

## **The persistence of Rift Valley fever in the Jazan region of Saudi Arabia**

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### **Summary**

A survey was conducted in the Jazan region of Saudi Arabia to investigate the presence of Rift Valley fever (RVF) in sheep and goats, by clinical identification of suspected herds and detection of immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibodies to RVF virus. The level of herd immunity was identified by detecting immunoglobulin G (IgG) antibodies. Rift Valley fever was diagnosed in six out of eight districts included in the survey. Twenty-two animals from 17 herds tested positive for the presence of IgM antibodies against RVF in these districts. The infection rate ranged from 0.12% in the Sabya district to 1.04% in the Jizan district. The level of herd immunity ranged from 22.2% in Jizan to 39.3% in the Alarda district. It can be concluded that the presence of IgM antibodies in clinically suspected herds suggests persistent RVF infection in the Jazan region. Thus, RVF control programmes should be continued to prevent the recurrence of outbreaks in the region and the possible further spread of infection to other regions of Saudi Arabia.

### **Keywords**

Epidemiological surveillance – Jazan – Middle East – Persistence – Rift Valley fever – Saudi Arabia – Serological survey.