Documentación e información parama 2º AGO 1984

ANIMAL DISEASE REPORT
ANTILLES ZONE

JULY - SEPTEMBER, 1983
VOL. III NO.3





INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE

P.O. BOX 10-1088, GEORGETOWN, GUYANA,

Pocumentación e Información Aericola

2 2 AGO 1984

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AN OUTBREAK OF EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANAEMIA IN THE

RUPUNUNI SAVANNAHS OF GUYANA

004253

by A. Mótie

SUMMARY

An outbreak of suspected Equine Infectious Anaemia (EIA) among a population of 678 horses from 16 farms occurred in the North and South Rupununi Savannahs of Guyana. One hundred and ten horses from these farms were examined for clinical signs of the disease and the findings were compatible with EIA. From this group of 110 affected horses, 92 sera and 50 whole blood samples were collected and examined for serologic and hematologic evidence of EIA, respectively.

The Coggins agar gel immunodiffusion test (AGID) results showed that 67 (72.8%) of the 92 sera examined were positive for EIA. The mean packed cell volume (PCV) of the 50 horses studied was 17.8 percent and the mean red blood cell (RBC) count was $3.7 \times 10^6/\text{mm}^3$ with the mean white blood cell count as $4.1 \times 10^3/\text{mm}^3$.

The mortality rate among the horses on all the 16 farms was 11.1 percent, whereas, the morbidity was 14.0 percent. It was considered of interest that 78 percent of all the sero-positive horses were from the 4-9 year age group.

Since the outbreak area in the Rupununi Savannahs occurred on the border with the country, Brazil, which is known to be the enzootic area for this disease, the need for strict border control and other appropriate surveillance measures aimed at elimination of the disease is evident.

INTRODUCTION

Equine Infectious Anaemia (EIA, commonly called swamp fever) has a viral actiology and results in a chronic disease after the first acute attack (Blood, D.C. and Henderson, J.A., 1975). The disease has a world-wide occurrence and causes an anaemia and intermittent fever (Issel, C.J. and Coggins, L., 1979). Blood sucking insects such as mosquitoes, stable flies and biting flies are frequently implicated in the spread of-the disease (The Merck Veterinary Manual, 1975). The role that the native 'Caboura' fly of this region, a biting fly (Simulium spp), plays in the transmission of EIA is unknown. Contaminated clothing and equipment are also known to be important in the transmission of this disease (The Merck Veterinary Manual, 1975). Favourable climatic conditions like those in Guyana, such as a warm humid climate, important for the survival and migration of vector hosts, can play a major role in the spread of EIA (Blood, D.C. and Henderson, J.A., 1975). No previous outbreak has been reported in the Savannahs of Guyana. The purpose of this study is to report on the first known EIA outbreak that the Rupununi Savannahs has experienced which occurred during October to November, 1982.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Area of Outbreak:

The Rupununi Savannahs are classified as tropical with one dry season lasting from the month of October to March and one rainy season beginning during April and ending in September. The average temperature during the year is 30.4°C with a mean humidity of 80%. Average annual rainfall can range from 103-155 cm (Annual Climatological Data Summary, Guyana, 1974).

The horse population of the entire savannahs was estimated to be approximately 3,000 head. The average number of horses per farm studied was found to vary from 8 to 250. The savannahs are used mainly for Livestock raising, of which cattle is the most important species. Farms on which the outbreak occurred were approximately 1 to 35 km from the Brazilian northern border with Guyana.

Collection of Samples:

A ranch to ranch survey was carried out during the month of November, 1982 on which outbreaks of the disease occurred. Ten ml of blood with and without the anticoagulant ethylenediaminetetra-acetic acid (EDTA) were collected by jugular venipuncture. Sera were labelled and stored at -25°C until they could be transported under refrigeration and tested by the immuno-diffusion (AGID) (Coggins) test (Coggins, L. and Narcross, N.L., 1970). The whole blood samples were transported under refrigeration to the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, Mon Repos, Guyana for testing for Red and White cell counts and packed cell blood volumes.

RESULTS

Observations made on examining the horses showed that they were unthrifty and emaciated. They appeared droopy and had difficulty raising the head from the ground. As a result, they suffered traumatic injury to the lower lips and gums. Anorexia or decreased appetite and weakness were evident in all the affected animals examined and epiphora was a consistent sign. Horses eventually became incoordinated. A dermatitis was evident but this was attributed to an increase in the number of biting flies on farms. These consisted mainly of the stable fly (Stomoxys calcitrana) and the biting 'Caboura' fly (Simulium spp.) which is indigenous to the area. Jaundice was also observed. Only three of the horses examined showed a subcutaneous edema on the underside and legs. There was also a history of two abortions. After

4-7 days of the initial appearance of the clinical signs, horses became recumbent and thrashed about in an attempt to rise. Dypsnea was accented by a rigorously heaving thorax. Heart sounds increased in amplitude. Death usually occurred during this stage.

Of the 678 horses on 16 farms in both North and South Rupunumi Savannahs 75 (11.1%) died and 95 (14%) were clinically 111 (Table I). The number of deaths in horses on these farms ranged from none to 25 (0 - 29.2%) and the number of sick horses was from 1 to 14 (1.8 - 81.3%).

One hundred and ten horses were classified as having clinical signs compatible with EIA. Of these, 92 were tested serologically for EIA. Sixty seven (72.8%) of the 92 sera examined were positive. The data on these sera examined for EIA antibodies are summarised in Table II.

Analysis of blood value results of 50 horses with clinical signs compatible with EIA showed a mean PCV value of 21.1 percent (range 18.1 - 30.3 percent), a mean RBC value of $3.7 \times 10^6/\text{mm}^3$) and a mean WBC value of $4.1 \times 10^3/\text{mm}^3$ (range $1.3 - 7.2 \times 10^3/\text{mm}^3$). These results are presented in Table III.

When the data on the positively reacting horses were examined according to sex no marked difference was observed. Of the 92 sera tested 73.9 percent of the males and 77.3 percent of the females were immuno-reactors. When a comparison was made according to age groups, horses between the age group 4-6 years were the most severely affected (45.5%). The combined prevalence of positive seroreactors of both sexes was greatest in the age group 4-9 years (78.2%).

DISCUSSION

This study has revealed a significant EIA outbreak that the Rupununi

Savannahs has experienced and recorded here for the very first time. This is substantiated by the fact that 170 horses out of a population of 678 horses (25.1%) from 16 farms either died or exhibited clinical signs compatible with EIA after examination.

A leukopenia was observed in most clinically ill horses. All of the 95 horses from which sera were obtained demonstrated evidence of an anemia, the mean PCV and RBC values were 21.1 percent and 3.7 x 10⁶/mm³, respectively. By contrast, the normal values for horses are WBC 6.5 - 12.5/mm³ (x 10³), PCV 32 - 52 percent and RBC 6.5 - 12.5/mm³ (x 10⁶). Of this group of clinically ill animals 67 (72.8%) demonstrated EIA antibodies. This suggests that although a horse may display clinical signs of an infection caused by the EIA virus, detection of antibody depends on the stage of the infection and the sensitivity of the serological test employed. In a previous study within the same region it was reported that 136 out of 266 (60.2%) sera from apparently normal horses were positive for antibodies (Bamigboye, O. and Da Silva, R.M., 1981). Although their study did not analyse data based on age or sex, it is of interest that 78.2 percent of all horses of both sexes from the present study showed that clinical signs occurred mostly in the 4-9 year age group.

The EIA outbreak in the present study co-incided with a hot, humid dry season and an increase in the population of the stable fly, Stomoxys calcitrans, in the Savannahs. Ranchers in the extreme south savannah reported noticing these flies for the first time on their ranches only three years ago. Whether this vector has migrated north to south or was mechanically transmitted by livestock from one area to the next has not yet been established. Similarly, the role of the 'Caboura' Fly (Simulium spp) in the transmission of the EIA virus is yet to be determined. The close proximity (1-35 km) of all 16 farms on which outbreaks occurred to the Brazilian Border and the relatively free traffic of livestock across the border,

especially during the dry season, increases the necessity for greater surveillance if this disease is to be eliminated.

ACKNOWLE DGEMENT

The author wishes to acknowledge the kind assistance of R.M. Da Silva of the Laboratorio De Analises Clinicas Veterinarias, Boa Vista, Brazil, for the examination of the sera by the immunodiffusion test, to M. Patterson of the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, Guyana, for examining whole blood samples for blood values and to P.L. McKenzie, Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Guyana, for his continued support and interest in this study.

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TABLE I. Distribution of 110 Sick And Dead Horses According To Farm And Population in The Rupununi Savannahs

	Horse	Dea	d	Sick		
Farm	Population	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
NORTH SAVANNAH			-		•	
Toka	20	ND	()	. 7	(35.0)	
Point Ranch	31	3	(9.7)	3	(9.7)	
Valemi	18	4	(22.2)	4	(22.2)	
Morero	24	7	(29.2)	8	(33.3)	
Karasabai	250	20	(8.0)	ND	()	
SOUTH SAVANNAH	·				÷	
Macushi	21	4	(19.1)	6	. (28.6)	
Red Hill	28	0	()	2	(7.1)	
Crystal Springs	15	0	()	1	(6.7)	
Ambrose	ND	1	()	ND	· · · · · ·	
Shiriri	12	1	(8.3)	9.	(75.0)	
)adanawa	55	0	()	1	(1.8)	
Katoonarib	50	5	(10.0)	14	(28.0)	
Sawariwau	130	25	(19.2)	12	(9.2)	
Maka tau	16	3	(18.8)	13	(81.3)	
Aishalton	20	2	(10.0)	12	(60.0)	
Santa Cruz	8	0	()	3	(37.5)	
Cotal	678	75	(11.1)	95	(14.0)	

Table II. Prevalence of Seroreactors on Farms in the Rupunumi Savannahs as Determined by Immunodiffusion Tests.

Farm	Number	Positive	Percent	
Point Ranch	5	5	(100.0)	
Valemi	10	9	(90.0)	
Morero	11	6	(.54.6)	
Karasabai	8	3	(37.5)	
Macushi	6	6	(100.0)	
Dadanawa	16	14	(87.5)	•
Katoonarib	17	14	(82.4)	:
Sawariwau	9	8	(88.9)	•
Aishalton	10	2	(20.0)	
Total	92	67	(72.8)	
			•	

Table III. Average Blood Values of Horses in the Outbreak Area on Seven Randomly Selected Farms in the Rupununi Savannahs.

Farm	Number Animals	PCV ⁽¹⁾	RBC ⁽²⁾	WBC ⁽³⁾
Point Ranch	7	20.4	3.7	2.7
Valemi	7	18.4	3.2	4.7
Macushi	4	30.3	5.1	6.3
Dadanawa	5	17.5	3.0	7.2
Katoonarib	10	17.2	3.3	2.3
Sawariwau	9	20.1	3.4	1.8
Aishalton	8	23.8	4.3	3.6
Total	50	21.1	3.7	4.1

⁽¹⁾ Mean PCV (%)

⁽²⁾ Mean RBC/mm³ (x 10^6) (3) Mean WBC/mm³ (10^3)

RABIES

Country	Species	No. of Cases /Quarter	Cumulative Total	No. Vaccinated	Cumulative Total
Grenada	Bovine	1	4	_	35
	Canine	-	_	45	226
	Feline	. -	-	5	5
	Caprine	2	8	•	(83
	Ovine	2	2		(
Guyana	Bovine	-	5	-	
Haiti	Canine	-	-	9380	(36113*
	Feline	-	-	895	(,
Suriname	Bovine	-	5	-	-
Trinidad	Bovine	1	1.	597	2378
& Tobago	Ruffalo	-	-	- ,	19
	Caprine	-	-	195	781
	Equine	-	-	15	40
	Ovine	-	-	11	58

^{*} Cumulative Total from October 1982 - September 1983

ENZOOTIC BOVINE LEUCOSIS

Country	Cases/Quarter	Cumulative Total	No. Deaths	No. Tested	No. Pos.
Trinidad	7	7	2	6	6
& Tobago					

TETANUS

Country	Bov	ine	Capt	rine	Equ	ine	Ovine	Por	cine	Total
	Q	С	Q	C	Q	C	Q C	Q	. с	Q C
Grenada	-	-	4*	16*	- .		4* 16*	3	-	7 29
Guyana	-	-	-	-	-	. 15	- 18	-	-	- 33
Jamaica +	2	8	-	35	-	14		3	43 -	5 100
Trinidad	-	1	4	19	-	3		-	-	4 23
& Tobago										

* Grouped Data

BRUCELLOSIS		No. Tested/Quarter		No.	No.	Cumula	Cumulative		
Country	Species	Slaughter	<u>Field</u>	<u>Farms</u>	Pos.	Slaughter	<u>Field</u>	Pos.	
Barbados	Bovine	-	-	-	-	• -	6	-	
Jamaica +	Bovine	3517	1640	37	-	22424	14364	22	
St. Lucia	Bovine	-	-	-	-	-	50	-	
Suriname	Bovine	78	50·	1	-	·169	660	7	
Trinidad	Bovine	-	· 1	1	- ·	-	3	-	
& Tobago	Ovine	-	-	-	-		12	-	

TUBERCULOSIS

		No. Tested	No.	No.	Cumulat	ive
Country	Species	/Quarter	<u>Farms</u>	Positive	No. Tested	No. Pos.
Guyana	Bovine	-	-	42*	-	132*
Jamaica +	Bovine	1599	40	-	10684	4
St. Lucia	Bovine	-	-	-	50	-
Suriname	Bovine	-	-	-	1	1
Trinidad & Tobago	Bovine	-	-	-	25	-

^{*} Slaughter House Data

HAEMOPARASITES

		No.	Cases	No.	No.	No.	Cumula	tive No
Country	Species	/Qua	rter	Deaths	Tested	Farms	of Cas	es
		Ana	Piro				Ana	Piro
Barbados	Bovine	-	_	-	-	-	33	4
	Canine	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Caprine	_	-	-	-	-	15	-
	Equine	-	-		-	-	_	3
	Ovine	-	-	-	-		1	-
Grenada	Bovine	1	-	-	-	1	10	-
Guyana	Bovine	1	-	-		1	119	36
Jamaica +	Bovine	12	_	-	-	12	58	-
	Canine	_	-	-	-	-	•	20
	Caprine	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Trinidad	Bovine	231	24	6	7	••	670	35
& Tobago	Caprine	_	_	-	-	-	1	-

LEPTOSPIROSIS

•		No. Tested	No.	Cumu	Lative
Country	Species	/Quarter	Positive	No. Tested	No. Positivė
Barbados	Bovine	-	-	13	12
•	Canine	<u>-</u>	-	11	8
	Equine	-	•	13 -	13
Guyana	Bovine	72	22	958	435
	Canine	-	1	-	1.,
	Porcine	18	1	18	1
•	Human	111	27	346	86
Jamaica +	Bovine	165	130	1758	872
	Canine	29	5	118	36
	Caprine	-	-	116	. 40
	Human	33	1	357	84
	Ovine	-	-	13	1
	Porcine	1	1	. 2	- 1
Trinided	Bovine	-	-	. 2	-
& Tobago	Ovine	-		12	-

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Trinidad & Tobago	Jamaica +	Haiti	Guyana	Grenada	Barbados	Country
217° 716°	211 1680	1	100 1759	160 400	- 17	Bovine Q , C
1	1	t	26	56*	ı	Can ine
8	1	ı	101	168*	117	ine
119	151	1	4	466*	• ,	စည်
414	1348	1	376	168* 466* 1477*	22	Caprine Q C
,	ъ	ŧ	u	ŧ	1	Q
12	136	1	25	20	12	Equine Q C
1	1		2	56*	•	O P
i	•	•	7	56* 168*	w	Feline Q C
28	79	·	ر.	466*1	ı	<u> </u>
67	692	1	327	1477*	. 39	C
22	80	1		196	t	Por
37	80 1061	ı	523	553	-	cine
ł	1	•	ı	-	1	0 2
ŧ	•	1	14	-	ı	Olo
387	526	1	143	879	ŧ	Porcine Zoo Total
1238	526 4917	3734**	523 - 14 143 3132	196 553 1 1 879 2619	211 .	C

^{*} Grouped Data - Dogs & Cats
Sheep & Goats

** From October 1982 - September 1983

o Includes Buffaloes

No. of Birds Affected	No. of Parms Affected	Trinidad & Tobago	No. Vaccinated	No. of Birds Affected	No. of Farms Affected	Mortality	Affected	No. of Cases Diagnosed	Guyana	INFECTIOUS POULTRY DISEASES Country Aspergillosis
6800	v		1	1	1	w	10	—		Aspergillosis
75720	79		1	l 	1	,	1	•		CRD
0 500	_, w		ı	11000	20	1	ı	i		Coryza
30000	,		1	ŧ	ı	1	1	ı	:	Encephalomalacia
757200 500 30000 100500 1500	53		ı	•	ı	1	, 1	1		Endoparasites
1500	11		•	1	ı		ı	1		Fowl Pox
136500	15		1	1		40	50	. ا		Gumboro Disease
•	ı			14000	17	ı	1	1	•	Infectious Bronchitis
1	1		- 80	ì	1		1			Leucosis
	ı		0000	t	1	182	289	σ		Marek's Disease
3000	مبو			1	ı		i	ı		Mycoplasmosis
3000 55000 128700	6		2500000	i	1	,	1	ı		Newcastle Disease
128700	63		-	1	1	45	86	;-	•	Infectious Synovitis

Trinidad & Tobago	Jamaica +	Haiti	Guyana	Grenada	Barbados	Country
217° 716°	211 1680	ı	100 1759	160 400	- 17	Bovine
1	1	ı	26	56*	i	0 0
8	1	1	101	168*	117	Canine
119	151	1	4	168* 466* 1477*	• •	de G
414	1348	1	376	1477*	22	Caprine Q C
-	G	£	u	t		Equine Q C
8	136	ı	25	20	12	C
1	i		2	56* 168*	١,	Peline Q C
•	1	1	7	168*	w	C
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67	692	1	327	466*1477*	. 39	Q C
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22 37 -	80 1061	ŧ	523	553)	Cine
ı	ı	1	ŧ	-	1	0 2
1	1	ı	14	مسو	ŧ	ဂါ၀
387 1238	526	ı	14 143 3132	879	ŧ	Porcine Zoo Total Q C Q C
1238	526 4917	3734**	3132	2619	211	C

^{*} Grouped Data - Dogs & Cats Sheep & Goats

^{**} From October 1982 - September 1983

Includes Buffaloes

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6	9440	ı	1	ı	15	11	53)	ω	79	v	No. of Parms
												Trinidad & Tobago
2500000	- 25	80000	- 80	1	ı	•	t	ı	ı	1	ı	No. Vaccinated
i	i	1	ı	14000	1	ı	1	1	11000	J L	, 1	No. of Birds Affected
1	1	ı	ı	17		ı	ı	1	20	ı	ı	No. of Farms Affected
			,	•								Jamaica +
- 45	ı	281	i	1	40	t	, ,	1	1	1	w	Mortality
- 86	i	289	i	1	50	1	1	1	ŧ	1	10	No. of Birds Affected
i	ı	6	f		.۳	ı	ı	ı	1	ŧ	۳	No. of Cases Diagnosed
Newcastle Disease	Mycoplasmosis	Marek's Disease	Leucosis	Infectious Bronchi	Gumboro Disease	Fowl Pox	Endoparasites	Encephalomalacia	Coryza	CRD	Aspergillosis	Country DISEASES Aspergillosis

					MANGE			·	METRITIS				HASTITIS	
	Trinidad & Tobago	Jamaica+	Guyana	Grenada	Barbados	Trinidad & Tobago	Jamaica+	Guyana	Grenada	Trinidad & Tobago	Jamaicat	Guyana	Grenada	Country
	5	∞		ı	1	76	79	1	12	215	186	298	19	OB
	14	47	ı	1	ı	286	544	t	2	598	1068	564	56	g C
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	Ü	1	-	1	1	ı	18	ŀ	1	6	2	ı	26*	Q
ı	ω	1	9	1	1	vo	138	1	',	31	49	20 .	. 75*	Caprine Q C
	1	2	1	1	ŧ	1	1	1	ı	ı	ı	t	•	OB
	i	4	-	1	f	t	1	ı	ı	.1	1		•	Equine Q C
	I.	1	.4	ı	1	1	1	•	1	ı	. 1	i.	ı	Feline Q C
	1	1	1	•	1	•	-	1	•	ı	1	1	t	C
	N	ı	1	1	1	-	∞	1	1) -	1	•	26*	Q C
	w	ı	ı	2	• .	8	33	ı	1	-	j	ı	75*	000
	ij	9	ı	10	ī	ມ	7	4	12	ı	7	1	•	Porcine Q C
	33	57	50	13	•	66	70	1	12	-	43	72	3 3	Contract
	15	19	j	15	,	110	112	ı	14	222	195	298	51	q c
	53	108	60	33	4	363	786	43	14	631	1160	656	1	CIE.
													•	

Grouped Data

BLACKLEG

Country	Species	No. of	Cases	No. Va	ccinated	No. o	f Farms
		Q	C	Q	· C	Q	С
Jamaica+	Bovine	-	-	2889	15386	512	2649
Trinidad & Tobago	Bovine	-	. 2	- ' !	-	, -	-

SWINE ERYSIPELAS

Country	No. of	Cases	No. Va	ccinated	No. o	f Farms
	Q	C	Q	C	Q	C
Jamaica +	-	· _	808	3743	32	174
Trinidad & Tobago	15	75	-	-	.	-

SCREWWORMS

Country	Boy	ine	Cap	rine	Equ	ine	Ov	ine	Por	cine	To	otal
	Q	C	Q	C	Q	С	Q	C	Q	C	Q_	С
Guyana	-	940	-	43	-	27	-	63	-	-	-	1073
Trinidad & Tobago	7	28	3	8	-	2	2	3 ·	1	. 6	14	48

REPRODUCT	IVE HERI) HRALTH		9		tion	a			Vaccns	obacte				
Country	Exam		No. of	<u> </u>		ب	Failur	Other	ق _	No.	Campyl	Far	26	Exa	Bulls mined
	Q	С	Q	Q	С	Q	С	Q	С	Q	. C	Q	С	Q	C
Jamaica+	2320	11421	42	-	•	-	-	_		782	3847	29	-	-	194
Trinidad & Tobago	_. 853	-	78	116	294	79	200	20	60		•	-	-		-

Jamaica + - July Data Only

IMPORT INSPECTIONS - TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Co	un	try	of

Origin	Avian	Bovine	Canine	Caprine	Equine	Gvine	Porcin	e Turtles	Total
Barbados	-	-	7	-	-		_	-	7
Canada	18		20	-	-	-	. =	•	38
Curacao	50	-	-	. 🖦	-	₹.	-	-	5 0
England	54	-	114	-	-	,-	- .	•	168
Germany	-	-	1		-	-	-		1
Grenada	-	-	-	372	8	796	-	· -	1176
Guyana	54	-	-	-	-	-	- .	4	58
Jamaica +	-	12	2	- '	1	- ,	-	-	15
Netherlands	4489	-	5	-	_	-	-	. •	44 94
New Zealand	62	· •	-	-	- .	-	-	-	62
Puerto Rico	35	-	-		-	-	•	•	35
St. Vincent	-	-	1	43	1	237	2 .	•	284
USA	55	-	-	<u>-</u>	10	-	-	2000	2065
Venezuela	7	-	1	-	-	••	-	•	1
Potal	4817	12	151	415	20	1033	2	2004	8454

GUYANA

Canada - Cats (2)

Juba - Dogs (3)

ISA - Cats (2)

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