

## USA Comments

(Note: All US suggested changes are indicated in blue font)

### CHAPTER 8.12.

## INFECTION WITH RIFT VALLEY FEVER VIRUS

### Article 8.12.1.

#### 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 purpose 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 RVFV *infection*:
  - a) RVFV, excluding vaccine strains, has been isolated and identified as such from a sample from an *animal*; or
  - b) antigen or ribonucleic acid specific to RVFV, excluding vaccine strains, has been identified in a sample from an *animal* 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 identified in a sample from an *animal* 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 Rift Valley fever (RVF) shall be 30 ~~14~~ 30 days.

**Comment/rationale:** The United States requests that the scientific basis for reducing the infective period of RVF from 30 days to 14 days be provided. Reducing the infective period from 30 to 14 days will potentially increase the likelihood of further international spread of RVFV unless there is strong and definitive evidence to support 14 days as the longest possible infective period (e.g., see the proposed change from 30 days to 14 days in Article 8.12.8, item 2) b), and the new text using 14 days in Article 8.12.10, item 4). If strong evidence to support the 14-day period does not exist, then the infective period should remain at 30 days.

- 5) In areas where RVFV is present, epizootics of RVF may occur following favorable 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:

“area” means a part of a country that experiences epizootics and inter-epizootic periods, but which does not correspond to the definition of *zone*;

“epizootic of RVF” means the occurrence of *outbreaks* at an incidence substantially exceeding that during an inter-epizootic period;

“inter-epizootic period” means the period of variable, often long, duration, with intermittent low level virus activity, which is often not detected.

For the purposes of this chapter, ruminants include camels.

- 7) The historical distribution of RVF has been parts of is the ~~sub-Saharan~~ 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 can~~ modify the temporal and spatial distribution of the infection.

**Rationale:** The United States recommends replacing the word “can” with the word “may”. To date there have been no RVFV infections of livestock outside the historical distribution described herein. Therefore, to indicate that any or all of these factors “can” modify the distribution of infection is conjecture. Using the word “may” in place of “can” conveys a more appropriate level of certainty related to distribution modification.

Annex XIX (contd)

~~Epidemics of RVF may occur in infected areas after flooding. They are separated by inter-epidemic periods that may last for several decades in arid areas and, during these periods, the prevalence of infection in humans, animals and mosquitoes can be difficult to detect.~~

~~In the absence of clinical disease, the RVF status of a country or zone within the historically infected regions of the world should be determined by a surveillance programme (carried out in accordance with Chapter 1.4.) focusing on mosquitoes and serology of susceptible mammals. The programme should concentrate on parts of the country or zone at high risk because of historical, geographic and climatic factors, ruminant and mosquito population distribution, and proximity to areas where epidemics have recently occurred.~~

- 8) When authorising import or transit of the *commodities* covered in the chapter, with the exception of those listed in Article 8.12.2., *Veterinary Authorities* should require the conditions prescribed in this chapter relevant to the RVF status of the ruminant population of the ~~exporting country or zone~~.
- 9) Standards for diagnostic tests and vaccines are described in the *Terrestrial Manual*.

Article 8.12.2.

**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 or zone~~:

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

Article 8.12.3.

**Country or zone free from RVFV infection free country or zone**

A country or a *zone* may be considered free from RVFV infection when the *disease* is notifiable ~~in animals throughout in~~ the whole country and either:

- 1) it meets the requirements for historical freedom in Article 1.4.6.; or
- 2) an ongoing pathogen-specific surveillance programme in accordance with Chapter 1.4 has demonstrated no evidence of RVFV infection in animals and humans in the country or zone.

~~No country or zone which has experienced an epizootic of RVF can ever be considered free from RVFV.~~

**Rationale:** The United States recommends deleting this sentence. The content of this sentence is too broad and restrictive, and assumes facts not yet demonstrated regarding RVF virus in areas outside of its historical geographic distribution. It is unknown with any certainty what would happen with respect to the virus overwintering in local mosquito species in other geographic regions outside the known endemic areas. Therefore it would be inappropriate to make a broad statement that such countries could never again be considered RVF virus-free. If RVF virus-free status can be demonstrated through the results of all other surveillance requirements for disease freedom recommended in the Terrestrial Code, then OIE Members should be allowed to consider such evidence and make their best judgment as to RVFV freedom for a given country or zone.

- 4) ~~the country or zone lies outside the historically infected regions, and is not adjacent to historically infected countries~~ infections; or

- 2) ~~a surveillance programme as described in Article 8.12.1. has demonstrated no evidence of RVF infection in humans, animals or mosquitoes in the country or zone during the past four years following a RVF epidemic.~~

~~The provisions of the last paragraph of Article 8.12.1. may need to be complied with on a continuous basis in order to maintain freedom from infection, depending on the geographical location of the country or zone.~~

~~A country or zone free from infection with RVFV infection free country or zone in which surveillance and monitoring has found no evidence that RVF infection is present will not lose its free status through the importation of animals that are seropositive, so long as they are which are either permanently marked identified as such or seropositive animals or those destined for immediate direct slaughter.~~

## Article 8.12.4.

**RVF infected country or zone infected with RVFV without disease 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.

A RVF disease free country or zone is a country or zone that is not infection free (see Article 8.12.3.) but in which disease has not occurred in humans or animals in the past six months provided that climatic changes predisposing to outbreaks of RVF have not occurred during this time.

## Article 8.12.5.

**RVF infected country or zone infected with RVFV with disease 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.

A RVF infected country or zone with disease is one in which clinical disease in humans or animals has occurred within the past six months.

Article 8.12.5.bis**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 8.12.6.

**Recommendations for importation from countries or zones free from RVFV infection free country or zones**For ruminants

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

- 1) were kept in a RVF free country or zone free from RVFV infection since birth or for at least 30 14 days prior to shipment; and
- 2) if the animals were exported from a free zone, either
  - Ba) they were vaccinated at least 14 days prior to leaving the free country or zone; or
  - Ab) they did not transit through an area experiencing an epizootic an infected zone during transportation to the place of shipment; or

## Annex XIX (contd)

- Bc) they were protected from vector mosquito attacks at all times when transiting through an infected zone area experiencing an epizootic.

~~Article 8.12.7.~~

~~Recommendations for importation from RVF infection free countries or zones~~

~~For meat and meat products of domestic and wild ruminants~~

~~Veterinary Authorities should require the presentation of an international veterinary certificate attesting that the products are derived from animals which remained in the RVF infection free country/free zone since birth or for the last 30 days.~~

Article 8.12.8.

Recommendations for importation from RVF infected countries/zones without disease 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 ~~evidence~~ signs of RVF on the day of shipment;
- 2) met one of the following conditions:
  - a. ~~were kept in a RVF infected country/zone free of disease since birth or for the last six months providing that climatic changes predisposing to outbreaks of RVF have not occurred during this time; or~~
  - b~~a~~) were vaccinated against RVF at least ~~24~~ 14 days prior to shipment with a modified live virus vaccine; or
  - b~~b~~) were held for at least ~~30~~ 14 ~~30~~ days prior to shipment in a mosquito-proof quarantine station which is located in an area of demonstrated low vector activity. During this period ~~which~~ the animals showed no clinical sign of RVFV infection. ~~and were protected from mosquitoes between quarantine and the place of shipment as well as at the place of shipment ;~~

**Rationale:** The United States recommends retaining the 30 day period as the designated time period (see comment on Article 8.12.1, item 4), unless there is definitive evidence of a lack of infectivity to support a reduction to 14 days.

AND

- 3) either
  - a) did not transit through an area experiencing an epizootic ~~infected zone with disease~~ during transportation to the place of shipment ~~or~~
  - b) were protected from vector attacks when transiting through an area experiencing an epizootic.

~~Article 8.12.9.~~

~~Recommendations for importation from RVF infected countries or zones without disease~~

~~For meat and meat products of domestic and wild ruminants~~

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

## Annex XIX (contd)

- 4) ~~the products are derived from *animals* which:~~
- a) ~~remained in the RVF infected country or zone without *disease* since birth or for the last 30 days;~~
  - b) ~~were slaughtered in an approved *abattoir* and were subjected to ante- and post-mortem inspections for RVF with favourable results;~~
- 2) ~~the carcasses from which the products were derived were submitted to maturation at a temperature above +2°C for a minimum period of 24 hours following *slaughter*.~~

Article 8.12.10.

~~Recommendations for importation from RVF infected countries or zones with disease~~

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

For ruminants

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

- 1) showed no signs 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 44 30 days prior to shipment in a *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 signs of RVF;

**Rationale:** Unless there is definitive evidence of a lack of infectivity to support a reduction to 14 days, the United States recommends retaining the 30 day period as the designated time period (see comment on Article 8.12.1, item 4).

- 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.
- 1) showed no evidence of RVF on the day of shipment;
- 2) were vaccinated against RVF at least 21 14 days prior to shipment with a modified live virus vaccine;

OR

- 3) ~~were held in a mosquito-proof *quarantine station* for at least 30 days prior to shipment during which the *animals* showed no clinical sign of RVF and were protected from mosquito attacks between quarantine and the *place of shipment* as well as at the *place of shipment*.~~

Article 8.12.10.bis

Recommendations for importation of fresh meat and meat products from ruminants

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

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

~~Article 8.12.11.~~

~~Recommendations for importation from RVF infected countries or zones with disease~~

For meat and meat products of domestic and wild ruminants

~~Veterinary Authorities should require the presentation of an international veterinary certificate attesting that the carcasses:~~

- 1) ~~are from animals which have been slaughtered in an approved abattoir and have been subjected to ante- and post-mortem inspections for RVF with favourable results; and~~
- 2) ~~have been fully eviscerated and submitted to maturation at a temperature above +2°C for a minimum period of 24 hours following slaughter.~~

Article 8.12.12.

Recommendations for importation from countries or zones not free from infection with RVEV

~~Recommendations for importation from countries or zones RVEV infected with disease~~

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 evidence signs of RVF within the period from 28 14 days prior to 28 and 14 days following collection of the semen or embryos;~~
- 2) ~~were vaccinated against RVF at least 24 14 days prior to collection. with a modified live virus vaccine; or~~
- 3) were demonstrated to be seropositive on the day of collection; or
- 4) testing of paired samples has demonstrated that seroconversion did not occur between semen or embryo collection and 14 days after.

~~were serologically tested on the day of collection and at least 14 days following collection and showed no significant rise in titre.~~

Article 8.12.13.

~~(Under study) Recommendations for importation from RVF infected countries or zones not free from infection with RVEV with disease or from RVF infected countries or zones without disease~~

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 8.12.14.

**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 RVFV status through an ongoing surveillance programme.

To determine areas of low vector activity (see Articles 8.12.8 and 8.12.10) 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.

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