recognized for [Avian Influenza](#), [Rabies](#), [PPR](#), and [Leptospirosis](#).
- **Formal Announcement:**
 - The official designation of ICAR-NRC Equine will be announced at the **92nd WOAHO General Session** and World Assembly of Delegates in May 2025.
 - This designation **strengthens India's diagnostic capabilities and international partnerships**, enhancing India's leadership in animal health, particularly in equine diseases.

World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

- Established as OIE, WOAHO is a **standard-setting body recognized under the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**.
- It works to improve global animal health and is **headquartered in Paris, France**.
- WOAHO had 183 member countries, including India.
- It creates guidelines, such as the **Terrestrial Animal Health Code**, to help countries prevent disease entry.

- The [World Trade Organization \(WTO\)](https://www.wto.org/) acknowledges WOH standards as international sanitary guidelines.

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