

DAIRY COWS AS BIO-INDICATORS OF ANAPLASMA PHAGOCYTOPHILUM PREVALENCE, TICK-BORNE FEVER AGENT, IN FRANCE.

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Cows Tick-Borne Fever is still often under-diagnosed in Brittany and in the whole country, especially sporadic or sub-acute stage. On the other hand, the acute disease can be suspected when it occurs as contagious pneumopathies in ticks biotopes. This multispecific “flu-like syndrom” regularly associated with persistent temperature and mild prostration, is, mainly, a “dairy cows pathology”. Locomotion signs (e.g. “cold” oedema on distal limb parts) are pathognomonic, when present. The financial impacts can be high, if the diagnosis is late. An epidemiological survey in Côtes d’Armor extended in 2001 to the whole of Brittany has been initiated in 1999 by a vet rural practitioners society (URGTV Bretagne) and, from 2002 to nowadays (June 2005), to the rest of France, through the SNGTV network. Undiagnosed in France before 1991, widely unknown up to 1998, the agent and his effects are now identified in 64 of the 96 Departments : 38 in cows, 22 in horses, 2 in roe deers and 2 in humans (June 2005). More than 400 sites of infection had noticed, from 1 to 40 cows stuck down in each.

A large information of the practitioners, a good knowledge of the clinical diagnosis confirmed by laboratory or an *a posteriori* diagnosis, associated to private and public support, permitted to improve our knowledge of the disease. Our first aim is to decrease the economical loss to agriculture and, accordingly improve Animal’s Health. Therefore we must inform and propose relevant sanitary directives and actions and share broadly our new experience and knowledge. Classified by the French Sanitary Authorities as a “Minor Zoonosis”, another goal is, then, Public Health and Safety by convincing the authorities of the presence and impact of *A. phagocytophilum* in France. In the same time, as often, cows -and other animals, domestic or wild- can be useful biological tools, bio-indicators for Public Health and Safety.