



**OIE ME Commission
REVC**



AU-IBAR



Red Sea LTC

**EPIDEMIOLOGY OF RIFT VALLEY FEVER IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ANIMAL AND HUMAN HEALTH AND LIVESTOCK TRADE
SHARJA (UAE), 21-22 November 2004**

CONCLUSIONS

The meeting reached a general consensus on the following topics related to this zoonotic disease:

- a) With regard to RVF, the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code gives several alternatives for the exporting countries to comply more readily with the sanitary requirements for safe trade in animals and animal products.
- b) The meeting recognizes the need for defining the geographical areas at risk in the region and to implement risk assessments and risk management based on the following:

The meeting recalls the conclusions of the UNDP – FAO meeting held in Nairobi (2002), which are highly relevant to the trade issues including:

- 1- RVF recovered and immune animals are safe for trade and human consumption.**
 - 2- Immune animals will never be viraemic and are considered as safer than any others with regard to RVF disease.**
 - 3- Only virus or IgM antibodies in tested animals can be considered as an indicator for RVF virus activity.**
- c) There was a general awareness and agreement amongst the participants, of the considerable impact of RVF on public and animal health and upon livestock trade in the region. The meeting described the negligible risk presented by RVF during the inter-epizootic periods, which may constitute more than 95% of the time. Only the pre-epizootic and epizootic periods of RVF constitute a risk for trade, and these may only be of 3-6 months duration in this region. All the available scientific data on RVF for the Horn of Africa and the Middle East are being used to generate a predictive model to identify the pre-epizootic climatic conditions for RVF. This will hopefully be available in 2005. A good understanding of the natural history of RVF can permit the establishment of rational and scientifically based guidelines for trade.

The meeting acknowledged the important role that a RSSD/GIS based predictive model could play in facilitating trade and rationalizing its regulation with regard to RVF. A regional network would be a valuable forum. This could discuss the climatic changes, which suggest that epizootics of RVF might occur and drive any regulatory measures, which may be imposed during the periods when there is a high risk of RVF virus activity. The network could serve to coordinate these activities, together with the assistance of the international and regional organizations, agencies (OIE, FAO, AU-IBAR, RSLTC, IRI etc.)

- d) The meeting urges member countries, to exchange and evaluate all the quarterly scientific information on RVF amongst themselves. This is especially important in the pre – epizootic situations, when disease occurs and when implementing measures for prophylaxis and control in their respective countries.

Conclusion:

The Regional Emergency Veterinary Committee, which is the scientific body for the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East and the Red Sea Livestock Trade Commission are both ready to assist the countries of the region in conducting risk assessments for RVF and other major diseases.
