

Hester to foray into cattle vaccines

Dharmendrasinh Chavda

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GUJARAT-based Hester Pharmaceuticals Ltd, an Indo-US joint venture which makes poultry vaccines, is planning to expand its activities to enter the cattle and sheep vaccines segment. The US-based Maine Biological Laboratories holds 10 per cent equity in Hester.

"By 2002-end, we will have a substantial range of cattle and sheep vaccines," Hester managing director Mr Rajiv Gandhi told ET. He said that Hester would buy the know-how from an international animal vaccine company. "We are have identified some European

companies and are in talks with them to acquire the know-how." A team from one such European company recently visited Hester, Mr Gandhi said.

Hester claims to have the largest number of poultry vaccines in the country. "We have licences to manufacture 33 types of vaccines," he said. The company expects to net a turnover of Rs 5 crore next year against Rs 3.1 crore this year.

A part of Hester's optimism comes from the fact that it has recently tied up with Japan-based Sinsui Inc. Under the agreement, Sinsui will source poultry vaccines from Hester for its global market. Though the two companies signed the pact almost a year back, Sinsui has not

yet started sourcing vaccines from Hester. "This is because Sinsui is trying to get its products registered in south-east Asian countries," Mr Gandhi explained. Besides making regular poultry vaccines, Hester also makes tailor-made vaccines for large poultry-farms. "We are the only ones to make farm-specific vaccines," Mr Gandhi said. Also, Hester has an elaborate testing facility, which is used for providing sero-monitoring service to the hatcheries. "We test the blood samples of a farm's breeding stock for checking the flock's disease protection levels."

The company is also in the process of applying for ISO 9000 certification.