

APPENDIX 3.8.2.

SURVEILLANCE FOR RINDERPEST

Article 3.8.2.1.

Purposes of the document

In order to receive OIE recognition of rinderpest freedom, a country's national authority must present for consideration a dossier of information relating to its livestock production systems, rinderpest vaccination and eradication history and the functioning of its *Veterinary Services*. The dossier must contain convincing evidence derived from an animal disease surveillance system that sufficient evidence has accrued to demonstrate that the presence of rinderpest virus would have been disclosed were it to be present. Guidelines for the structure and the functioning of *Veterinary Services* and diagnostic support services are provided in Chapters 1.3.3. and 1.3.4. of the *Terrestrial Code*. A Member Country must also be in compliance with its OIE reporting obligations (Chapter 1.1.2. of the *Terrestrial Code*).

Article 3.8.2.2.

Definitions

1. Rinderpest

For the purpose of this Appendix, rinderpest is defined as an infection of large ruminants (cattle, buffalo, yaks, etc.), small ruminants, pigs and various wildlife species within the order Artiodactyla, caused by rinderpest virus. In small ruminants and various species of wildlife, particularly antelopes, infection generally passes without the development of frank clinical signs. Characteristic clinical signs and pathological lesions are described in Chapter 2.1.4. of the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Outbreaks of rinderpest in cattle may be graded as per-acute, acute or sub-acute. Differing clinical presentations reflect variations in levels of innate host resistance (*Bos indicus* breeds being more resistant than *Bos taurus*), and variations in the virulence of the attacking strain. It is generally accepted that unvaccinated populations of cattle are likely to promote the emergence of virulent strains and associated epidemics while partially vaccinated populations favour the emergence of mild strains associated with endemic situations. In the case of per-acute cases the presenting sign may be sudden death. In the case of sub-acute (mild) cases, clinical signs are irregularly displayed and difficult to detect.

Freedom from rinderpest means freedom from rinderpest virus infection.

2. Rinderpest vaccines

For the purpose of this Appendix and the *Terrestrial Code*, OIE-recognised rinderpest vaccines currently in use, or likely to become so in the foreseeable future, are considered to be commercial modified live vaccines produced from attenuated rinderpest virus (referred to as 'rinderpest vaccine') produced in accordance with Chapter 2.1.4. of the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Article 3.8.2.3.

Rinderpest surveillance

General guidelines on animal disease surveillance are outlined in Appendix 3.8.1. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Rinderpest must be a *notifiable disease* i.e. notification of *outbreaks* of rinderpest as soon as detected or suspected must be brought to the attention of the *Veterinary Authority*.

The precise surveillance information required for establishing freedom will differ from country to country depending on factors such as the former rinderpest status of the country, the regional rinderpest situation and accreditation status, the time elapsing since the last occurrence of rinderpest, livestock husbandry systems (e.g. extensive pastoralism, nomadism and transhumance versus sedentary agropastoralism) and trading patterns.

Evidence of efficiency of the surveillance system can be provided by the use of performance indicators.

Surveillance results presented will be expected to have accrued from a combination of surveillance activities including some or all of the following:

1. A routine national animal disease reporting system supported by evidence of its efficiency and follow-up - an on-going, statutory, centrally organised system of reporting

Ideally disease reports should be expressed in a Geographical Information System environment and analysed for clustering of observations and followed up.

2. Emergency disease reporting systems and investigation of epidemiologically significant events ('stomatitis-enteritis syndrome')

Emergency reporting systems can be devised to short-circuit normal passive reporting systems to bring suspicious events to the fore and lead to rapid investigation and tracing. All such investigations should be well documented for presentation as an outcome of the surveillance system.

3. Detection and thorough investigation of epidemiologically significant events ('stomatitis-enteritis syndrome') which raise suspicion of rinderpest supported by evidence of efficiency of the system.

Laboratory examination undertaken to confirm or rule out rinderpest is given extra credibility if it is accompanied by the results of differential diagnostic examinations.

4. Searching for evidence of clinical rinderpest

Active search for disease might include participatory disease searching combined with village disease searching, tracing backwards and forwards, follow-up and investigation.

5. Serosurveillance

- a) Randomised serosurveys

Statistically selected samples from relevant strata within the host populations are examined to detect serological evidence of possible virus circulation.

A sampling unit for the purposes of disease investigation and surveillance is defined as a group of animals in sufficiently close contact that individuals within the group are at approximately equal risk of coming in contact with the virus if there should be an infectious animal within the group. In most circumstances, the sampling unit will be a herd which is managed as a unit by an individual or a community, but it may also be other epidemiologically appropriate groupings which are subject to regular mixing, such as all animals belonging to residents of a village. In the areas where nomadic or transhumant movements exist, the sampling unit can be the permanent bore holes, wells or water points. Sampling units should normally be defined so that their size is generally between 50 and 1,000 animals.

- i) Criteria for stratification of host populations

Strata are homogeneously mixing sub-populations of livestock. Any disease surveillance activities must be conducted on populations stratified according to the management

system, and by herd size where this is variable. Herds, or other sampling units, should be selected by proper random statistical selection procedures from each stratum.

ii) Field procedures and sample sizes

Annual sample sizes shall be sufficient to provide 95% probability of detecting evidence of rinderpest if present at a prevalence of 1% of herds or other sampling units and 5% within herds or other sampling units. This can typically be achieved by examining 300 herds per stratum per year, but procedures for sampling should be in accordance with the “Guide to Epidemiological Surveillance for Rinderpest”¹, or another procedure that would achieve the same probability of detection.

Where the sampling frame of herds is known, herds shall be selected for examination by the use of random number tables. Otherwise, samples of herds can be selected by taking the nearest herd to a randomly selected map reference, provided that the herds are evenly distributed. Failing this, any herd(s) within a fixed radius of randomly selected map references should be sampled. It must be compulsory for any selected herd to be examined or tested as required.

In carrying out clinical surveillance for evidence of rinderpest, all animals in selected herds or sampling units will be examined by a veterinarian for signs of the disease, especially mouth lesions. Any positive result shall be evaluated using epidemiological and laboratory methods to confirm or refute the suspicion of rinderpest virus activity. All animals born after the cessation of vaccination and more than one year old will be eligible for serological testing.

Where operational considerations require it, the number of eligible animals tested within each sampled herd may be reduced. This will reduce the probability of within-herd detection and there must be at least a compensatory increase in the number of herds sampled, so that the required 95% probability of detecting 1% between-herd prevalence is maintained.

b) Risk-focussed serosurveillance

Risk-focussed serosurveillance differs from randomised serosurveillance in that it increases detection sensitivity by obtaining samples from areas/populations determined to be at higher risk of infection, so as to detect serological evidence of possible virus circulation. The operational modalities for risk-based focussing of surveillance require definition (randomisation within defined focus, high risk animals, etc.). The extent to which randomisation needs to be retained in the generation of risk-focussed serosurveillance data needs to be established.

Focussing can be achieved by reference to some or all of the following:

- i) Historical disease patterns (prior probability mapping) – clinical, participatory and laboratory-based
- ii) Critical population size, structure and density
- iii) Livestock husbandry and farming systems
- iv) Movement and contact patterns – markets and other trade-related movements

¹ JAMES A.D. (1998). Guide to epidemiological surveillance for rinderpest. *Rev. Sci. Tech.* 17 (3), 796–824.

- v) Transmission parameters (e.g. virulence of the strain, animal movements)
- vi) Wildlife and other species demography.

Article 3.8.2.4.

Selection of cattle and buffalos for serosurveillance

Ageing cattle and Asian buffalos for the purpose of serosurveillance:

Mis-ageing of cattle selected for serosurveillance is the most common source of error. Colostral immunity can persist almost up to one year of age when measured by the H c-ELISA. Thus, it is essential to exclude from sampling buffalos and cattle less than one year of age. In addition, it is frequently necessary to be able to exclude those which are older than a certain age, for example, to select only those born after cessation of vaccination.

Accounts of the ages for eruption of the incisor teeth vary markedly and are clearly dependent on species, breed, nutritional status and nature of the feed.

Pragmatically, and solely for the purposes of serosurveillance, it can be accepted that:

- a) cattle having only one pair of erupted permanent central incisor teeth are aged between 21 and 36 months (Asian buffalos 24-48 months);
- b) cattle having only two pairs of erupted permanent central incisor teeth are aged between 30 and 48 months (Asian buffalos 48-60 months).

Thus selecting a cohort of cattle possessing only one pair of permanent incisors will preclude any interference from maternal immunity derived from earlier vaccination or infection and ensure that vaccinated cattle are not included if vaccination ceased 3 years or more previously (for Asian buffalos 4 years or more).

Although it is stressed here that animals with milk teeth only are not suitable for surveillance based on serology, they are of particular interest and importance in surveillance for clinical disease. After the loss of colostral immunity, by about one year of age, these are the animals which are most likely to suffer the more severe disease form and in which to look for lesions indicative of rinderpest.

Article 3.8.2.5.

Wildlife surveillance where a significant, susceptible wildlife population exists

There are some key wildlife populations, especially African buffalo, which act as sentinels for rinderpest infection. Where a significant population of a susceptible wildlife species exists, serosurveillance data are required to support absence of infection. These populations should be monitored purposively to support the dossiers to be submitted for freedom from rinderpest virus infection. Detection of virus circulation in wildlife can be undertaken indirectly by sampling contiguous livestock populations.

Obtaining meaningful data from wildlife surveillance can be enhanced by close coordination of activities in the regions and countries. Both purposive and opportunistic sampling are used to obtain material for analysis in national and reference laboratories. The latter are required because most countries are unable to perform the full testing protocol for detecting rinderpest antibodies in wildlife sera.

Purposive sampling is the preferred method to provide wildlife data to evaluate the status of rinderpest infection. In reality, the capacity to perform purposive work in the majority of countries remains minimal. Opportunistic sampling (hunting) is feasible and it provides useful background information.

Wildlife form transboundary populations, therefore any data from the population could be used to

represent the result for the ecosystem and be submitted by more than one country in a dossier (even if the sampling was not obtained in the country submitting). It is recommended therefore that the countries represented in a particular ecosystem should coordinate their sampling programmes.

The standards for serosurveillance are different from that set for cattle because the serological tests are not fully validated for wildlife species and financial and logistic constraints of sampling prevent collection of large numbers of samples.

From the collective experience of the laboratories and experts over the years, an appropriate test protocol is based on the high expected sero-prevalence in a previously infected buffalo herd (99% seroconversion of eligible animals within a herd), which is detected using a test, which is 100% sensitive. No single test can achieve this; however, combining H c-ELISA to VNT raises sensitivity close to 100%.

In the order of 1-2% of a herd of African buffalos must be sampled to ensure that no positive case is missed. For example in a herd of 300 buffalos, five animals should be sampled and the above multiple test protocol followed. Where the serological history of the herd is known from previous work (as might be the case for a sentinel herd), repeat sampling need only focus on the untested age groups, born since the last known infection. Appropriate sampling fraction for other wildlife species are less well defined, as social organization (herd structure, likely contact rates, etc.) vary. The sample needs to be taken according to the known epidemiology of the disease in a given species. Opportunistic samples, which are positive, should not be interpreted without a purposive survey to confirm the validity of these results. Opportunistic sampling cannot follow a defined protocol and therefore can only provide background information.

Article 3.8.2.6.

Evaluation of applications for accreditation of freedom from rinderpest

Evaluation of applications for the status of freedom from rinderpest will be the responsibility of the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases which can request the Director General of the OIE to appoint an *ad hoc* group in order to assist in reaching an informed decision to present to the OIE International Committee for approval.

The composition and method of selection of the *ad hoc* group shall be such as to ensure both a high level of expertise in evaluating the evidence and total independence of the group in reaching conclusions concerning the disease status of a particular country.

Article 3.8.2.7.

Steps to be taken to declare a country to be free from rinderpest

Recognition of the status '*free from rinderpest*' is given to a Member Country. Where traditionally managed livestock move freely across international borders, groups of Member Countries may usefully associate themselves into a group for the purposes of obtaining data to be used for mutually supportive applications for individual country accreditation.

For the purpose of this Appendix, the following assumptions are made:

- a) that within most previously infected countries, rinderpest vaccine will have been used to control the rate of infection;
- b) that within an endemically infected population there will be a large number of immune hosts (both vaccinees and recovered animals);
- c) that the presence of a proportion of immune hosts within a vaccinated population could have led to a slowing of the rate of virus transmission and possibly the concomitant emergence of strains of reduced virulence, difficult to detect clinically;

- d) that the virulence of the virus (and therefore the ease of clinical detection) may or may not increase as the herd immunity declines following withdrawal of vaccination; however, continuing transmission will generate serological evidence of their persistence.

Before accreditation can be considered, countries which have controlled the disease by the use of rinderpest vaccine must wait until an unvaccinated cohort is available to allow meaningful serological surveillance to be conducted.

The OIE has concluded that the majority of countries have stopped vaccinating for a sufficient length of time for it now to be feasible that a single submission of evidence gained over 2 years of appropriate surveillance shall be sufficient to gain rinderpest free accreditation.

A Member Country accredited as free from rinderpest must thereafter submit annual statements to the Director General of the OIE indicating that surveillance has failed to disclose the presence of rinderpest, and that all other criteria continue to be met.

A country previously infected with rinderpest which has not employed rinderpest vaccine for at least 25 years and has throughout that period detected no evidence of rinderpest virus disease or infection may be accredited as free from rinderpest by the OIE based on historical grounds, provided that the country:

- has had throughout at least the last 10 years and maintains permanently an adequate animal disease surveillance system along with the other requirements outlined in Article 3.8.1.6.;
- is in compliance with OIE reporting obligations (Chapter 1.1.2).

The *Veterinary Authorities* of the Member Country must submit a dossier containing evidence supporting their claim to be free from rinderpest on a historical basis to the Director General of the OIE for evaluation by the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases and accreditation by the OIE International Committee. The dossier should contain at least the following information:

- a description of livestock populations, including wildlife;
- the history of rinderpest occurrence in the country and its control;
- an affirmation that rinderpest has not occurred for 25 years, that vaccine has not been used during that time, and that rinderpest is a *notifiable disease*;
- evidence that in the last 10 years the disease situation throughout the Member Country has been constantly monitored by a competent and effective veterinary infrastructure that has operated a national animal disease reporting system submitting regular (monthly) disease occurrence reports to the *Veterinary Administration*;
- the structure and functioning of the *Veterinary Services*;
- the Member Country operates a reliable system of risk analysis based importation of livestock and livestock products.

Evidence in support of these criteria must accompany the Member Country's accreditation application dossier. In the event that satisfactory evidence is not forthcoming, the OIE may seek clarification or refer the dossier back to the originators, giving its reasons for so doing. Under such circumstances a fresh dossier would be entertained in due course.

OR

A Member Country having eradicated rinderpest within the last 25 years, wishing to be accredited free from rinderpest and having ended rinderpest vaccination must initiate a two-year surveillance programme to demonstrate freedom from rinderpest whilst banning further use of rinderpest vaccine. The step of

accreditation as free from rinderpest is subject to meeting stringent criteria with international verification under the auspices of the OIE.

A country historically infected with rinderpest but which has convincing evidence that the disease has been excluded for at least two years and is not likely to return, may apply to OIE to be accredited as free from rinderpest. The conditions which apply include that an adequate animal disease surveillance system has been maintained throughout at least that period.

The *Veterinary Administration* of the Member Country must submit a dossier containing evidence supporting their claim to be free from rinderpest to the Director General of the OIE for evaluation by the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases and accreditation by the OIE International Committee showing that they comply with:

- the provisions outlined in Chapter 2.2.12. of the *Terrestrial Code*;
- OIE reporting obligations outlined in Chapter 1.1.2. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

Other conditions that apply are:

- The Member Country affirms that rinderpest has not occurred for at least 2 years, that vaccine has not been used during that time, and that rinderpest is a *notifiable disease*.
- The *Veterinary Administration* has issued orders curtailing the distribution and use of rinderpest vaccine in livestock.
- The *Veterinary Administration* has issued orders for the recall and destruction of rinderpest vaccine already issued.
- The *Veterinary Administration* has issued orders restricting the importation of rinderpest vaccine into, or the further manufacture of rinderpest vaccine within, the territory under his jurisdiction. An exception can be made for establishing a safeguarded rinderpest emergency vaccine bank under the control of the Chief Veterinary Officer who can demonstrate that no calls have been made on that vaccine bank.
- The *Veterinary Administration* has set in place a rinderpest contingency plan.
- Over the previous 2 years at least, the disease situation throughout the Member Country has been constantly monitored by a competent and effective infrastructure that has operated a national animal disease reporting system submitting regular (monthly) disease occurrence reports to the *Veterinary Administration*.
- All *outbreaks of disease* with a clinical resemblance to rinderpest have been thoroughly investigated and routinely subjected to laboratory testing by an OIE recognised rinderpest-specific test within the national rinderpest laboratory or at a recognised reference laboratory.

The dossier shall contain:

- the results of a continuous surveillance programme, including appropriate serological surveys conducted during at least the last 24 months, providing convincing evidence for the absence of rinderpest virus circulation;
- a description of livestock populations including wildlife;
- the history of rinderpest occurrence in the country and its control;
- an affirmation that rinderpest has not occurred for at least 2 years, that vaccine has not been used during that time, and that rinderpest is a *notifiable disease*;

- evidence that in the last 2 years the disease situation throughout the Member Country has been constantly monitored by a competent and effective veterinary infrastructure that has operated a national animal disease reporting system submitting regular (monthly) disease occurrence reports to the *Veterinary Administration*;
- the structure and functioning of the *Veterinary Services*;
- the Member Country operates a reliable system of risk analysis based importation of livestock and livestock products.

In the event that satisfactory evidence in support of the application is not forthcoming, the OIE may seek clarification or refer the dossier back to the originators, giving its reasons for so doing. Under such circumstances a fresh dossier would be entertained in due course.

Article 3.8.2.8.

Rinderpest outbreaks after the accreditation process and recovery of rinderpest free status

Should there be an *outbreak*, or *outbreaks*, of rinderpest in a Member Country at any time after recognition of rinderpest freedom, the origin of the virus strain must be thoroughly investigated. In particular it is important to determine if this is due to the re-introduction of virus or re-emergence from an undetected focus of infection. The virus must be isolated and compared with historical strains from the same area as well as those representatives of other possible sources. The *outbreak* itself must be contained with the utmost rapidity using the resources and methods outlined in the Contingency Plan.

After elimination of the *outbreak*, a Member Country wishing to regain the status '*free from rinderpest*' must undertake serosurveillance to determine the extent of virus spread.

If investigations show the *outbreak* virus originated from outside the country, provided the *outbreak* was localised, rapidly contained and speedily eliminated, and provided there was no serological evidence of virus spread outside the index infected area, accreditation of freedom could proceed rapidly. The country must satisfy the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases that the *outbreaks* were contained, eliminated and did not represent endemic infection.

An application to regain the status free from rinderpest shall not generally be accepted until both clinical and serological evidence shows that there has been no virus transmission for at least three or six months, depending on whether or not stamping-out or vaccination respectively has been applied.
