

## CHAPTER 8.15.

# INFECTION WITH RIFT VALLEY FEVER VIRUS

### Article 8.15.1.

#### General provisions

- 1) The aim of this chapter is to mitigate the animal and public health risks posed by Rift Valley fever (RVF) and to prevent its international spread.
- 2) Humans and many animal species are susceptible to *infection*. For the purposes of the *Terrestrial Code*, RVF is defined as an *infection* of ruminants with Rift Valley fever virus (RVFV).
- 3) The following defines the occurrence of *infection* with RVFV:
  - a) RVFV, excluding vaccine strains, has been isolated and identified as such from a sample from a ruminant; or
  - b) antigen or ribonucleic acid specific to RVFV, excluding vaccine strains, has been identified in a sample from a ruminant epidemiologically linked to a confirmed or suspected *case* of RVF, or giving cause for suspicion of association or contact with RVFV; or
  - c) antibodies to RVFV antigens which are not the consequence of *vaccination*, have been detected in a sample from a ruminant with either epidemiological links to a confirmed or suspected *case* of RVF, or giving cause for suspicion of association or contact with RVFV.
- 4) For the purposes of the *Terrestrial Code*, the *infective period* for RVF shall be 14 days.
- 5) In areas where RVFV is present, epizootics of RVF may occur following favourable climatic, environmental conditions and availability of susceptible host and competent *vector* populations. Epizootics are separated by inter-epizootic periods.
- 6) For the purposes of this chapter:
  - a) 'area' means a part of a country that experiences epizootics and inter-epizootic periods, but which does not correspond to the definition of *zone*;
  - b) 'epizootic of RVF' means the occurrence of *outbreaks* at an incidence substantially exceeding that during an inter-epizootic period;
  - c) 'inter-epizootic period' means the period of variable duration, often long, with intermittent low level of *vector* activity and low rate of virus transmission, which is often not detected;
  - d) ruminants include dromedary camels.
- 7) The historical distribution of RVF has been parts of the African continent, Madagascar, some other Indian Ocean Islands and the south western Arabian Peninsula. However, *vectors*, environmental and climatic factors, land-use dynamics, and animal movements may modify the temporal and spatial distribution of the *infection*.
- 8) When authorising import or transit of the *commodities* covered in the chapter, with the exception of those listed in Article 8.15.2., *Veterinary Authorities* should require the conditions prescribed in this chapter relevant to the RVF status of the ruminant population of the *exporting country*.
- 9) Standards for diagnostic tests and vaccines are described in the *Terrestrial Manual*.

### Article 8.15.2.

#### Safe commodities

When authorising import or transit of the following *commodities* and any products made from them, *Veterinary Authorities* should not require any RVF-related conditions, regardless of the RVF status of the ruminant population of the *exporting country*:

- 1) hides and skins;
- 2) wool and fibre.

Article 8.15.3.

**Country or zone free from RVF**

A country or a *zone* may be considered free from RVF when *infection* with RVFV is notifiable in the entire country and either:

- 1) it meets the requirements for historical freedom in Article 1.4.6.; or
- 2) met the following conditions:
  - a) an on-going pathogen-specific *surveillance* programme in accordance with Chapter 1.4. has demonstrated no evidence of *infection* with RVFV in ruminants in the country or *zone* for a minimum of ten years; and
  - b) during that period no indigenous human cases have occurred in the country or *zone*.

A country or *zone* free from RVF will not lose its free status through the importation of ruminants that are seropositive, so long as they are either permanently identified as such or destined for immediate *slaughter*.

Article 8.15.4.

**Country or zone infected with RVFV during the inter-epizootic period**

A country or *zone* infected with RVFV, during the inter-epizootic period, is one in which virus activity is present at a low level but the factors predisposing to an epizootic are absent.

Article 8.15.5.

**Country or zone infected with RVFV during an epizootic**

A country or *zone* infected with RVFV, during an epizootic, is one in which *outbreaks* of RVF are occurring at an incidence substantially exceeding that of the inter-epizootic period.

Article 8.15.6.

**Strategies to protect from vector attacks during transport**

Strategies to protect animals from *vector* attacks during transport should take into account the local ecology of the *vectors* and potential *risk management* measures include:

- 1) treating animals with insect repellents prior to and during transportation;
- 2) *loading*, transporting and *unloading* animals at times of low *vector* activity;
- 3) ensuring *vehicles* do not stop en route during dawn or dusk, or overnight, unless the animals are held behind insect-proof netting;
- 4) using historical and current information to identify low risk ports and transport routes.

Article 8.15.7.

**Recommendations for importation from countries or zones free from RVF**

For ruminants

*Veterinary Authorities* should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the animals:

- 1) were kept in a country or *zone* free from RVF since birth or for at least 14 days prior to shipment;

AND

- 2) either:
  - a) were vaccinated at least 14 days prior to leaving the free country or *zone*; or
  - b) did not transit through an area experiencing an epizootic during transportation to the *place of shipment*; or
  - c) were protected from *vector* attacks when transiting through an area experiencing an epizootic.

Article 8.15.8.

**Recommendations for importation from countries or zones infected with RVFV during the inter-epizootic period**

For ruminants

*Veterinary Authorities* should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the animals:

- 1) showed no sign of RVF on the day of shipment;
- 2) met one of the following conditions:
  - a) were vaccinated against RVF at least 14 days prior to shipment with a modified live virus vaccine; or
  - b) were held for at least 14 days prior to shipment in a *vector*-protected *quarantine station*, which is located in an area of demonstrated low *vector* activity. During this period the animals showed no clinical sign of RVF;

AND

- 3) either:
  - a) did not transit through an area experiencing an epizootic during transportation to the *place of shipment*; or
  - b) were protected from *vector* attacks when transiting through an area experiencing an epizootic.

Article 8.15.9.

**Recommendations for importation from countries or zones infected with RVFV during an epizootic**

For ruminants

*Veterinary Authorities* should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the animals:

- 1) showed no sign of RVF on the day of shipment;
- 2) did not originate in the area of the epizootic;
- 3) were vaccinated against RVF at least 14 days prior to shipment;
- 4) were held for at least 14 days prior to shipment in a *vector*-protected *quarantine station*, which is located in an area of demonstrated low *vector* activity outside the area of the epizootic. During this period the animals showed no sign of RVF;
- 5) either:
  - a) did not transit through an area experiencing an epizootic during transportation to the *place of shipment*; or
  - b) were protected from *vector* attacks when transiting through an area experiencing an epizootic.

Article 8.15.10.

**Recommendations for importation from countries or zones not free from RVF**

For semen and *in vivo* derived embryos of ruminants

*Veterinary Authorities* should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the donor animals:

- 1) showed no sign of RVF within the period from 14 days prior to and 14 days following collection of the semen or embryos;

AND

- 2) either:
  - a) were vaccinated against RVF at least 14 days prior to collection; or
  - b) were demonstrated to be seropositive on the day of collection; or
  - c) testing of paired samples has demonstrated that seroconversion did not occur between semen or embryo collection and 14 days after.

Article 8.15.11.

**Recommendations for importation of fresh meat and meat products from ruminants from countries or zones not free from RVF**

*Veterinary Authorities* should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the entire consignment of *meat* comes from:

- 1) ruminants which showed no clinical sign of RVF within 24 hours before *slaughter*;
- 2) ruminants which were slaughtered in an approved *slaughterhouse/abattoir* and were subjected to ante- and post-mortem inspections with favourable results;
- 3) carcasses which were submitted to maturation at a temperature above 2°C for a minimum period of 24 hours following *slaughter*.

Article 8.15.12.

**Recommendations for importation from countries or zones not free from RVF**

For milk and milk products

*Veterinary Authorities of importing countries* should require the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the consignment:

- 1) was subjected to pasteurisation; or
- 2) was subjected to a combination of control measures with equivalent performance as described in the Codex Alimentarius Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products.

Article 8.15.13.

**Surveillance**

*Surveillance* should be carried out in accordance with Chapter 1.4.

- 1) During an epizootic, *surveillance* should be conducted to define the extent of the affected area.
- 2) During the inter-epizootic period, *surveillance* and monitoring of climatic factors predisposing an epizootic should be carried out in countries or *zones* infected with RVFV.
- 3) Countries or *zones* adjacent to a country or *zone* in which epizootics have been reported should determine their RVF status through an on-going *surveillance* programme.

To determine areas of low *vector* activity (see Articles 8.15.8. and 8.15.9.) *surveillance* for arthropod *vectors* should be carried out in accordance with Chapter 1.5.

Examination of *vectors* for the presence of RVFV is an insensitive *surveillance* method and is therefore not recommended.

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NB: FIRST ADOPTED IN 1986; MOST RECENT UPDATE ADOPTED IN 2016.