



OIE Regional Seminar

“Re-emergence of RVF in Southern Africa : how to better predict and respond”

Bloemfontein, South Africa, 16 – 18 February 2009

Original: English (draft)

Recommendations

CONSIDERING THAT

1. There are indications that the Rift Valley Fever virus (RVFV) is present in many countries in Southern Africa.
2. There is a potential risk of spread of Rift Valley fever (RVF) to new territories through animal movements.
3. RVF is one of the major zoonotic diseases, affecting most countries in Africa and may further spread to, or emerge in other continents.
4. RVF outbreaks have a considerable negative socio-economic impact on the national economies and rural population's livelihoods of southern African countries by reducing income from their livestock and additional economic loss due to trade barriers and mitigation measures.
5. The control of the disease requires a harmonised effort from national authorities, regional and international organisations, and the negative impact on regional and intercontinental trade can be significantly alleviated if countries are capacitated through good veterinary governance to develop and apply sanitary measures for disease control and prevention.
6. The southern African region is characterised by a heterogeneity, regardless of national boundaries, with regard to climate, ecology, livestock husbandry practices and epidemiological situation of RVF, therefore it would be useful to group the region into sub-regions.
7. Failure to prevent and control RVF in one country can seriously endanger the rest of the region.
8. The FAO-OIE initiative on GF-TADs (Global framework for the progressive control of transboundary animal diseases) and the RAHCs (Regional animal health centres) can provide the opportunity to coordinate and put in place prevention and control programmes for transboundary animal diseases such as RVF.
9. The current knowledge on RVF and its control revealed remaining gaps on diagnostic tools, including deployment of molecular epidemiology tools, vaccines and vaccination strategies, environmental data, risk modelling tools and the epidemiological role of wildlife and insect vectors.
10. Previous meetings on RVF in Northern, Western, and Eastern Africa and the Middle East have been held and recommendations in relation to animal health measures adopted.
11. There is a need for a recognized human vaccine to protect laboratory and other frontline staff.

THE SEMINAR ON RIFT VALLEY FEVER IN SOUTHERN AFRICA RECOMMENDS THAT

- 1 Southern African countries should promote and practice good veterinary governance in order to effectively prevent and control RVF, in accordance with international standards.
- 2 Ecological sub-regions that share similar characteristics with regard to RVF risk factors be defined and in consequence develop harmonized and customized preventive approaches in disease and risk management, in line with international standards and guidelines and GF-TADs programmes for Southern Africa and supported by the Regional Animal Health Centres ;
- 3 The OIE and FAO continue to support research, accelerated development and registration of new diagnostic tests (including rapid tests), safe and efficacious vaccines, and strategies for control.
- 4 Research on the epidemiology of RVF, including molecular epidemiology, should be strengthened in Southern Africa, with particular emphasis on entomological studies, viral dynamics, environmental factors and the elucidation of the role of wildlife.
- 5 The impact of RVF outbreaks and implementation of control programmes should be assessed on a socio-economic level including social and cultural considerations regarding implementation of sanitary measures through an appropriate communication strategy
- 6 In line with the “One World One Health” concepts, strengthen and formalise inter-sectoral collaboration and data sharing, to ensure that the surveillance and control of RVF be followed by rapid response after detection of disease either in animals or humans.
- 7 All Southern African countries prepare and update emergency preparedness plans against RVF in accordance with international standards, guidelines and recommendations in particular those of FAO and WHO.
- 8 Southern African countries should ensure compliance with their obligations on animal disease reporting by promptly reporting all exceptional epidemiological events of RVF to the OIE for incorporation into the *World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS)*.
- 9 OIE is encouraged to continue to update the current *Terrestrial Manual* and *Code* chapters related to RVF according to the latest scientific evidence available, as well as the acquired experiences of affected countries.
- 10 The OIE should support, in partnership with FAO and SADC, capacity-building efforts, aimed at strengthening or establishing diagnostic capacity for RVF in national veterinary laboratories.
- 11 The OIE should support twinning agreements between OVI and other competent national veterinary laboratories in the region and seek harmonization with SADC –Secretariat priorities in view of identifying a second reference laboratory for the region;
- 12 OIE and FAO support countries in the Southern African region in developing a model based on risk parameters, including agro-climatic factors, to forecast potential RVF virus activities, particularly within the framework of the related Regional Animal Health Centre with the support of the *Global Early Warning System (GLEWS)* of FAO, OIE and WHO.
- 13 A draft proposal entitled “Regional RVF control strategy” be developed by the Regional Animal Health Centre for Southern Africa in collaboration with SADC and funding possibilities should be explored. This project shall address the main recommendations of the OIE workshop held in Bloemfontein and invite other interested partners to contribute to areas not covered by the core proposal. Progress on putting such a programme in place should be reported.
- 14 The OIE should consult with the WHO to facilitate the necessary research and registration of a human vaccine.
- 15 These recommendations should be presented at the OIE Regional Commission for Africa Conference for endorsement.