

ICAR-NBFGR's Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory Designated as WOAH Reference Laboratory for Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome

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ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFGR), Lucknow, has achieved a prestigious international recognition with the designation of its Aquatic Animal Health Laboratory, under the Exotic and Aquatic Animal Health Division, as a *WOAH Reference Laboratory* for infection with *Aphanomyces invadans*—commonly known as Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS). This recognition was formally confirmed by the World Assembly of Delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) during its 92nd General Session held in Paris, France. The designation acknowledges ICAR-NBFGR's scientific expertise, laboratory excellence, and sustained contributions to aquatic animal health research, particularly in the field of EUS diagnostics and disease management. Dr. Pravata Kumar Pradhan, Principal Scientist & Head, Exotic and Aquatic Animal Health Division at ICAR-NBFGR, has been designated as the WOAH Expert for this Reference Laboratory. This recognition places ICAR-NBFGR among the leading international laboratories with global responsibilities in aquatic disease surveillance, diagnostics, technical support, and policy advisory. Dr. Kajal Chakraborty, Director of ICAR-NBFGR, congratulated the team on achieving this significant milestone and emphasized its role in reinforcing India's leadership in aquatic animal health research. He noted that this advancement not only elevates the scientific stature of ICAR-NBFGR at the global level but also strengthens its strategic contributions to transboundary disease surveillance, diagnostic innovation, and biosecurity frameworks in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Dr. Chakraborty further underlined the importance of collaborative research and targeted capacity building initiatives in developing sustainable aquatic health management solutions aligned with global standards and the One Health approach. The Director General of WOAH, in a formal communication addressed to Dr. Alka Upadhyaya, Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India, extended gratitude for India's cooperation and expressed anticipation for productive collaboration with the ICAR system in the years ahead. This achievement demonstrates the visionary leadership at ICAR, the dedicated scientific efforts of the NBFGR team, and India's commitment to strengthening aquatic animal health systems globally.

