



FACT SHEET ON RIFT VALLEY FEVER

1. Introduction

An outbreak of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) has been confirmed in Lejweleputswa and other districts in the Free State province. Rift Valley Fever is a viral zoonosis that primarily affects animals, but it also has the capacity to infect humans. It causes a mild flu-like condition in the majority of humans, but can also cause a severe disease. RVF is more severe in animals, including livestock and game animals; and can result in abortion and mortality.

2. Who is at Risk?

Any person with recent close contact with animals in or from suspected Rift Valley Fever (RVF) areas in Free State Province or any affected area presenting with:

- Flu-like illness (which may include fever, muscle and joint pain and headache),
- Fever and features of haemorrhage and blurred vision

3. Causative agent

Rift Valley Fever is caused by a virus which is a member of the Phlebovirus genus.

4. Signs and Symptoms

- Flu-like symptoms;
- Headache;
- Muscle or joint pains;
- Neck stiffness;
- Sensitivity to light;
- Vomiting.

5. Transmission to humans

- Contact with the blood or organs of infected animals.
- Through the handling of animal tissues during slaughtering or butchering, assisting with animal births, conducting veterinary procedures, or from disposals of carcasses or fetuses.
- Occupational groups such as herders, farmers, slaughters house workers and veterinarians are at higher risk of infection.
- Infects humans via a wound from an infected knife, or through contact with broken skin, or through inhalation of aerosol procedure during the slaughter of infected animals.
- No human to human transmission has been documented to date.

6. Prevention and Control of Rift Valley Fever

Rift Valley Fever can be prevented by observing the following measures:

1. Avoid contact with infected animals, particularly body fluids.
2. Do not slaughter sick or dying domestic animals suspected of being infected with RVF for consumption purposes.
3. Wear appropriate protective clothing (e.g. gloves, masks) when handling sick or suspected animals or any part thereof.
4. Avoid all animals' products (blood, meat and raw milk) from unsafe animals.
5. Boil raw milk before use.
6. All animal's products from the outbreak area should be cooked thoroughly.
7. Avoid movement of animals from one area to another.
8. Identify and destroy mosquito breeding places and protect yourself from mosquito bites (e.g. wear long sleeved clothing at night, use mosquito repellents, avoid evening outdoor activities).
9. Allow all appropriate animals to be vaccinated against Rift Valley fever.

10. All dead animals should be safely disposed under the supervision of an Environmental Health Practitioner.

11. Please visit the nearest health facility if one or more of the following symptoms is experienced:

- Flu- like fever;
- Headache;
- Muscle or joint pains;
- Neck stiffness;
- Sensitivity to light; and
- Vomiting.

For more information please visit the nearest health facility or call the following number: 0800 53 55 54.

End.

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