

Wells help control plateau parasite in SW China

Authorities in southwest China's Sichuan Province have dug 554 deep wells in the past five years in areas subject to a fatal parasitic disease, providing clean drinking water to 57,000 residents, according to local land and resources department.

The wells are at least 30 meters deep, which can avoid spreading of echinococcosis, a type of tapeworm infection, which mainly affects herding areas in Sichuan, Gansu, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Qinghai, Tibet and Xinjiang.

Humans can be infected with the disease through contact with infected animals and contaminated food, water and sand.

Shiqu County in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Garze, Sichuan, is among the hardest-hit regions. Last year, 150 wells, costing nearly 43 million yuan (6.2 million U.S. dollars) from the provincial government, were finished in the county.

In 2012, about 50 million Chinese people were under threat from the disease. The government aims to have the disease under control by 2020.