

Newcastle disease audio feature 1 – transcript

- PS Chicken is the most commonly-reared bird among households in the rural African setup. It is both a source of income and food. But the presence of the Newcastle Disease, one of the most dangerous to the lives of birds, has for a long time remained the biggest enemy to the smallholder farmer.*
- BB It is a viral infection and it is incurable.*
- PS Brian Bigirwa is a vaccine expert from Uganda.*
- BB It is a 100% fatal to chicks and about 70% fatal to adult birds which is why it does not totally wipe out the population. So usually the farmer will lose about 70% of his homestead birds if he does not vaccinate.*
- PS Brian says there is no hotspot for the Newcastle Disease in a country and therefore every farmer who has chicken is at risk of losing his flock.*
- BB The outbreaks are a result of movement of birds. It exists in nature, in wild birds. And what happens is around the festive seasons, Easter, Christmas, Eid, when people are buying a lot of chicken, the traders go through the villages buying up all this chicken to come to bring to the towns to sell. As the traders move that is when the outbreak kicks off. So it just moves across the country in a wave.*
- PS However there is good news to farmers because in Uganda a partnership between Brentec, a private registered company and GALVmed, a non-profit organisation has boosted the manufacturing and distribution of the I2 vaccine which is thermal tolerant under the brand name Kukustar. Brian Bigirwa is the quality assurance manager for Brentec.*
- BB The strain of the virus that we use for our vaccine is heat tolerant, so at room temperature which is between 24 and 28 degrees centigrade in its freeze dried state it can survive for 48 days. It is about two months, a month and a half roughly. Then when you add water to it, it can survive at room temperature for 72 hours. So the advantage that the vaccine offers is for the end user farmer who does not have access to a cold chain. So this is a local farmer in the village where there is no electricity, there is no access to ice. So he can go to a trading centre, buy the vaccine and still take his time and get back to his village as long as he keeps the vaccine away from direct sunlight he can vaccinate his chickens at his convenience within that 72 hour window. So it removes the end user requirement for access to a cold chain.*
- PS To find out more about the Kukustar vaccine I visit one agro vet in Ginger town, eastern Uganda who stocks and supplies the vaccine to farmers. Dr Florence Nahamya has been supplying the vaccine for now 3 years. Is this your shop?*
- FN Yes this is my shop.*
- PS When I am looking around all the shelves I cannot see the vaccine?*
- FN This is a vaccine, you don't just put it on the shelves. You have to keep it in the fridge if you want to let it stay longer, at least before you distribute it to the farmers or to the different*

retail shops. So at the moment the vaccine is now in the fridge. So if a farmer comes to ask for the vaccine we always get the vaccine from the fridge.

PS *And I can just see one of your workers is opening the fridge and giving out some of the vaccines.*

FN The vaccines yes.

PS *There is a customer at the counter buying the vaccine.*

FN Yes so that is when you get out the vaccine but normally you do not put vaccines just on the shelves of the shops.

PS *What is so unique about this vaccine compared to the rest?*

FN If a farmer carries the vaccine one can even stay with it for 3 days without using it unlike the one of cold chain where one has got to carry flask and should use the vaccine within 2 hours. So this one is really advantageous in that you can stay with it for even 3 days without making use of it. So it has really helped the farmers down there, it is user friendly. Anytime somebody has some birds hatching one can take it and stay around and leave it until the birds all hatch out.

PS *Let me hear from the vaccinator.*

IS My name is Ikona Stephen. Last year I managed to vaccinate about 1000 birds using Kukustar. We have been supplying the Kukustar on free range to farmers because some farmers are very poor, whereby at times some farmers can pay at least some little money. This I assume I can say that if you have about 20 birds you can give me at least 2000 shillings.

PS *2000 shillings is even less than a dollar?*

IS Which is less than a dollar yes.

PS *Yes very affordable?*

IS It's affordable. The main aim is to see that we can use poultry as a commercial project.

PS *With such a success in Uganda Brian says Brentec plans to expand their brand of Kukustar to other countries.*

BB We are hoping to have registered our product in most countries in the commercial region by the end of 2017. So we will be starting with East Africa obviously. We have also started procedure to register it in Kenya and Tanzania and Rwanda. So we expect to be in those markets by the end of the year and then expand further to the commercial market, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, all of those.

PS *This report was compiled by WRENmedia on behalf of GALVmed. My name is Pius Sawa.*