Steps for banning veterinary drugs in Bangladesh: Where we are

Ketoprofen was demonstrated to be toxic to vultures and a peer-reviewed scientific paper giving the experimental evidence for this was published was published online in 2009 (print publication: Naidoo et al (2009) Biology Letters (2010) 6, 339–341. https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2009.0818). Vultures are known to be exposed to ketoprofen when they feed on carcasses of cattle dosed with the drug in India because the drug has been shown to be present at toxic concentrations in tissues of dead cattle sampled there in 2006 (Taggart et al. Environmental Science & Technology (2009), 43: 4561–4566.).

The steps taken to achieve a national ban ketoprofen in Bangladesh

**Step 1:** In the 5th meeting of Bangladesh National Vulture Recovery Committee (BNVRC) it was proposed that the use of ketoprofen should be banned within Bangladesh’s two government declared Vulture Safe Zones (VSZs). (Figure 1)

![Figure 1: Decision taken on the 5th meeting to ban ketoprofen](image-url)
Step 2: It was decided that a workshop will be held within six months of the meeting, with assistance of Bangladesh Forest Department, Drug administration and IUCN Bangladesh to present the harmful effects of the drugs to all relevant stakeholders and in order to ban ketoprofen.

Step 3: A national workshop was held in Dhaka where senior Government officials from MoEF, Department of Livestock Services, Bangladesh Forest Department, national level policy makers and IUCN Country Representative were present along with 100 participants from veterinary and conservation communities.(Figure 2)

Figure 2: National Workshop on Drug

Step 4: In the workshop (May 2016), chief vet of Zoological Society of London, Dr. Nic Masters and Chris Bowden of SAVE presented evidence on harmful effects of ketoprofen. All relevant stakeholders understood the harmful effects of the drug on vultures and agreed that the drugs should be banned. Later, the workshop minutes were submitted to MoEF through BNVRC where the ministry decided to take necessary actions.
**Step 5:** On 25th January, 2016 the first letter and on 15th December 2016 a second letter was sent to the Secretary of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare by MoEF to initiate the ban on ketoprofen.
Step 6: On 3rd January 2017 the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued a letter to the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) to take actions regarding the banning of the drug.

Step 7: On 11th January 2017, the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) issued a government order on restricting the sale, distribution, storage, preservation and exhibition of Ketoprofen in any form in the Vulture Safe Zones.
Step 8. In 2018, the third undercover pharmacy survey conducted in 2018 by IUCN Bangladesh and Bangladesh Forest Department, and it was seen that ketoprofen was still prevalent (62%) in the VSZs, while no diclofenac was found. It was determined ketoprofen entered the VSZs from outside the banned areas. Ketoprofen thus remains as a threat to the vulture population residing in the two VSZs.

Step 9. The results of the third undercover pharmacy survey was presented to the BNVRC in its 9th meeting held on 20 October 2019. In the meeting it was decided that a meeting with all relevant stakeholders asking for their opinion on the country-wide ban of ketoprofen will be held.

Step 10. On 24 August 2020, in the 10th BNVRC meeting, it was discussed that the meeting with stakeholders will be held on November 2020.

Figure 7. Meeting minutes of the 9th BNVRC meeting

Figure 8. Meeting minutes of the 10th BNVRC meeting
Step 11. On 18 November 2020, Bangladesh National Vulture Recovery Committee under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change organized a meeting to discuss use meloxicam instead of vulture-toxic drug Ketoprofen for vulture conservatives with all relevant stakeholders, including top 13 meloxicam producing phama-companies of Bangladesh, the DGDA, Department of Livestock and Bangladesh Forest Department. In the meeting, all stakeholders unanimously agreed that ketoprofen should be banned for the conservation of vulture. After the meeting, a proposal was drafted by MoEFCC with assistance of IUCN Bangladesh and was submitted to the Parliament Cabinet for approval.

Figure 9. Meeting with relevant stakeholders Nov 2020.

Step 12. On 8 February 2021, the Cabinet, chaired by Honourable Prime Minister approved the proposal to ban ketoprofen across the country. Thereafter on 23 March 2021, the MoEFCC issued a letter to take necessary steps on ketoprofen banning across the country to the relevant ministries.

Figure 10. Approval to ban national ketoprofen on 8 February 2021.