



**Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Rift
Valley Fever Control in Agriculture**

The University of Texas at El Paso Texas, USA
Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania
The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston Texas, USA



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PRESS RELEASE

El Paso, Texas. February, 21 2015. University of Texas at El Paso signs a development agreement with MCI Sante-Animale, Mohammedia, Morocco to help develop, manufacture, license and distribute a veterinary vaccine in Africa and the Middle East that prevents Rift Valley fever disease in livestock.

The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) today announced that it has signed a joint development agreement with MCI Sante-Animale Biopharmaceutical Company (MCI) in Morocco to manufacture and sell a Rift Valley fever (RVF) vaccine in Africa and the Middle East. UTEP is the lead developer and is working under a major cooperative agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to continue the testing of a recombinant RVF MP-12 based animal vaccine. The project is part of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Rift Valley Fever Control in Agriculture with a goal of protecting livestock against the disease. This will help to increase global food security, which is a priority of USAID under Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative.

MCI-Sante-Animale is a major veterinary products developer and manufacturer, fully certified and working under Good Manufacturing Practices. It is based in Morocco and dedicated to providing solutions to nutrition and infectious disease problems affecting companion animals and livestock. The company has developed several viral based vaccines for livestock and other animal diseases, and has started a program to address the problem of RVF. MCI will adapt the vaccine into its commercial live attenuated virus vaccine manufacturing process. It will also obtain in-country licenses across Africa and the Middle East where RVF has had a devastating impact on the

health of domestic and feral animals as well as humans, and is a costly problem for agriculture. UTEP, along with its technical partners in the program, The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston, TX and The Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), School of Veterinary Medicine, Morogoro, Tanzania will provide technical support to establish the safety and efficacy parameters of the vaccine.

The RVF MP-12 vaccine was originally developed by Dr. C.J. Peters and colleagues at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Disease at Ft. Detrick, Maryland. The vaccine used in this project is a live, attenuated vaccine derived from the MP-12 vaccine but modified to distinguish naturally infected animals from vaccinated animals by deleting a non-essential nonstructural gene from the RVF viral genome. Finally, Bioject Inc. in Tigard, Oregon will provide a needle-free vaccine delivery system to simplify the vaccination process, allowing for wider use of the vaccine in Africa.

The establishment of the partnership leading to the availability of this improved vaccine will make possible the prospect of RVF regional vaccine banks or strategic reserves, which could improve the control of this devastating disease.

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Rift Valley Fever Control in Agriculture builds upon previous federally funded research directly applicable to both the animal and human form of RVF disease, and reflects the growing recognition of UTEP's and collaborating institutions' capability and interest in contributing to the improvement of both food security and global health.

For further information please contact Dr. George Bettinger, The University of Texas El Paso (gebettinger@utep.edu) or Dr. Baptiste Dungu, MCI-Sante Animale, Mohammedia, Morocco (B.DUNGU@mci-santeanimale.com).

USAID is the lead US Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential.

Feed the Future (www.feedthefuture.gov) is the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative. With a focus on smallholder farmers, particularly women, Feed the Future supports partner countries in developing their agriculture sectors to spur economic growth and trade that increase incomes and reduce hunger, poverty and undernutrition.