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## NEWS ARTICLE



### Fighting disease spread during 'the greatest show on earth'

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The annual migration of over a million wildebeest across the Serengeti and Maasai Mara is often described as one of the greatest spectacles on earth. However, this natural wonder poses a real threat to the livelihood of local farmers whose cattle are essential to their economic and social welfare.

Four hundred thousand wildebeest calves born each year harbour the virus that causes Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF) which is deadly to livestock. To avoid MCF, farmers move their cattle to poorer upland grazing where they are exposed to other serious diseases. Successful MCF control would have a major impact on the quality of life of farmers and their communities, as well as on the ecology of the plains where wildebeest and cattle co-exist.

Researchers led by David Haig, Professor of Animal Infection and Immunity at The University of Nottingham have already developed a candidate MCF vaccine for use in cattle. The next step is to test it in field conditions. Over the next three years his research team will test the vaccine in Tanzania, develop it further as required and then look to make a new vaccine for a sheep virus which is very similar to the wildebeest virus and causes MCF in livestock in other parts of the world, including Europe, Indonesia, Australasia and the Americas.

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