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OLD WORLD SCREWWORM (*CHRYSOMYA BEZZIANA*) IN KUWAIT

Emergency report

Text of an e-mail received on 28 December 1997 from Dr Sultan A.S. Khalaf, Deputy Director General, The Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAF), Safat:

Nature of diagnosis: laboratory.

Date of initial detection of animal health incident: 1 December 1997.

Estimated date of first infestation: 26 November 1997.

Location of the outbreak: Sulaibiya.

Description of affected population: a cow in an intensive dairy farm with 500 cattle had infestation with 11 larvae of *Chrysomya bezziana* in the fetlock area. However, the total population at risk is estimated to reach 13,000.

Diagnosis:

- A. Laboratory where diagnosis was made:** Medical and Veterinary Division Department of Entomology, The Natural History Museum, London, United Kingdom (FAO Collaborating Centre on myiasis-causing insects and their identification).
- B. Diagnostic tests used:** identification of the third instar larvae dispatched.

Epidemiology:

- A. Source of agent / origin of infestation:** unknown, but suspected to be by an adult fly whose origin has not been determined; as the infested cow has been on the farm for four years and no new dairy cattle have recently been introduced, and despite the fact that small ruminant movements are uncontrolled, the fly is suspected to have been in the vicinity.
- B. Other epidemiological details:** fly populations on dairy farms are very high from late autumn to early winter, when temperature and humidity levels are optimal for their multiplication. The preceding summer months are too hot (above 45° C) for the fly or pupae to thrive. After mid-December, night temperatures drop well below 10° C.

Control measures during reporting period:

- the wound of the affected cow was effectively treated with insecticide;
- active surveillance for the larvae by three teams and treatment of any wound encountered to prevent oviposition by flies has been initiated. This has been complemented by spraying all farms with insecticide to control flies and pupae. The Ministry of Public Health has been informed of the event and the Ministry's Insect Control Unit is planning a survey of fly distribution and control.

RIFT VALLEY FEVER IN KENYA

Information dated 6 January 1998 taken from the Web site of the World Health Organization (WHO), at the following address: <http://www.who.ch/programmes/emc/news.htm>

Rift Valley fever (RVF) has been confirmed in an outbreak which affected humans and domestic animals (goat, sheep, cattle and camels) in Garissa District, a remote area of north-eastern Kenya. The outbreak area is difficult to access and the full extent of the outbreak is not yet known but reports indicate that up to 300 people may have died from the disease.

The first evidence that RVF was responsible for the outbreak was obtained on 31 December in the WHO Collaborating Centre at the National Institute for Virology, Johannesburg, South Africa. In testing the first sera available from the outbreak (from 36 human cases and 1 calf), 4 sera were PCR⁽¹⁾-positive and RVF was subsequently confirmed when the virus was isolated from 3 of them. Antibody to RVF virus was detected in 17 sera by either indirect immunofluorescence or IgG or IgM ELISA⁽²⁾ tests. Eight of 12 sera which could be retested had haemagglutination inhibition antibody to RVF.

Because the human population affected is undernourished and subject to various diseases, particularly those associated with a lack of clean drinking water and of health services, other severe diseases that normally occur in the area, such as shigellosis and malaria, may partially explain the large number of deaths in the region.

- (1) PCR: polymerase chain reaction.
(2) ELISA: enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay.

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HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA IN AUSTRALIA Lifting of restriction measures

Follow-up report No. 3

Text of a fax received on 7 January 1998 from Dr G. Murray, Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Primary Industries and Energy, Canberra:

End of previous report period: 17 December 1997 (see *Disease Information*, **10** [50], 175).

End of this report period: 7 January 1998.

Further to the previous reports relating to the single incursion affecting three farms within a 3-km radius near Tamworth, Australia has met all the *International Animal Health Code* Article 2.1.14.2 requirements to regain zonal freedom status for the declared infected and surveillance zones, relating to the outbreak: "a highly pathogenic avian influenza infected zone shall be considered as such until at least 21 days have elapsed after the last case has been reported and following the completion of a stamping-out policy and disinfection procedures...".

New South Wales authorities have met these requirements as follows: a stamping-out policy was implemented by New South Wales on the three infected farms within the declared 3-km infected zone (destruction of all birds was completed on 13 December 1997) and disinfection was completed on 4 January 1998.

Intensive surveillance has not detected any further cases. The remainder of New South Wales and all other States/Territories within Australia remain free from highly pathogenic avian influenza.

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AVIAN INFLUENZA IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
Absence of avian influenza virus type A (H5N1) in mainland China

Message transmitted by the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China to the FAO⁽¹⁾ Representative in Beijing and received at the OIE on 8 January 1998:

The news agencies recently reported that avian influenza (H5N1 virus) occurred in Hong Kong and caused several cases and deaths of infection in humans. On 29 December 1997, the government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ordered the slaughter of 1.3 million chickens in Hong Kong.

Some news media also had suspicions about influenza possibly occurring in mainland China. These reports caused us extreme concern. Avian influenza is a disease subject to strict checks by the animal health authorities in China; to date, no H5N1 infected chickens have been found in the chicken population of mainland China.

In early December 1997, Shenzhen animal health authorities serologically tested 550 blood samples from Shenzhen chicken farms. All results of the tests were negative. The expert investigation team, sent out by the Ministry on 17 December, inspected 1,078 blood and avian manure samples taken from Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Fushan and Yunfu areas of Guangdong Province. No avian influenza H5N1 virus has been found in the above areas.

In view of the fact that Hong Kong borders Guangdong province, the Ministry of Agriculture recently urged the relevant Departments of Guangdong Province to tighten controls. In the meantime, a written notice was sent to the national animal health authorities at all levels to strengthen avian influenza monitoring and watch closely for any further development of influenza. The notice also requested the provinces to report animal disease information immediately as soon as any avian influenza is found and strict measures will be taken.

Up to now, the Ministry of Agriculture has not received any report of avian influenza (virus H5N1) occurring in mainland China.

(1) FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

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