

Presentation

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Emerging and re-emerging diseases have been frequently reported worldwide in the last years. Recent examples are BSE, HPAI, West Nile Disease in North America and in some European countries, Italy included, Bluetongue emergence in many Southern European countries. These are a limited set of diseases, that were unknown or occurred only in some definite areas of developing countries till some years ago, but that now have left from the countries of origin to make their appearance in previously free areas or even have adapted to new animal species. This happened because climate and environment changes have modified the original ecosystems of these infections; also, movements of animals and men have been subjected to dramatic changes in the course of the last years; last, but not least, war and political changes have heavily affected society structure in these diseases' native countries, this being another factor in the migration of their causal agents.

Rift Valley Fever could be the next emerging disease in the countries whose ecological characteristics allow the survival of its etiologic agent, in the unlucky event of its introduction; Italy could well be one of these countries.

We have deemed therefore useful to provide Italian veterinarians, other public health professionals and farmers with the Italian translation of the FAO publication "Recognising Rift Valley Fever", by F. Glyn Davies, Consultant, EMPRES/Infectious Diseases Group and by Vincent Martin, Animal Health Officer,

EMPRES/Infectious Diseases Group.

RVF is a zoonosis with serious health consequences both for man and for livestock. Livestock losses are indeed heavy, hence the need to provide vets, farmers, etc. with the tools to recognize the disease. Italian vets must adapt to the new health, social, economical and environmental conditions; this can be achieved only by means of research and of a continuous education process, becoming aware that diseases have changed over years and that to prevent and control them requires a great deal more of different specific backgrounds and skills; this is a multidisciplinary effort.

The National Reference Centre for Foreign Animal Diseases at the "Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise "G. Caporale" has prepared this translation in the hope that it can become an easy and practical reference text for field veterinarians, should they find themselves in the unlucky circumstances to have to diagnose a disease never before observed in Italy and which in 2000 made its first sortie outside its traditional areals in several Northern African countries and in the Arabian peninsula. This publication can be an useful tool also for Veterinary Medicine students and for everyone wishing to work in Africa or in Middle East.

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