

Worldwide risks of animal diseases: introduction

Animal diseases impact food supplies, trade and commerce, and human health and well-being in every part of the world. Outbreaks draw the attention of those in agriculture, regulatory agencies, and government, as well as the general public. This was demonstrated by the 2000-2001 foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks that occurred in Europe, South America, Asia and Africa and by the recent increased occurrence of emerging diseases transmitted from animals to humans. Examples of these emerging zoonotic diseases are highly pathogenic avian influenza, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, West Nile virus and severe acute respiratory syndrome. There is also the risk of well-known and preventable zoonotic diseases, such as rabies, brucellosis, leishmaniasis, and echinococcosis/hydatidosis, in certain countries; these diseases have a high morbidity with the potential for a very high mortality. Animal agriculturalists should have a global disease awareness of disease risks and develop plans of action to deal with them; in order to better respond to these diseases, they should develop the skills and competencies in politics, media interactions, and community engagement. This issue of *Veterinaria Italiana* presents information on the risk of animal diseases; their impact on animals and humans at the international, national, industry, and societal levels; and the responses to them. In addition, specific information is provided on national and international disease monitoring, surveillance and reporting, the risk of spread of disease by bioterrorism and on import risk analysis.

J.E. Pearson
Editor

4016 Phoenix, Ames, Iowa 50014,
United States of America
JPearson34@aol.com