Disease outbreaks reported

16 January 1998

Rift Valley Fever in Kenya and Somalia - Update 2

An outbreak similar to that reported in north-eastern Kenya has been reported in Somalia in the flooded area delimited by the towns of Belet Weyne and Johar on the Shabelle River. Four of 13 blood samples from suspected human cases have been positive for RVF.

The WHO team assembled in Kenya has established a small coordinating group for the Rift Valley Fever Task Force. It will comprise representatives from the Kenyan Government and from participating agencies and international organizations in Somalia and Kenya. This group will facilitate the rapid planning, coordination and implementation of surveillance and control activities. The surveillance system in both countries will be extended and strengthened in order to detect and confirm suspected cases. Standardized clinical case definitions and reporting methods will be used allowing for a better understanding of the epidemiology of the outbreak.

The WHO Collaborating Centre at the National Institute for Virology in Johannesburg has confirmed RVF virus infection in a second batch of 41 blood specimens. The virus was isolated in three specimens from human cases and six other specimens had IgM antibody indicating recent RVF virus infection. RVF virus was detected by PCR in one of seven blood specimens collected from goats.

Further details are given in the press release below.


*** RIFT VALLEY FEVER OUTBREAK WIDESPREAD IN KENYA

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