

OFFICE INTERNATIONAL DES EPIZOOTIES



**2nd Conference  
of the  
OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Damascus (Syria)  
26 - 29 April 1993**

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**List of abbreviations**

EEC	:	European Economic Community
FAO	:	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEI	:	Fédération équestre internationale <i>International Equestrian Federation</i>
GREP	:	Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme
GTZ	:	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit <i>German Agency for Technical Cooperation</i>
MINEADEP	:	Near and Middle East Regional Animal Production and Health Project (FAO)
MZCC	:	Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre
PARC	:	Pan African Rinderpest Campaign
SAREC	:	South Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
WARECC	:	West Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign Coordination
WHO	:	World Health Organisation

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## Introduction

1. On the invitation of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, the 2nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East was held in Damascus from 26 to 29 April 1993.
2. Thirty-four Delegates from thirteen Member Countries and five Observers from two international organisations and other institutions attended the Conference (Appendix I). The Rapporteurs for Items I and II also participated in the proceedings of the Conference. These were Prof. E. Istanbuluoglu, Dr S.C. Mathur, Dr A.A. Mustafa, Dr S.A. Sultan Al-Khalaf and Dr M. Ghazi Yehya.

Monday, 26 April 1993

### Official Opening Ceremony

3. In his opening address, Dr Abdoul Shakour Kari, Director of Animal Health Services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform in Damascus, greeted participants and in particular welcomed the Syrian Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, His Excellency Asaad Moustafa.
4. Prof. M.S.M.A. Harbi, Vice-President of the Regional Commission for the Middle East, expressed his appreciation to the Government of Syria and underlined the importance of the meeting for the control of infectious diseases in the region. Prof. Harbi also emphasised the importance of sustained cooperation among countries of the region and international organisations in fulfilling the goals of development in the agricultural and animal resources sectors of the region, and worldwide.
5. Dr J. Blancou, Director General of the OIE, thanked the Syrian Government for its invitation to hold the Conference in Damascus and expressed his gratitude to Dr Kari and his staff for the warm welcome they had given participants. He briefly reviewed the subjects to be discussed during the Conference, emphasising the necessity and value of the meeting.
6. His Excellency Asaad Moustafa, Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, welcomed all participants to Syria. After outlining the various

policies instituted by the Ministry to develop the animal production sector in Syria, he stressed the need for efficient livestock production in the region and the economic importance of disease control and prevention both to individual nation states and their trading partners.

7. The texts of the above speeches were distributed to the Delegates.

#### **Election of the Conference Committee**

8. Participants elected the following Conference Committee:

Chairman : Dr A. S. Kari  
Vice-Chairman : Dr Ali A. Arab  
Rapporteur General : Prof. M.S.M.A. Harbi

#### **Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable**

9. The Provisional Agenda and Timetable were adopted (Appendices II and III).

#### **Election of Chairmen and Rapporteurs**

10. Chairmen and Rapporteurs were designated for the technical items as follows:

Item I : Dr A. Kazemi, Chairman  
Dr G. Barsoum, Rapporteur

Item II : Dr M.F. Kilani, Chairman  
Dr G. Khoury, Rapporteur

Item III : Dr A. Ziadheh, Chairman  
Dr M. Arif Salemi, Rapporteur



## ITEM I

### **Brucellosis, foot and mouth disease and rinderpest: surveillance and control in the region**

#### **A. Brucellosis**

11. Dr Kazemi, Chairman of the Session, briefly introduced the Rapporteur for this item, Dr Mustafa.
12. Dr Mustafa commenced his presentation by pointing out that brucellosis is well established in all countries of the region. The disease causes appreciable losses to modern intensive systems, especially the dairy industry, as well as to extensively raised livestock. Losses are mainly due to abortion, reduction in milk yield, restriction of animal movement and trade, veterinary costs, and increased culling and replacement rates. Losses due to human suffering, incapacity of infected individuals to work and costs of treatment are appreciable.
13. The Rapporteur noted that serological diagnosis of brucellosis is carried out in all the countries of the region, for diagnosis and for disease surveys. Based on the current knowledge of specificity and sensitivity of the conventional serological tests, the serological test of choice should be carefully selected. The rose bengal plate test, complement fixation test and milk ring test, are the most reliable conventional tests in cattle and small ruminants. Research is needed to optimise and standardise these tests for small ruminants and camels. In the epidemiological context the main difficulties are decreased specificity to differentiate vaccinated from non vaccinated animals, and in the late stages of eradication when the tests' predictive values will be low. An answer to these difficulties may be found in development of new enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) techniques such as the competitive ELISA test.
14. Dr Mustafa recalled that bacteriological methods for isolation and identification of *Brucella* are carried out in laboratories in nearly all the countries of the region. Biotypes of *Brucella* species isolated in at least seven countries of the region yielded useful epidemiological information on the association of bovine, caprine, ovine and camel brucellosis which

would be of value in determining the strategy for control of brucellosis and its elimination in the region.

15. In conclusion, the Rapporteur expressed the view that the strategy for the control of bovine and small ruminant brucellosis in the region needs to be readdressed, taking into consideration the epidemiology of the disease, resources, and local customs. In view of all these factors, a realistic strategy should be based on whole herd and flock vaccination to be sustained for many years. The vaccines of choice, according to research carried out so far, are still *B. abortus* Strain 19 for *B. abortus* infections in cattle, and *B. melitensis* Rev1 vaccine in small ruminants for *B. melitensis* infections.

### Discussion

16. The Chairman congratulated Dr Mustafa on his interesting presentation and then asked for questions from the floor.
17. The Delegate of the United Arab Emirates asked the Rapporteur for additional information on the methods for detecting antibodies against *Brucella* and the significance of these antibodies. Dr Mustafa responded by clarifying that these questions were dealt with in detail in a specialised document published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO). As concerns the methods for complement fixation, its application in sheep is difficult as the serum for this species is often anti-complementary.
18. Dr Khoury asked if the Rev1 vaccine protects bovines well against *Brucella abortus*. The Rapporteur responded by indicating that protection is good against infections of *Brucella melitensis*, but not against *B. abortus* for which the vaccine B19 is more immunogenic.
19. Dr Mathur asked for more information on *B. ovis* infections in the Middle East. He also asked for information about the results of the FAO/OIE/WHO technical meeting in Amman. Dr Mustafa clarified that the recommendations of this meeting, which were prepared by the leading current experts, are excellent and that he drew inspiration from them when writing his presentation.

## **B. Foot and mouth disease**

20. The Chairman called on Prof. E. Istanbuluoglu, Rapporteur for this technical item, to present his report and briefly introduced the speaker.
21. Prof. Istanbuluoglu reminded participants of the geographic and economic characteristics of the Middle Eastern region. He described the problems related to the importation and exportation of agricultural products and to farming in this region, and illustrated these with tables of statistics.
22. The Rapporteur then described the animal production situation in the Middle East and analysed the factors limiting production: geographic, technical, financial and human.
23. He described the situations of the Veterinary Services in the region and presented tables showing the resources available to these services in the different countries of the region.
24. Prof. Istanbuluoglu then presented details of the sanitary situation in each of these countries with respect to foot and mouth disease (FMD): number of cases in 1991 and 1992, virus types isolated, control measures applied, etc.
25. The Rapporteur concluded by indicating that vaccination against FMD, although widely practised in the region, was carried out in a very erratic fashion and covered an inadequate number of animals. The disease could therefore spread easily, especially during illegal trading of animals. It therefore seemed to him imperative to create buffer zones and to strengthen the means for diagnosis and for virus typing in the region.

## **Discussion**

26. The Chairman congratulated Prof. Istanbuluoglu for his excellent report and then asked if there were any questions.
27. The Delegate from Jordan was eager to emphasise the fact that the infection of sheep by the FMD virus is quite frequent in the Middle East

and that it has an important impact on animal production. Prof. Istanbuluoglu agreed entirely and expressed the view that this may be due to the fact that sheep suffer from a deficiency of oligo-elements and vitamins.

28. A long discussion followed on the different aspects of FMD in sheep in the Middle East: do predispositional causes exist; do more sensitive breeds exist; do microbiological complications exist involving *Pasteurella multocida*. It seems that the responses to these questions vary according to the country and the circumstances and it is clear that further research is needed on this subject.
29. In response to Prof. Istanbuluoglu's suggestion to create an FMD Commission for the Middle East, Dr Mathur indicated that the FAO agrees, in principle, to this suggestion, but would prefer that the objectives of the Commission be broadened and that the Commission be entitled "Middle Eastern Animal Health Commission". The FAO declared that it was ready to support such a Commission, with which the OIE would work in close collaboration, and to accommodate it in the FAO Regional Bureau in Cairo (Egypt).
30. Dr Blancou indicated that the final decision regarding the FAO's proposal would be made by the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East itself and the International Committee of the OIE. Prof. Istanbuluoglu, for his part, would prefer that the objectives of the Commission suggested by Dr Mathur remain limited to FMD to avoid dissipating the resources of the Commission instead of concentrating them on one disease.
31. The Delegate of Kuwait drew attention to the difficulties which could exist in establishing buffer zones for FMD vaccination between countries of the region as a result of the existing conflicts between these countries. These conflicts can, moreover, favour the movement of infected animals (sheep) across borders.
32. Prof. Istanbuluoglu responded that the solution could be to meet on a regular basis, as Balkan countries have done in the past, to facilitate the setting up of buffer zones in the region.

### C. Rinderpest

33. The Chairman gave a brief introduction of Dr S.C. Mathur, Rapporteur for this technical item.
34. Dr Mathur gave a general review of rinderpest and the dangers it poses to livestock. This disease represents a particular danger to the Middle East, which he illustrated by showing the number of animals of susceptible species (bovines and buffaloes) found in the region.
35. He then reviewed the history of the development of the disease in the Middle East and the methods used to carry out campaigns within the framework of the "West Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign Coordination" (WARECC): evolution of the technical phases, vaccination, seromonitoring, technology transfer, etc. He also described other campaigns in progress within countries of the region, in particular the "Technical Cooperation Programmes".
36. With the aid of a map and numerous statistics, Dr Mathur then described the current situation with respect to rinderpest in 19 countries of the region, from Afghanistan to Yemen. He also described the strategy recommended by the FAO for eradicating the disease, the conditions set by the OIE for a country to declare itself free of rinderpest, and the particular strategy applicable by WARECC.
37. The Rapporteur concluded his talk by indicating that rinderpest is amenable to eradication provided there is a professional determination and firm will to carry it out. The Middle East region, having some countries in the Pan African Rinderpest Campaign (PARC), some in the South Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign (SAREC) and the majority in WARECC, should be the first to get rid of rinderpest. However, because of its location between the PARC and SAREC regions, and because of its importing character, threats will loom large for inadvertent entry of infection from other areas. As a result, surveillance and quarantine will continue. The maintenance of freedom in the Middle East will largely depend on freedom in South Asia and Africa.

### Discussion

38. The Chairman thanked Dr Mathur for his comprehensive and informative report, and then invited participants to ask questions.
39. The representative of Egypt asked for clarifications on the duration of the persistence of circulating antibodies against rinderpest after vaccination (up to 11 years?) or during infection with mild virus strains (throughout the lifespan?), and the consequence of this problem for the declaration of free status, using sero-surveillance.
40. Dr Mathur reassured him by explaining that the sero-surveillance is made solely on non-vaccinated animals and calves.
41. Dr Khoury asked if WARECC was going to be extended at the end of the current phase. Dr Mathur told him that this was probable within the framework of the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP), for which the FAO was searching for sponsors (e.g. European Economic Community). Regardless of the outcome, Technical Cooperation Programmes can be put into place during the interim, and every effort will be made to continue the programme.
42. Concerning the possibility of establishing a regional reference laboratory for the quality control of vaccines for rinderpest, Dr Mathur said that this was already established at Baghdad but did not become fully operational due to Gulf War sanctions. It is since being revitalised and strengthened.
43. Professor Harbi expressed his great wish that the Regional Laboratory for Rinderpest be strengthened rapidly. This proposal will be discussed next May at the General Session. The Islamic Development Bank would be interested in this proposal, which two consultants (from the FAO and the OIE) could prepare shortly.
44. A discussion was then entered into on the respective roles of the WHO, FAO and OIE in the combat of zoonoses. Professor Harbi thought that it would be useful to establish an "Arabian Zoonoses Control Centre" for the region, along the lines of the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre (MZCC), with the assistance of these three organisations. Dr Mustafa

suggested that research should be carried out on carrier and reservoir status of rinderpest.

45. After having discussed technical questions with Dr Mustafa on the quality of new tissue culture vaccines and on the way of transmitting the rinderpest virus (through fomites or meat), Dr Mathur concluded by indicating that the principal quality of a programme to combat this disease would always remain its sustainability.
46. The Chairman of the Session invited Delegates to join the three Rapporteurs for Technical Item I to prepare draft recommendations. Three groups were formed and were made up of Prof. Istanbuluoglu, Dr Mathur, Dr Mustafa and the Delegates from Cyprus, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates.

### **ITEM III**

#### **Animal health status of Member Countries**

47. Each Delegate was given a summary document noting the dates on which the OIE received the SR3 reports of their country between 1988 and 1992. The Director General drew attention to the fact that many countries had not sent their reports in on time, or indeed in some years had not sent them at all. He stressed the crucial importance of these reports for the OIE and for the safety of international trade.
48. Dr A. Ziadeh, Chairman of the Session, invited Delegates of Member Countries to report on any changes that had taken place regarding the animal health status of their country since the 60th General Session of the OIE. It should be noted that no information was received from Iraq before this date on the health status of its livestock in 1992.
49. The animal health situation in the region can be summarised as follows, according to the reports, written and spoken, presented to the Conference.

### List A diseases

#### 50. Foot and mouth disease

Foot and mouth disease (virus types O and A) continued to circulate enzootically in the Anatolian region of Turkey; in the buffer zone set up in Western Anatolia, where nearly 2.5 million cattle were vaccinated twice, and over 3.7 million sheep were vaccinated once, using a bivalent vaccine. A sharp decrease in the number of outbreaks was noted in comparison to 1991.

The presence of outbreaks caused by virus type O was reported in several countries in the region (Bahrain, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates), whereas virus type A was isolated in only two countries (Iran and Saudi Arabia), and virus type Asia 1 only in Saudi Arabia.

An epidemiological investigation in wildlife was carried out in Israel on the only outbreak in which cattle were involved. Samples collected from wild boar and taken from the region of the pharynx and from podal lesions allowed the isolation of a type O virus strain identical to that of the outbreak in cattle.

#### 51. Rinderpest

Egypt reported that the vaccination campaign against rinderpest was successfully carried out. The country reported on the implementation of serological surveys designed to measure the level of immunity acquired as a result of successive vaccination campaigns, and judged the results to be encouraging. Iran has established some "free zones" with border countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey).

Several countries in the Arabian Peninsula (Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) reported outbreaks of rinderpest in their territories. In Turkey, quarantine measures applied as a result of the epizootic which occurred in October and November 1991 were lifted on 16 January 1992. A new vaccination campaign for cattle and buffalo, covering the entire national territory, was carried out in 1992.



In the Sudan, where almost six million cattle have been vaccinated, the disease was investigated in the South by non-governmental organisations, but has not been officially confirmed, so far, in Khartoum.

52. **Peste des petits ruminants**

In Oman, 149 outbreaks of the disease were reported in 1992 and 353,742 small ruminants were vaccinated.

53. **Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia**

The disease was reported in Afghanistan, and in Kuwait, with a low incidence, where surveillance against the disease has been reinforced.

54. **Lumpy skin disease**

In Egypt 1,578,888 cattle were vaccinated against the disease with a sheep pox vaccine produced locally. In Israel, a disease resembling lumpy skin disease was reported by the Veterinary Services in November in cattle kept in the Controlled Territories (Gaza strip). Epidemiological investigations led to the conclusion that the outbreak had resulted from the use of a heterologous vaccine. The vaccine in question was immediately withdrawn from use.

55. **Rift Valley fever**

No events of particular significance regarding Rift Valley fever were reported to the OIE in 1992.

56. **Bluetongue**

In a serological survey carried out in Cyprus, 4 goat sera were found positive among 42 caprine sera tested.

57. **Sheep pox and goat pox**

In Oman 66 outbreaks of the disease were registered in 1992 and 263,078 small ruminants were vaccinated with a Kenyan strain of goat origin. The disease is sporadic in Kuwait.

**58. African horse sickness**

In Egypt, as in previous years, the 35,000 horses, donkeys and mules present in the three Governorates in the south of the country (Aswan, Qena and Sohag) were vaccinated against the disease. A study is under way to evaluate the efficacy of an inactivated virus vaccine to replace the live virus vaccine currently in use.

**59. Newcastle disease**

Incidents involving Newcastle disease occurred in Cyprus in breeding aviary bird farms.

**List B diseases****60. Anthrax**

Endemic in the region.

**61. Echinococcosis/hydatidosis**

Endemic in the region. Eliminated from Cyprus since 1985, where a large survey carried out in 1992 yielded negative results.

**62. Rabies**

Endemic in most of the countries except Kuwait, is a serious threat to human health. Two human deaths were reported in Jordan and 7,746 human post exposure treatments cost 205,000 USD in 1992.

In Oman, rabies in dogs and wildlife poses a threat to cattle, which have been vaccinated against the disease.

**63. Brucellosis**

A serious concern in most Middle Eastern countries. In Egypt, out of 334,735 cattle, sheep or goats tested 2,681 (0,6%) were found positive. Vaccination with Rev1 vaccine is applied. In Kuwait the prevalence of the disease was reduced to under 5% before the Gulf War. Oman reported one serious outbreak in a farm in Dhofar.

64. **Tuberculosis**  
Reported from many countries. In Egypt 135,129 bovines (cattle and buffaloes) were tested by intradermal tuberculinations with 1,247 positive results (= 0.75%).
65. **Contagious caprine pleuropneumonia**  
In Oman 270 outbreaks of the disease were reported in 1992, affecting 29,490 goats and 312 sheep.
66. **Scrapie**  
Twenty-five outbreaks were reported in Cyprus affecting 134 sheep and 3 goats which were all slaughtered, with compensation.
67. **Infectious bursal disease (Gumboro disease)**  
In 1992 an acute form of the disease was reported in Kuwait following importation of broilers from surrounding countries.
68. **Salmonellosis**  
Salmonellosis was reported in cattle in Kuwait (*Salmonella typhi* and *Salmonella dublin*) and in poultry. In Israel, in 1992, *Salmonella enteritidis* was identified for the first time in local breeding poultry stock. Some 35,000 affected birds, from six breeding flocks, two laying chick flocks, stocked offspring of a local infected breeding flock, and 29,000 hatching eggs were all destroyed. As a result, the Israeli Veterinary Authorities decided to apply to local breeding flocks the same surveillance programme which was already in force for imported birds.
69. **Other diseases**  
Many other diseases of List B were reported from the region including **infectious bovine tracheitis** (155 positive in 1,384 cattle tested in Cyprus) and **Maedi-visna** (6 positive out of 165 sera tested in Cyprus). **Varroasis** was reported in Cyprus. **Theileriosis** has become a serious problem in the Sudan as well as **pasteurellosis** in ruminants in Kuwait, etc.

#### **Presentation and discussion of Draft Recommendations for Item I**

70. The draft recommendations Nos. 1, 2.1, 2.2, and 3 were distributed to participants and a lively discussion took place. Several Delegates called for changes to be made.

Tuesday, 27 April 1993

## ITEM II

### **Problems associated with international trade and the movement of livestock, including horses, in the region**

#### **A. Livestock**

71. The Chairman of the Session presented Dr Sultan Ahmed Sultan Al-Khalaf, Rapporteur for the first part of this technical item.
72. Dr Sultan stressed that the Middle East is an important market for the international livestock trade. The transportation of several million animals annually through the region carries hazards for both the animals and the countries concerned.
73. The Rapporteur then presented an overview of the problems associated with livestock trade, based on an outline of the available recent scientific research, recommendations and references to significant reports published. These problems include disease problems (morbidity, mortality, losses during transport, etc.), and problems related to animal welfare (ventilation, temperature, stocking density, feeding, watering, loading and unloading, etc.).
74. The Rapporteur expanded on the welfare standards recommended for animal transport and gave an account of the most recent available research work on the problems associated with transport of livestock.
75. In conclusion, Dr Sultan stressed the importance of international cooperation in adhering to guidelines and legislation which currently exist in order to allow this important trade to continue whilst maintaining the highest standards of animal welfare.

#### **Discussion**

76. The Delegate of the United Arab Emirates congratulated the Rapporteur and stated that he would have preferred more details on the miscellaneous

diseases noted in the report as he felt that they could involve infections by *Salmonella* (very important), *Pasteurella*, *Clostridium*, etc.

77. Dr Sultan responded that he too would have liked to offer more information but that not many countries in the region had sent him detailed reports on this subject.
78. The Director General reminded Delegates that it was of the utmost importance that they give their technical report to the Conference Secretariat if they wanted the latter to provide them with really specific information on their region.
79. Dr Mathur then asked why the report mentions sheep almost exclusively. The Rapporteur indicated that they were, in fact, the animals which presented the greatest problem in the Middle East as bovines were less numerous and most often imported from Europe by plane.
80. Several Delegates (Jordan, the Sudan, Syria) obtained clarifications from the Rapporteur on the following points: the weight loss of animals transported; the carrying over of disease vectors; the proportion of "deaths" to "rejects"; the importance of salmonellosis and measures taken to ensure that humans are not contaminated by the disease.
81. Other Delegates (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Sudan) expressed their regret that the Rapporteur had mentioned only Australian data even though many countries import animals from the region (Somalia, the Sudan, Turkey).
82. Moreover, the Delegate of Saudi Arabia would have liked the Australian data to be compared to data from other countries importing animals from the Middle East.
83. The Rapporteur responded that his country traded, in practice, only with Australia, in which he has the utmost confidence. A long discussion followed regarding the credibility of Veterinary Services in the Middle East, which is sometimes challenged as a result of the poorness of existing diagnostic means in certain countries.
84. The Delegate of Turkey expanded the debate to other OIE regions where the credibility problem has also been raised as a result of forgery, as well

as theft of certificates and seals. He considered this question to be very important for Veterinary Services, which should discuss it thoroughly.

85. Dr Blancou recalled that during the last emergency meeting organised by the OIE on FMD (19 March 1993), Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe asked the OIE to deal with the problem of forged health certificates, which is of great concern to the veterinary profession.
86. The representatives of Egypt and the Delegate of Turkey praised the last proposal and went so far as to suggest that the signatures and seals of Veterinary Services be recorded in Member Country Embassies or at the OIE.

### **B. Horses**

87. Dr M.F. Kilani, Chairman of the Session, introduced Dr M. Ghazi Yehya and gave him the floor.
88. Dr Yehya introduced his talk by reviewing the general conditions of movement of horses in the Middle East, the states involved and the problems raised.
89. He then presented a complete inventory of the 17 equine diseases for which surveillance is carried out in 16 countries in the region, from Afghanistan to the United Arab Emirates.
90. Dr Yehya then described in detail the sanitary requirements currently in force in these 16 countries, from the wording of health certificates to the methods of serological control of different diseases. He emphasised the disparity between countries with respect to these requirements and the resultant necessity for collaboration between veterinary services in order to avoid any dissemination of equine diseases.
91. He concluded by emphasising the necessity that any horse that is moved in the Middle East be correctly identified and accompanied by a passport approved by the international equestrian authorities. The wording of this passport must be that recommended by the OIE, and he presented a model of this wording in Arabic.

### **Discussion**

92. Dr Mathur, FAO representative, congratulated the Rapporteur but raised the question as to whether it would be practicable to issue passports to all horses, and wished that passports and health certificates be separated.
93. The Rapporteur responded by clarifying that the draft passport only concerned the inter-regional movement of horses involved in competitive sporting events. The health certificate could be conserved very well at the regional or national scale.
94. The Syrian delegation asked if the Rapporteur's investigation concerns only horses or the equidae. Dr Yehya responded that data sent to the OIE included all the equidae (horses, mules, donkeys, etc.).
95. The Delegate of Saudi Arabia was concerned by the fact that some Middle Eastern countries were not included in the recent classification of countries by horse health regulation groups, published by the European Economic Community. The Rapporteur informed the Delegate that this would be done shortly.
96. The Chairman of the Session invited Delegates to join the Rapporteurs of Technical Item II to prepare recommendations. Two groups were formed. One group was made up of Dr Yehya and the Delegates of Saudi Arabia and Syria. Dr Sultan, the Delegates of Iran, Jordan and Turkey, and Dr Lightfoot made up the second group.

### **Date, venue and agenda items for the 3rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East**

97. Dr Ali Abdullah Arab, Vice-Chairman of the Conference and Chairman of the Session, asked the Delegates present if one of their countries wished to host the 3rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East.
98. The Delegate of the Sudan informed participants that, in accordance with the proposal already presented in Pendik, his government would be

willing to organise the Conference in Khartoum at the end of March of 1995. This proposal was unanimously accepted and applauded by all participants.

99. The Delegates of Jordan and Oman indicated their willingness to host respectively the 4th and 5th Conferences of the Commission in 1997 and 1999.
100. Several proposals were put forward for agenda items to be discussed in Khartoum: new information on transportation of animals (suggested by Oman); peste des petits ruminants (Iran); diagnostic services (Turkey); spongiform encephalopathy (Cyprus). The final decision will be taken during the next meeting of the Commission.

#### **Presentations by International Organisations**

101. The Chairman of the Session invited Dr Mathur, the Representative of the FAO, to inform the Conference about his organisation.
102. Dr Mathur gave a brief account of FAO's role in animal health cover in the Middle East. FAO collaborates closely with the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East and other specialist commissions.
103. In the past FAO assisted in animal health and production activities through the Regional Animal Production and Health Project (MINEADEP), and it is presently coordinating rinderpest control efforts through WARECC. A strategy is being developed for control of brucellosis on a regional basis. FAO will also assist the countries in developing a "Middle East Animal Health Commission" on the lines of such ongoing FAO Commissions in South Asia and Latin America.
104. Dr Mathur described how FAO provides assistance to countries through technical cooperation, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Trust Fund Projects, and gave a detailed account of 26 such projects being implemented in 13 countries of the region.
105. Dr Mathur concluded his remarks by saying that FAO's biggest achievement in animal health activities in the Middle East region was in



eradicating the menace of New World screwworm from the region by mobilising enormous input support and fast operation.

106. The Chairman then invited Dr A. Seimenis, Representative of the World Health Organisation, to present the activities of the WHO and the Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre (MZCC).
107. The representative of the WHO thanked the OIE for having invited him to this Conference and presented a summary of the activities that the Veterinary Public Health Unit of the WHO conducts. These activities concern mainly the combat against zoonoses and food-borne diseases. Activities concerning brucellosis, notably those conducted in collaboration with the FAO and the OIE (Amman meeting), were described in detail.
108. Dr Seimenis then gave a complete assessment of the MZCC, based in Athens (Greece), for which he was recently named Director. The Centre is mainly concerned with surveillance and control of zoonoses (brucellosis, rabies, echinococcosis/hydatidosis, salmonellosis, etc.) and food-borne diseases in the Mediterranean region.
109. Dr Seimenis then distributed a complete document of the activities of the WHO and the MZCC to participants.
110. After these presentations, the Delegate of the Sudan asked Dr Seimenis if copies of the WHO correspondence sent to the Ministry of Health could also be received by the Ministry of Agriculture. Dr Seimenis agreed to this request.

#### **Presentation and discussion of Draft Recommendations for Item II**

111. The Draft Recommendations No. 4 and No. 5 were distributed to participants and thoroughly discussed. Several Delegates called for changes to be made before adoption.

Wednesday, 28 April 1993

112. The visit to Palmyra organised by the Syrian Authorities was considered by all participants to be most interesting.

Thursday, 29 April 1993

**Adoption of the Draft Final Report  
and Recommendations for Items I and II**

113. The Conference adopted the Final Report pending certain amendments and approved Recommendations Nos. 1, 2.1, 2.2, 3, 4 and 5 (Appendices IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and IX). A motion of thanks proposed by the President of the Regional Commission was passed by the Conference (Appendix X).
114. The President of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East, Dr Ali A.M. Moussa, asked the Delegates to suggest subjects for the agenda of the meeting of the Commission to be held in May 1993. Pox disease in animals, livestock trade, and Marek's disease were proposed. The question of the election of the next bureau of the Commission will also be studied at this meeting.

**Closing Session**

115. Dr Blancou gave a brief review of the Conference work and the problems discussed. He pointed out that the OIE will do everything in its power to assist countries in the Middle East region in their national projects and thanked the Government of Syria for the warm welcome accorded to the Conference. He also thanked Dr Kari for having presided over the meeting with such efficiency and for all the work he had put into its organisation. The Director General congratulated the Chairmen of the Sessions and the Rapporteurs for their presentations. A final expression of thanks went to the Delegate of the Sudan for offering to host the next Commission meeting.

116. Dr Ali Moussa was very pleased with the success of the Conference and the participation of Member Countries, and thanked the organisers.
118. Dr Kari thanked Drs Blancou and Ali Moussa. He read to participants the proposed text of a telegram of thanks from the Conference to His Excellency Hafez Al-Asad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic.
119. After a Delegate had read a verse from the Koran, Dr Kari officially closed the conference at 11h30.

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.../Appendices



## APPENDICES

- I. List of participants
  - II. Agenda
  - III. Timetable
  - IV. Recommendation No. 1  
Brucellosis surveillance and control in the Middle East
  - V. Recommendation No. 2.1  
Foot and mouth disease surveillance and control in the Middle East
  - VI. Recommendation No. 2.2  
Foot and mouth disease surveillance and control in the Middle East
  - VII. Recommendation No. 3  
Rinderpest surveillance and control in the Middle East
  - VIII. Recommendation No. 4  
Problems associated with international trade and movement of livestock in the Middle East.
  - IX. Recommendation No. 5  
Problems associated with international trade and movement of competition horses in the Middle East.
  - X. Motion of thanks
-



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Appendix II

**2nd Conference of the  
OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East**  
*Damascus, Syria, 26 - 29 April 1993*

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**Agenda**

- I. Brucellosis, foot and mouth disease and rinderpest: surveillance and control in the region
- II. Problems associated with international trade and the movement of livestock, including horses, in the region
- III. Animal health status of Member Countries
- IV. Other matters

Date, venue and agenda items for the 3rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East

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Appendix III

**2nd Conference of the  
OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East  
Damascus, Syria, 26 - 29 April 1993**

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**Timetable**Monday, 26 April 1993

- 9.00 - 10.00 am - Opening Ceremony
- 10.00 - 10.30 am - Registration and delivery of documents
- 10.30 - 11.30 am - **Item I:** Brucellosis, foot and mouth disease and rinderpest: surveillance and control in the region (Dr A.A. Mustafa on brucellosis)
- 11.30 - 12.30 pm - **Item I:** continued (Prof. E. Istanbuluoglu on foot and mouth disease)
- 12.30 - 1.00 pm - Break
- 1.00 - 2.00 pm - **Item I:** continued (Dr S.C. Mathur on rinderpest)
- 2.00 - 3.30 pm - Lunch (Preparation of recommendations for item I)
- 3.30 - 5.00 pm - **Item III:** Animal health status of Member Countries
- 5.00 - 5.30 pm - Discussion of recommendations for item I

Tuesday, 27 April 1993

- 9.00 - 10.30 am - **Item II:** Problems associated with international trade and the movement of livestock, including horses, in the region (Dr S.A. Sultan Al-Khalaf on livestock)
- 10.30 - 10.45 am - Break

Appendix III (contd.)

- 10.45 - 11.45 pm - **Item II:** continued (Dr M. Ghazi Yehya on horses)
- 11.45 - 12.15 pm - Date, venue and agenda items for the 3rd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East (Preparation of recommendations for item II)
- 12.15 - 12.30 pm - Presentations by International or Regional Organisations, Any other business
- 12.30 - 13.30 pm - Break
- 13.30 - 14.30 pm - Discussion of recommendations for item II

Wednesday, 28 April 1993

Professional visit to Palmyra

Thursday, 29 April 1993

- 9.30 am - Adoption of the draft Final Report and recommendations, Motion of thanks
  - 11.00 am - Closing Ceremony
-

Appendix IV

## Recommendation No. 1

**Brucellosis surveillance and control in the Middle East**

## CONSIDERING

That brucellosis is well established in nearly all countries of the Middle East

The economic losses the disease is causing to the livestock sector, especially the intensive dairy industry and small ruminant production, as well as increased human brucellosis

The need for a reliable, realistic and sustainable surveillance and control strategy which would ultimately lead to the elimination of the disease from countries of the region

The recent developments in research on and knowledge of the epidemiology of the disease, diagnostic methods and models of control strategies

The role of predominant small ruminant populations as reservoirs of the disease and the epidemiological association of bovine-caprine-ovine and camel brucellosis in several countries of the region

The husbandry and veterinary resources of the region; customs and traditions of livestock owners, especially small ruminant producers, and the large numbers of livestock raised extensively

THE 2nd CONFERENCE OF THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

## RECOMMENDS THAT

1. A comprehensive survey should be carried out to determine herd and flock incidence rates, together with average individual animal incidence rates. This survey should be carried out simultaneously with the start of the recommended control strategy to be undertaken by all countries of the region.

Appendix IV (contd.)

2. Whole herd and flock vaccination of all cattle, sheep, goats, camels and buffaloes, irrespective of sex or age should be implemented simultaneously with (1) above. The vaccination should be repeated every other year for 10 years or until the incidence has been greatly reduced in the human and animal populations. The programme progress should be monitored in the 4th or 5th year by determining flock or herd incidence rates, using the most specific serological tests available.
3. When the incidence of human and animal brucellosis has been significantly reduced, alternative strategies aiming at eradication should be considered.
4. Live vaccines, namely *B. abortus* strain 19 and *B. melitensis* Rev1 for cattle and small ruminants respectively, should be used. When *B. melitensis* is confirmed to occur in cattle, Rev1 vaccine may be a better option.
5. Vaccines used in the region should be subjected to quality control by internationally recognised laboratories according to WHO/OIE standards.
6. Priority should be given to national and international research cooperation projects on live vaccines to be used on camels and buffaloes, use of *B. melitensis* Rev1 vaccine on cattle, and the impact of brucellosis on farm economy.
7. A comprehensive regional control programme based on this strategy that includes finance should be drawn up by OIE, FAO and Mediterranean Zoonoses Control Centre. This is in line with the recommendations of the FAO/WHO/OIE Regional Workshop on brucellosis (Amman, 13-18 February 1993) worked out at the request of the first Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East (Pendik, 1991).
8. Collaboration between the animal health and medical public health authorities to be established in order to achieve the targets of this control strategy.

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(Adopted by the 2nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East on 29 April 1993)

Appendix V (contd.)

## Recommendation No. 2.1

**Foot and mouth disease surveillance and control in the Middle East**

## CONSIDERING THAT

The last true panzootic of foot and mouth disease (FMD) occurred in the years 1951-1952 in Western Europe, with more than 500,000 outbreaks and economic losses estimated at 600 million USD

This situation led to the establishment in 1953 of the European Commission for the Control of FMD

A similar cooperation among the countries in the Middle East region seems to be a prerequisite for the successful control of the disease based on systematic vaccination, supported by severe and planned restrictions on animal movements from infected areas

## THE 2nd CONFERENCE OF THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

## RECOMMENDS THAT

1. The whole of the Middle East should be considered as an epizootiological unit and a regionally planned FMD control and eradication programme should be prepared taking into account the European experience.
2. Regional disease survey programmes should be put into effect and data collected should be analysed in a centre.
3. Ordinary sanitary measures should be strengthened by imposing restrictions on animal movement whenever the disease is declared.
4. Annual vaccination campaigns of ruminants should be encouraged in all areas at risk, especially in border areas, with appropriate equipment and vaccine.

Appendix V (contd.)

5. The greatest attention should be directed to vaccine quality control and the level of immunity after vaccination.
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(Adopted by the 2nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East on 29 April 1993)

Appendix VI (contd.)

## Recommendation No. 2.2

**Foot and mouth disease surveillance and control in the Middle East**

## CONSIDERING

That FMD continues to be prevalent in all Middle Eastern countries and poses a great threat to ruminant production in the region

The problems related to data collection, diagnostic services and a regional control strategy

THE 2nd CONFERENCE OF THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

## RECOMMENDS THAT

A regional commission to be known as the "Middle East FMD Commission" be established, whose objective shall be to promote national and international action with respect to control measures against foot and mouth disease in the Middle East.

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(Adopted by the 2nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East on 29 April 1993)





Appendix VII

## Recommendation No. 3

**Rinderpest surveillance and control in the Middle East**

## CONSIDERING THAT

Rinderpest eradication efforts are being made by most countries of the Middle East region as part of the West Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign Coordination (WARECC) and Pan African Rinderpest Campaign (PARC), or are planned under the proposed South Asia Rinderpest Eradication Campaign (SAREC)

Most rinderpest outbreaks in the Middle East occur through movements of animals, which are difficult to control in certain areas due to civil disturbances

The bovine populations in most countries have developed herd immunity against rinderpest following mass vaccination

Rinderpest is amenable for eradication on a regional basis in a geographically distinct group of contiguous countries

## THE 2nd CONFERENCE OF THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

## RECOMMENDS THAT

1. The regional campaigns WARECC, PARC and proposed SAREC should be continued until rinderpest is finally eradicated from these regions.
2. Iran and Turkey should be requested to join WARECC and Saudi Arabia should be invited to have direct or indirect liaison with WARECC to attain geographical contiguity.

Appendix VII (contd.)

3. Neighbouring countries should harmonise their efforts through border meetings for controlling rinderpest, if outbreaks of the disease are known to occur in these areas.
  4. All countries in the region should undertake extensive clinical and serological surveillance through searches for the disease and infection to attain, in a phased manner, provisional freedom from disease, freedom from disease and freedom from infection, according to OIE rules.
  5. All countries should enforce quarantine regulations and strengthen the surveillance of their territory in case of civil disturbances.
  6. In case there is suspicion of rinderpest in a country, that country should immediately report the incidence to International Organisations and simultaneously to all the neighbouring countries.
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(Adopted by the 2nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East on 29 April 1993)

Appendix VIII

## Recommendation No. 4

**Problems associated with international trade  
and movement of livestock in the Middle East**

## CONSIDERING THAT

Several million animals are transported to the Middle East each year and the number of animals and movement is increasing

All movements of animals are a potential means of spreading disease

All movements of animals take them out of their natural environment and subject them to stress in various forms

National Veterinary Services have the responsibility for preventing the introduction and spread of disease, ensuring quality of livestock and ensuring that the welfare of animals in transit is safeguarded

THE 2nd CONFERENCE OF THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
THE MIDDLE EAST

## RECOMMENDS THAT

1. An OIE Ad hoc Group be established to:
  - a. Identify the problems involved in the international transport of animals and suggest solutions.
  - b. Review the current international guidelines and some individual legislations on the movement of animals in international trade, with the aim of extending the *International Animal Health Code* to cover road, rail and sea transport, paying particular attention to the problems involved in long distance road journeys for animals for slaughter.

Appendix VIII (contd.)

2. Member Countries should ensure that national regulations governing the transport of live animals, which prevent the spread of diseases and also the ill-treatment of animals, are strictly applied.
3. Member Countries should ensure that animals to be exported are in good health and should ensure the appropriate monitoring of the animals during transport.
4. Countries and organisations of this and other regions are requested to cooperate in the exchange of information on the disease situation and the latest diagnostic techniques used.
5. All means of transportation of livestock (air, sea, road and rail) should be equipped so as to minimise the stress exerted upon transported animals.
6. When animals are being transported by sea and passing another country's coastline, the Veterinary Services of that country should be informed in advance by the exporting country.
7. Border quarantine stations should be established and equipped with facilities for the rapid diagnosis of some animal diseases.
8. Countries within the region are encouraged to implement uniform measures regarding the movement of animals through their borders in terms of vaccinations, laboratory testing, certification format, and the provision of names of authorised veterinary personnel.

(Adopted by the 2nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East on 29 April 1993)

Appendix IX

## Recommendation No. 5

**Problems associated with international trade  
and movement of competition horses in the Middle East**

## CONSIDERING THAT

The volume of international movement of horses for competition, leisure, breeding and trade is on the increase

It is necessary on occasions to curtail movements of horses due to the presence of infectious and contagious diseases

Delays in transit at border crossings and airports may negatively affect the health and welfare of the horses concerned

An internationally-approved uniform passport would facilitate the international movement of horses, as well as allow for adequate monitoring of the health status of the horse and of its movements

Such a passport could be used in lieu of a health certificate for movements of horses between countries or regions of the same health status

THE 2nd CONFERENCE OF THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR  
THE MIDDLE EAST

## RECOMMENDS THAT

1. The national veterinary authority in each country must carry out an equine herd survey and the results of such a survey should be available regularly to the OIE and other official veterinary authorities.
2. Regional horse authorities should formulate a standardised and internationally acceptable horse passport which takes into account all elements allowing for the unhindered international movement of horses between countries or areas of the same health status.

Appendix IX (contd.)

3. Vaccination and medication records against various infectious diseases and the results of veterinary examinations and laboratory tests should be included in the passport and shall be accepted by the Veterinary Services when signed by an approved official.
  4. The OIE prepare a list of diseases to be made notifiable by the countries using the horse passport in connection with an animal health certificate.
  5. Where health certificates are required for special epizootiological reasons, the health certificate shall follow a uniform layout and be worded in the official languages of both the exporting and importing country. Horses should be identified by reference to their passport where such a passport exists. The issue of such a certificate should be recorded in the passport.
  6. As far as the epizootiological and animal welfare situations permit, border veterinary controls and import licensing requirements should be waived in the case of horses accompanied by a valid passport.
  7. The veterinary authorities of Saudi Arabia are recommended to contact the European Economic Community (EEC) Commission and the Working Group Committee appointed by the Cyprus meeting organised by the Fédération équestre internationale (FEI) in October of 1992 to help the Kingdom to resolve the problems related to African horse sickness vaccinations.
  8. Member Countries are urged to establish import policies and relevant certification based on OIE recommendations. EEC directives could be used as a basis for consideration.
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(Adopted by the 2nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East on 29 April 1993)

Appendix X**MOTION OF THANKS**

The OIE Regional Commission for the Middle East, the Director General of the OIE, Members of Delegations, Observers and Representatives of Countries and International Organisations, wish to express their gratitude to the Honourable President and to the Government Authorities of Syria, the Host Country of the 2nd Conference of the Regional Commission, for the excellent welcome accorded to them and for all facilities made available to them during their stay in Damascus from 26 to 29 April 1993.

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