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## **PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE ANIMAL DISEASE REPORTING SYSTEM IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA 1995-2005**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The planning and implementation of disease control and eradication program depend on efficient disease information system. Disease reporting can serve as an early warning mechanism against disease outbreak and spread. The problems and factors affecting the animal disease reporting system of Oyo state were diagnosed and identified by the use of open-ended interview and retrospective survey of records of outbreaks as kept in the offices of the three stages of disease reporting for the state. The major impediments confronting the animal disease reporting system's operations of the state include inadequate qualified veterinary personnel, lack of communication facilities and poor diagnostic facilities. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were made on improving the veterinary services; provision of communication facilities; farmers' awareness; diagnostic capabilities; education and enforcement of existing veterinary laws, to improve the system's operation for optimum effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Problems, Animal Disease Reporting, Oyo state and Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

Disease reporting is that branch of epidemiology, which entails the collection, analysis and storage of morbidity and mortality and the transmission of such information for action. Such information is meant to provide necessary and timely information to permit the institution of appropriate control measures as well as encouraging uniformity in data reporting so that data within a country and between nations can be compared (1). The first step in the control of animal disease is its rapid identification followed by prompt reporting to the appropriate authorities within the area of jurisdiction. The reports on epidemiological situations are to be standardized as to content, form, place and frequency to make data comparable and easier to process and assuring the uniformity (5). Every data reported should have a specific importance and usefulness. The planning and implementation of disease control and eradication program depend on efficient animal disease information system. Disease reporting can serve as an early warning mechanism against disease outbreak and spread (4). An efficient disease reporting is basic requirement for the success of nation's veterinary services (3).

### **Materials and Methods**

Six major animal diseases of the list "A" notifiable diseases, namely: African swine fever, Foot and mouth disease, Contagious bovine pleuro pneumonia, Avian influenza, Rinderpest and Peste des petits ruminantis were considered and used as term of reference for this study.

Two types of surveys: retrospective and open-ended interviews were utilized for this study. The retrospective survey entailed analysis of the data sourced from the records for outbreaks of the

specified diseases of this study for the period 1995 to 2005, as kept in the state monitoring office, the relevant zonal office of the Pan-African Program for the Control of Epizootics (PACE), the national monitoring and recording office of the Federal Department of Livestock (FDL) and National Animal Disease Information System (NADIS) of the PACE headquarters, Abuja. Open-ended interviews were utilized to source and assess information not provided in the records as well as clarification of grey areas in the system's operations.

### **Observation and Result**

Many problems were identified to affect the effectiveness and efficiency of the system both at the local government and state level, which are classified as direct or indirect.

- **Lack Of Awareness Amongst The Farmers**  
In some of the rural (remote) areas, there is poor awareness of the need and value of disease reporting among the majority of the farmers/livestock owners. This is further compounded by long distance of the veterinary clinics from their farms. This situation is a major contributory factor to late and under reporting of outbreaks.
- **Inadequate Personnel**  
There is shortage of qualified veterinary personnel and auxiliary staff in the state. The few qualified personnel are unevenly distributed to the local government areas and most of the state clinics lack schedule officer, who monitors disease reporting.
- **Inadequate Diagnostic Facilities**  
The veterinary clinics within the state are only equipped to carry out basic diagnosis. Complex and confirmatory diagnosis are carried out by diagnostic laboratories in University of Ibadan and NVRI, Vom.
- **Inadequate Sources Of Data**  
The University of Ibadan, Veterinary Teaching Hospital, state and private veterinary clinics are the primary sources of animal disease reporting data in Oyo state. Sources of data should include quarantine stations, livestock check points and markets and abattoir. It is only the abattoir officers that sometime reports disease incidence. The inability of these other units to report or notify disease incidence greatly hinders the local and international disease control efforts.
- **Problems Of Communication**  
Before the launch of the PACE project in 2001, communication of data was a major problem. This is because of the lack of functional communication facilities. Outbreaks were only reported when there was means of getting to the headquarters, except when there is severe mortality and morbidity. Reasons for this could be attributed to political or economical factors. At that time, many of the local government areas of the state suffered this problem.
- **Problems Of Transportation**  
At the time of this study, there was no specified vehicle used for surveillance and monitoring for effective reporting of disease outbreaks. Previously, there used to be vehicles for this purpose. However, presently they are all worn out.
- **Non-Enforcement Of Relevant Veterinary Legislation**  
The staff of the veterinary division neither abides by the existing veterinary laws nor do they encourage their enforcement. Provisions for the inspection of international trade of animals and notification of any infected/suspected diseased animal to the prescribed veterinary officer in the local government area is clearly stated in section 1 (3) and 8 (1) of the animal disease control decree of 1988. On the contrary, in Oyo state, the control

post and checkpoints are basically revenue generations and marketing centers. This is highly detrimental to the state and the country as a whole, because there is great risk of inflow of new diseases into the state (country) through their boundaries.

### Discussion

Effective disease reporting has been described as a determinant factor for measuring the success of any nation's veterinary services and animal disease control program (3, 2). With the results of this study, it is pertinent to say that Oyo state has not been an actively reporting state of animal diseases (outbreaks). In this light, it cannot contribute to the nation's and international animal disease reporting system. This situation is detrimental to the public health and preventive medicine of both human and animal population, socio-economic sector, food security and safety of the nation.

### Recommendation

- The manpower should be increased to eliminate inadequacies. Veterinarians must be in-charge of all units in the state's veterinary services for effective handling of expected responsibilities. There is need to actively integrate the private veterinarians in order to enhance the efficiency of veterinary services in the state.
- For effective discharge of the duties of the system in the state, there is serious need to adequately equip all the sections with the modern communication facilities.
- Early warning of outbreaks of potentially serious animal disease (Transboundary Animal Diseases) is only likely to occur and be complete if farmers are prompt to seek help from Veterinarians.
- It is highly important for the state to establish and maintain a veterinary diagnostic laboratory that is equipped and competent to undertake a broad range of standard techniques in pathology, virology, bacteriology and serology to the standard where the isolation and preliminary characterization of etiological agents for emergency animal disease can be attempted.
- Education of the existing veterinary laws must be carried out to ensure the awareness of the laws by the staff. Law enforcement agencies in collaboration with the veterinary services department of the state and the veterinary council of Nigeria must ensure the enforcement and sustenance of all veterinary laws in the state.

### Conclusion

The operations of the animal disease reporting system in Oyo state are found to be ineffective in many aspects. Despite that, the record sourced in the course of this study gave an idea of the prevalence and incidence of animal diseases in the state. This indicates that the desired and optimum effectiveness as well as benefits of the Animal Disease Reporting System can be attained if all recommended modifications and upgrading is established and sustained.

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