Epidémiol. santé anim., 1997, 31-32

TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATIES SURVEILLANCE IN PORTUGAL

Almeida V.[1], Melo M.[1], Louzã A[1], Nunes T.[1]

The surveillance measures taken in May 1995 to cope with bovine spongiform encephalophaty in Portugal need to be reinforced and integrated into an active network due to the lack of farmers motivation to report suspicious cases and the sporadic nature of the disease. Till March 31 it were confirmed in Portugal, 68 cases of BSE out of 126 clinical suspicious.
The Authors present a prototype of a surveillance network of the animal TSE designed to maximize the potential intervention of the various types of Animal Health and Diagnosis Services existent in Portugal and adjusted to increasing levels of information technologies already available either on Veterinary Services or on-farm. The target populations are: Cattle and zoo ruminants, sheep, domestic cats and zoo felines, and wild deer populations.

The surveillance measures taken in May 1995 to cope with bovine spongiform encephalophaty [BSE] in Portugal need to be reinforced and integrated into an active network due to the lack of farmers motivation to report suspicious cases and the sporadic nature of the disease. Till March 31 it were confirmed in Portugal, 68 cases of BSE out of 126 clinical suspicious.

The Authors present a prototype of a surveillance network of the animal TSE designed to maximize the potential intervention of the various types of Animal Health and Diagnosis Services existent in Portugal and adjusted to increasing levels of information technologies already present either on Veterinary Services or on-farm.
The target populations are: Cattle and zoo ruminants for bovine spongiform encephalophaty [BSE]; sheep for scrapie; domestic cats and zoo felines for feline spongiform encephalophaty [FSE] and wild deer populations for chronic wasting disease [CWD].

The surveillance network has the following main goals: (1) Early detection of cattle with nervous syntoms; (2) Immediate activation of BSE national measures; (3) To begin to surveill sheep, domestic cats/zoo felines and wild deer, in order to confirm/deny clinical suspicions of scrapie, FSE and CWD; and to assure the absence or to report the presence of thes diseases in Portugal.

The surveillance network has the following caractheristics: Fully computorized, universal acess, capable of receiving/storing Alarm Messages and able to activate, simultaneously, a range of diferent Actions at the participant Parterners. It will offer freely epidemiological information about the Portuguese scenario of BSE (or any other animal TSE to be reported) updated daily through modem-Internet; it will generate and distribute a writen bulletin each two months; and it will allow users to visualize video images with the main clinical signs of BSE, scrapie, FSE and CWD.

The prototype will be tested and validated in 3 Regional Livestock Directorates (Entre-Douro e Minho, Trás-os-Montes and Alentejo), 30 Animal Health Defense Groupments [ADS]; 4 Veterinary Laboratories (Oporto, Mirandela, Lisbon and Évora); the National Wildlife Institute; a sample of major Small Animals Clinics located in Lisbon and Oporto; and also the Lisbon Zoo. An estimate of fifty veterinary and other professionals will be involved in the exercise.

[1] Faculdade de Medicina Veterinária de Lisboa, R.Gomes Freire, 1199 Lisboa Codex, Portugal