

Short Communication

THE PREVALENCE OF FASCIOLIASIS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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INTRODUCTION

Fascioliasis presents a hazard to domestic animals in many parts of the world. The studies reported here were designed to investigate for the first time, the prevalence of this disease in domestic animals in the different regions of Saudi Arabia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey covered abattoirs in those areas which have a high animal and human population—the rest of the country is very sparsely populated. Thus in the northern region the survey took place at Tabuk, Hayil and Madena; in the southern region at Gizan, Nagran and Abha; in the central region at Riyadh the national capital, Brayda and Eneiza; in the eastern region at Dammam, Dhahran, Khobar and Hafuf; and in the western region at Mecca, Geddah and Tayif.

At each visit to an abattoir the liver of each animal in the abattoir was carefully dissected and examined for the presence of *Fasciola* within 1 h of slaughter. Specimens were stained and mounted for morphological studies.

RESULTS

The results are recorded in Tables I and II.

Both *Fasciola hepatica* and *F. gigantica* were found in all the regions surveyed.

DISCUSSION

The higher incidence of fascioliasis in cattle and camels in the eastern region is probably because rainfall is higher and irrigation schemes are more developed in that area, so that habitats for the intermediate snail hosts are more plentiful.

The survey showed that the prevalence of fascioliasis in imported animals is usually higher than in animals reared in Saudi Arabia.

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TABLE I
Prevalence of fascioliasis in the regions surveyed

Species	Northern Region		Southern Region		Central Region		Eastern Region		Western Region	
	No. of animals slaughtered	% infected	No. of animals slaughtered	% infected	No. of animals slaughtered	% infected	No. of animals slaughtered	% infected	No. of animals slaughtered	% infected
Cattle	53	5.86	2,050	3.00	1,200	1.20	692	20.00	2,160	4.80
Sheep and goats	22,240	2.40	7,483	0.18	200,459	0.04	2,010	2.10	27,000	2.00
Camels	1,342	Nil	Nil	Nil	28,136	0.04	2,400	10.43	22,050	2.05

TABLE II
Prevalence of fascioliasis in imported animals

Species	Source	No. of animals slaughtered	% infected
Cattle	Australia	1,110	0.50
	India	10,610	41.31
	Somalia	30,320	18.01
	Sudan	5,492	22.35
Sheep and goats	Australia	23,750	6.97
	Iraq	12,521	3.39
	Sudan	95,530	3.13
Camels	Sudan	1,205	14.22