



Preface

Animal health emergency diseases



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Guest Editor

Preparedness is the new watchword for homeland security, veterinary medicine, and animal health. Globalization of economy (trade), health (plant, animal, and human), education, travel, and terrorism, have a direct impact on veterinary medicine in the 21st century. The veterinary practitioner is the point guard in preparedness and biosecurity of animal health and the well-being of the animal-based economies.

Foreign disease risks pose a continual threat in this global world of veterinary medicine. While some diseases, ie foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and swine fever, continue to be on the list of concern, they also have become major modern day worries because of the severe animal loss and economic disasters they can bring to the affected country. In addition, there are new emerging diseases such as menangle and nipah; while they have not been rampant in recent years, their presumed vector and transmission mechanisms do not assure that they cannot invade North America. Diseases such as the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) are not exotic but the diagnosis of the infection could destroy the cattle industry for this country. Other exotic diseases, like Rift Valley fever and rinderpest, are threats to animals and humans, and possess the possibility of incursion. We must be able to recognize and diagnose these diseases expediently. The change in susceptibility of organisms and vectors to preventative regimes present a real risk to the reintroduction of previously excluded diseases, such as babesiosis. Continuing education is the cornerstone of modern medical practice preparedness and entails the continual revisiting and revising of the old as well as enfolding the new and exotic.

Veterinarians must be versed in the recognition and diagnosis of these diseases that present a risk to animal and human health. An understanding of the biosecurity and surveillance programs facilitates the maintenance of the veterinary/client/patient relationship and the viability of the food animal industries. Importantly, the veterinarian must be willing and able to report any suspected exotic diseases to the appropriate authorities.

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