

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2009 RESOLUTION

OCTOBER 14, 2009, SAN DIEGO, CA

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 20 and 26 Combined APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON WILDLIFE DISEASES
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND EMERGING DISEASES

SUBJECT MATTER: ENHANCE DEVELOPMENT OF RISK ASSESSMENT MODELS
BY DETERMINATION OF UNITED STATES WILDLIFE
SUSCEPTIBILITY TO RIFT VALLEY FEVER VIRUS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) identifies Rift Valley Fever (RVF) as the third most important foreign animal disease threat to United States (US) livestock. RVF is an insect-transmitted viral (arboviral), zoonotic disease that is endemic and epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa. The recent outbreaks and spread of RVF from Africa to the Arabian Peninsula have raised concerns of the potential introduction of this arbovirus into the US. In addition, the potential for RVF virus being used as a bioterrorism agent is widely recognized. RVF virus infection of cattle, sheep, and goats can result in very high abortion rates and 70-100 percent newborn mortality. The number of hospitalized human cases is usually less than 1 percent, but in the Saudi Arabia epidemic the mortality rate was 13.9 percent demonstrating the potential severity of an RVF outbreak. Vision loss from retinitis occurs in approximately 10 percent of human patients either during acute febrile illness, or up to four weeks after. The spread of West Nile Virus to the Western hemisphere illustrates the natural ability of arboviruses to establish themselves in new ecosystems. Wildlife species are important components of the epidemiology of many arboviral diseases. There is no information of the US wildlife susceptibility to infection, clinical disease, or potential as reservoirs for RVF virus.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agriculture Research Service (ARS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate, and the US Department of the Interior's (USDO) research agencies, working with universities and other agencies, establish, expand and/or coordinate research programs to:

- Determine the potential of United States (US) wildlife to become affected by Rift Valley Fever (RVF) virus
- Determine the potential role of US wildlife as reservoir hosts for RVF

RESPONSE:

USDA, ARS

ARS will seek opportunities to include research on wildlife transmissibility at ABADRL.

INTERIM RESPONSE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association and appreciates the opportunity to respond. VS has conferred with colleagues at the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and ARS has agreed to include research on wildlife transmissibility of Rift Valley fever at the ARS laboratory in Laramie, Wyoming.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Rift Valley Fever Virus is an important foreign animal disease which could have devastating economic and ecological effects if introduced into the United States. We agree that more information is needed to determine: 1) the potential for native wildlife in the United States to be affected by Rift Valley Fever Virus; and 2) what role, if any, U.S. wildlife would play as reservoir hosts. The DOI is a member of the interagency Foreign Animal Disease Threats Subcommittee of the National Science and Technology Council Committee on Homeland and National Security. The subcommittee has been involved in efforts to model the potential movement of foot and mouth disease in the United States. We will share this USAHA resolution with the subcommittee and encourage them to pursue similar activities related to Rift Valley Fever Virus. In Africa, the DOI U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has been using information on environmental conditions and key risk indicators, monitored through satellite and in situ observations, to develop models that would improve early warning systems for epizootic Rift Valley Fever. These tools could potentially be applied to other parts of the world including North America if the disease became endemic here.