LUMPY SKIN DISEASE

SUMMARY

Lumpy skin disease (LSD, knopvelsiekte) is a pox disease of cattle characterised by fever, nodules on the skin, mucous membranes and internal organs, emaciation, enlarged lymph nodes, oedema of the skin, and sometimes death. The disease is of economic importance because it causes reduced production, particularly in dairy herds. It also causes damage to the hide. LSD is caused by strains of capripoxvirus that are antigenically indistinguishable from strains causing sheep pox and goat pox. However, LSD has a partially different geographical distribution from sheep and goat pox, suggesting that cattle strains of capripoxvirus do not infect and transmit between sheep and goats.

Transmission of LSD virus is thought to be predominantly by insects, natural contact transmission in the absence of insect vectors being inefficient. Lumpy skin disease occurs in most African countries. The most recent outbreaks outside Africa occurred in the Middle East in 2006 and 2007 and in Mauritius in 2008. Until 1988 LSD was confined to sub-Saharan Africa, but then spread into Egypt. There have been only two laboratory-confirmed outbreaks of LSD outside Africa: in Israel in 1989, which was eliminated by slaughter of all infected and in-contact cattle, and vaccination, and in Reunion in 1993. An outbreak was reported in Bahrain in 1993 but was not confirmed by virus isolation. There was an outbreak in 2000 in cattle imported into Mauritius; the diagnosis was confirmed by electron microscopy.

Identification of the agent: Laboratory confirmation of LSD is most rapid using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) method specific for capripoxviruses or by the demonstration of typical capripoxvirus in biopsy material or desiccated crusts using the transmission electron microscope in combination with a clinical history of a generalised nodular skin disease and enlarged superficial lymph glands in cattle. Capripoxvirus is distinct from parapoxvirus, which causes bovine papular stomatitis and pseudocowpox, but cannot be distinguished morphologically from cowpox and vaccinia virus, both orthopoxvirus infections of cattle. Neither of these, however, causes generalised infection and both are uncommon in cattle. LSD virus will grow in tissue culture of bovine, ovine or caprine origin, although maximum yield is obtained using lamb testis or bovine dermis cells. Capripoxvirus causes a characteristic cytopathic effect and intracytoplasmic inclusion bodies, and is distinct from the virus of pseudo-LSD (Allerton — herpes mammilitis), which is a herpesvirus producing syncytia and intranuclear inclusion bodies. The antigen of capripoxvirus can be demonstrated in tissue culture using immunoperoxidase or immunofluorescent staining and the virus can be neutralised using specific antisera.

An antigen-detection enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) using a polyclonal detection serum raised against a recombinant immunodominant antigen of capripoxvirus and an antibody-detecting ELISA based on the purified whole virus have been described. Genome detection using capripoxvirus-specific primers for the fusion protein gene and attachment protein gene has also been reported and several conventional and real-time PCR methods have been published for use on both blood, and tissue and semen samples.

Serological tests: The virus neutralisation test is the most specific serological test, but because immunity to LSD infection is predominantly cell mediated, the test is not sufficiently sensitive to identify animals that have had contact with LSD virus and developed only low levels of neutralising antibody. The agar gel immunodiffusion test and indirect immunofluorescent antibody test are less specific due to cross-reactions with antibody to other poxviruses. Western blotting using the reaction between the P32 antigen of LSD virus with test sera is both sensitive and specific, but is difficult and expensive to carry out. The use of this or another appropriate antigen, expressed by a suitable vector, in an ELISA offers the prospect of an acceptable and standardised serological test.
Requirements for vaccines [and diagnostic biologicals]: All strains of capripoxvirus examined so far, whether derived from cattle, sheep or goats, share immunising antigens. Attenuated cattle strains, and strains derived from sheep and goats have been used as live vaccines.

A. INTRODUCTION

Lumpy skin disease (LSD) was first seen in Zambia in 1929, spreading into Botswana by 1943 (Haig, 1957[16]), and then into South Africa, where it affected over eight million cattle causing major economic loss. In 1957 it entered Kenya, associated with an outbreak of sheep pox (Weiss, 1968[28]). In 1970 LSD spread north into the Sudan, by 1974 it had spread west as far as Nigeria, and in 1977 was reported from Mauritania, Mali, Ghana and Liberia. Another epizootic of LSD between 1981 and 1986 affected Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Somalia and the Cameroon, with reported mortality rates in affected cattle of 20%. However, the true extent of this epizootic was not clear, and it probably affected a considerable area of central Africa. Lumpy skin disease outbreaks occur at regular intervals in Africa. In 2006 [2000/2001, another large outbreak spread across sub-Saharan Africa (11). In 1988 LSD [became established] in Egypt and [in 1989 a single outbreak was reported] in Israel after 17 years (Brenner et al., 2006). LSD must be considered to have the potential to become established outside Africa. The principle method of transmission is mechanical by arthropod vector (Carn & Kitching, 1995a; Chihota et al., 2001; Kitching & Mellor, 1986[6–9]).

The severity of clinical signs of LSD (Neethling virus infection or knopvelsiekte), depends on the strain of capripoxvirus and the breed of host. Bos taurus is more susceptible to clinical disease than Bos indicus; the Asian buffalo has also been reported to be susceptible. Within Bos taurus, the fine-skinned Channel Island breeds develop more severe disease, with lactating cows appearing to be the most at risk. However, even among groups of cattle of the same breed kept together under the same conditions, there is a large variation in the clinical signs presented, ranging from subclinical infection to death (Carn & Kitching, 1995b[2]). There may be failure of the virus to infect the whole group, depending on the virulence of the virus isolate, immunological status of the host and vector prevalence.

[In the acutely infected animal, there is an initial pyrexia, which may exceed 41°C and persist for 1 week.] The incubation period under field conditions has not been reported, but following inoculation is 6–9 days until the onset of fever. [A rhinitis and conjunctivitis develop, and in] In the acutely infected animal, there is an initial pyrexia, which may exceed 41°C and persist for 1 week. All the superficial lymph nodes become enlarged. In lactating cattle there is a marked reduction in milk yield. Nodules of 2–5 cm in diameter develop over the body, particularly on the head, neck, udder and perineum between 7 and 19 days after virus inoculation (Coetzer, 2004[4]). These nodules involve the dermis and epidermis and may initially exude serum, but over the following 2 weeks [may become] necrotic plugs may appear penetrating the full thickness of the hide. [All the superficial lymph nodes are enlarged, the limbs may be oedematous and the animal is reluctant to move. The nodules on the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, mouth, rectum, udder and genitalia quickly ulcerate, and by then all secretions contain LSD virus.] On the appearance of clinical signs, the discharge from the eyes and nose becomes mucopurulent, and keratitis may develop. Nodules may also develop in the mucous membranes of the mouth [subcutis and muscle, in the trachea] and alimentary tract, particularly the abomasum and in the trachea and the lungs, resulting in primary and secondary pneumonia. The nodules on the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, mouth, rectum, udder and genitalia quickly ulcerate, and by then all secretions, ocular and nasal discharge and saliva contain LSD virus. The limbs may be oedematous and the animal is reluctant to move. Pregnant cattle may abort, and there are reports of aborted fetuses being covered in nodules. Bulls may become permanently or temporarily infertile and the virus can be excreted in the semen for prolonged periods (Irons et al., 2005[48]). Recovery from severe infection is slow; the animal is emaciated, may have pneumonia and mastitis, and the necrotic plugs of skin, which may have been subject to fly strike, are shed leaving deep holes in the hide (Prozesky & Barnard, 1982[23]).

LSD virus is not transmissible to humans.

B. DIAGNOSTIC TECHNIQUES

1. Identification of the agent

  * Sample collection, submission and preparation

Material for virus isolation and antigen detection should be collected by biopsy or at post-mortem from skin nodules, lung lesions or lymph nodes. Samples for virus isolation and antigen-detection enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) should be collected within the first week of the occurrence of clinical signs, before the development of neutralising antibodies (Davies, 1991; Davies et al., 1971[12–13]). Samples for genome detection by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) may be collected when neutralising antibody is present. Following the first appearance of the skin lesions, the virus can be isolated for up to 35 days and viral nucleic acid can be
demonstrated by PCR for up to 3 months (Tuppurainen et al., 2005; Weiss, 1968[26,27]). Buffy coat from blood collected into heparin or EDTA (ethylene diamine tetra-acetic acid) during the viraemic stage of LSD (before generalisation of lesions or within 4 days of generalisation), can also be used for virus isolation. Samples for histology should include tissue from the surrounding area and should be placed immediately following collection into ten times the sample volume of 10% formalin.

Tissues in formalin have no special transportation requirements. Blood samples with anticoagulant for virus isolation from the buffy coat should be placed immediately on ice and processed as soon as possible. In practice, the samples may be kept at 4°C for up to 2 days prior to processing, but should not be frozen or kept at ambient temperatures. Tissues for virus isolation and antigen detection should be kept at 4°C, on ice or at -20°C. If it is necessary to transport samples over long distances without refrigeration, the medium should contain 10% glycerol; the samples should be of sufficient size that the transport medium does not penetrate the central part of the biopsy, which should be used for virus isolation.

Material for histology should be prepared by standard techniques and stained with haematoxylin and eosin (H&E) (Burdin, 1959[2]). Lesion material for virus isolation and antigen detection is minced using sterile scalpel blade (scissors) and forceps and then ground with a pestle in a sterile pestle and mortar with sterile sand and an equal volume of sterile phosphate buffered saline (PBS) containing sodium penicillin (1000 international units [IU]/ml), streptomycin sulphate (1 mg/ml), mycostatin (100 IU/ml) or fungizone (2.5 µg/ml) and neomycin (200 IU/ml). The suspension is freeze–thawed three times and then partially clarified by centrifugation using a bench centrifuge at 600 g for 10 minutes. Buffy coats may be prepared from unclotted blood by centrifugation at 600 g for 15 minutes, and the buffy coat carefully removed into 5 ml of cold double-distilled water using a sterile Pasteur pipette. After 30 seconds, 5 ml of cold double-strength growth medium is added and mixed. The mixture is centrifuged at 600 g for 15 minutes, the supernatant is discarded and the cell pellet is suspended in 5 ml growth medium, such as PBS and covered with 10 ml of a suitable medium, such as GMEM, containing antibiotics and 2% fetal calf serum. If available, tissue culture tubes containing LT cells and a flying cover-slip, or tissue culture microscope slides, are also infected.

**a) Virus isolation on cell culture**

LSD virus will grow in tissue culture of bovine, ovine or caprine origin, although primary or secondary culture of lamb testis (LT) cells are considered to be the most susceptible, particularly those derived from a breed of wool sheep. Sample material prepared as above, i.e. 1 ml of clarified supernatant or buffy coat, is inoculated on to a 25 cm² culture flask at 37°C and allowed to absorb for 1 hour. The culture is then washed with warm PBS and covered with 10 ml of a suitable medium, such as GMEM, containing antibiotics and 2% fetal calf serum. If available, tissue culture tubes containing LT cells and a flying cover-slip, or tissue culture microscope slides, are also infected.

The flasks are examined daily for 14 days for evidence of cytopathic effect (CPE). The medium is replaced if it appears to be cloudy. Infected cells develop a characteristic CPE consisting of retraction of the cell membrane from surrounding cells, and eventually rounding of cells and margination of the nuclear chromatin. At first only small areas of CPE can be seen, sometimes as soon as 2 days after infection; over the following 4–6 days these expand to involve the whole cell sheet. If no CPE is apparent by day 14, the culture should be freeze–thawed three times, and clarified supernatant inoculated on to fresh LT culture. At the first sign of CPE in the flasks, or earlier if a number of infected cover-slips are being used, a cover-slip should be removed, fixed in acetone and stained using H&E. Eosinophilic intracytoplasmic inclusion bodies, which are variable in size but up to half the size of the nucleus and surrounded by a clear halo, are diagnostic for poxvirus infection. The CPE can be prevented or delayed by inclusion in the medium of specific anti-LSD serum. The herpesvirus of pseudo-LSD produces a Cowdry type A intranuclear inclusion body. Formation of syncytia is not a feature of capripoxvirus infection, unlike the herpesvirus causing pseudo-LSD. Strains of capripoxvirus that cause LSD have been adapted to grow on the chorioallantoic membrane of embryonated chicken eggs and African green monkey kidney (Vero) cells. This is not recommended for primary isolation.

**b) Electron microscopy**

Before centrifugation, material from the original biopsy suspension is prepared for examination under the transmission electron microscope by floating a 400-mesh hexagon electron microscope grid, with pileiform-carbon substrate activated by glow discharge in pentyamine vapour, on to a drop of the suspension placed on parafilm or a wax plate. After 1 minute, the grid is transferred to a drop of Tris/EDTA buffer, pH 7.8, for 20 seconds and then to a drop of 1% phosphotungstic acid, pH 7.2, for 10 seconds. The grid is drained using filter paper, air-dried and placed in the electron microscope. The capripox virion is brick shaped, covered in short tubular elements and measures approximately 290 × 270 nm. A host-cell-derived membrane may surround some of the virions, and as many as possible should be examined to confirm their appearance (Kitching & Smale, 1986[24]).
Fluorescent antibody tests

Capripoxvirus antigen can also be identified on the infected cover-slips or tissue culture slides using fluorescent antibody tests. Cover-slips or slides should be washed and air-dried and fixed in cold acetone for 10 minutes. The indirect test using immune cattle sera is subject to high background colour and nonspecific reactions. However, a direct conjugate can be prepared from sera from convalescent cattle (or from sheep or goats convalescing from capripox) or from rabbits hyperimmunised with purified capripoxvirus. Uninfected tissue culture should be included as a negative control as cross-reactions, due to antibodies to cell culture, can cause problems.

d) Agar gel immunodiffusion

An agar gel immunodiffusion (AGID) test has been used for detecting the precipitating antigen of capripoxvirus, but has the disadvantage that this antigen is shared by parapoxvirus. Agarose (1%) is prepared in borate buffer, pH 8.6, dissolved by heating, and 2 ml is poured on to a glass microscope slide (76 × 26 mm). When the agar has solidified, wells are cut to give a six-well rosette around a central well. Each well is 5 mm in diameter, with a distance of 7 mm between the middle of the central well and the middle of each peripheral well. The wells are filled as follows: 18 µl of the 10% lesion suspension is added to three of the peripheral wells, alternately with positive control antigen, and 18 µl of positive capripoxvirus control serum is added to the central well. The slides are placed in a humid chamber at room temperature for 48 hours, and examined for visible precipitation lines using a light box. The test material is positive if a precipitation line develops with the control serum that is confluent with that produced by the positive control antigen.

To prepare antigen for the AGID, one of two 125 cm² flasks of LT cells is infected with capripoxvirus, and harvested when there is 90% CPE (8–12 days). The flask is freeze–thawed twice, and the cells are shaken free of the flask. The contents are centrifuged at 4000 g for 15 minutes, most of the supernatant is decanted and stored, and the pellet is resuspended in the remaining supernatant. The cells should be lysed using an ultrasonic probe for approximately 60 seconds. This homogenate is then centrifuged as before, the resulting supernatant being pooled with that already collected. The pooled supernatant is then added to an equal volume of saturated ammonium sulphate at pH 7.4 and left at 4°C for 1 hour. This solution is centrifuged at 4000 g for 15 minutes, and the precipitate is collected and resuspended in a small volume of 0.8% saline for use in the AGID test. The uninfected flask is processed in an identical manner throughout, to produce a tissue culture control antigen (Kitching et al., 1986[20]).

e) Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay

Following the cloning of the highly antigenic capripoxvirus structural protein P32, it is possible to use expressed recombinant antigen for the production of diagnostic reagents, including the raising of P32 monospecific polyclonal antiserum and the production of monoclonal antibodies (MAbs) (Carn, 1995[4]). [These reagents have facilitated the development of a highly specific ELISA.] Using hyperimmune rabbit antiserum, raised by inoculation of rabbits with purified capripoxvirus, capripoxvirus antigen from biopsy suspensions or tissue culture supernatant can be trapped on an ELISA plate. The presence of the antigen can then be indicated using guinea-pig serum, raised against the group-specific structural protein P32, commercial horseradish-peroxidase-conjugated rabbit anti-guinea-pig immunoglobulin and a chromogen/substrate solution.

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)

This PCR method (The PCR) is a fast and sensitive method for the detection of capripoxvirus genome in EDTA blood, biopsy, semen or tissue culture samples. However, it does not allow differentiation between LSD and sheep and goat pox viruses. Primers for the viral attachment protein gene (Ireland & Binepal, 1996[12]) are specific for all the strains within the genus Capripoxivirus. By the use of sequence and phylogenetic analysis; strains of virus can be identified[This work should be done in a Reference Laboratory]. Virus isolates can also be characterised by comparing the genome fragments generated by HincII digestion of their purified DNA (Black et al., 1986; Kitching et al., 1989[4, 10]). This technique has identified differences between isolates from the different species, but these are not consistent
and there is evidence of the movement of strains between species and recombination between strains in the field (Gershon & Black, 1987; Gershon et al., 1989[4,15]).

The LSD virus genome contains 156 putative genes (Tulman et al., 2001[25]). An example of a published PCR method is described below (Tuppurainen et al., 2005[26]).

**[Polymerase chain reaction]**

- **Test procedure**
  - i) Freeze and thaw 200 µl of blood in EDTA, semen or tissue culture supernatant and suspend in 100 µl [1000 µl] of lysis buffer containing 5 M guanidine thiocyanate, 50 mM potassium chloride, 10 mM Tris/HCl (pH 8); and 0.5 ml of 100°C for 10 minutes [to inactivate the enzyme]. Add 300 µl of a mixture of phenol:chloroform: isoamylalcohol (25:24:1 [v/v]) to the [blood] samples in 1:1 ratio [and 1000 µl to tissue samples]. Vortex and incubate at room temperature for 10 minutes. Centrifuge the samples at 16,060 g for 15 minutes at 4°C. Carefully collect the upper, aqueous phase and transfer into a clean 2.0 ml tube. Add two volumes of ice cold ethanol (100%) and 1/10 of 3 M sodium acetate. Place the samples at −20°C for 1 hour. Centrifuge again at 16,060 g [40,000 g] for 15 minutes at 4°C and discard the supernatant. Wash the pellets with ice cold ethanol (100 µl) and centrifuge at 16,060 g [40,000 g] for 1 minute at 4°C. Discard the supernatant and dry the pellets thoroughly. Suspend the pellets in 30 µl of nuclease-free water (Tuppurainen et al., 2005[26]).
  - ii) Add 2 µl [1 [µl] of proteinase K (20 mg/ml [Invitrogen]) to blood samples and 10 µl of proteinase K to tissue samples. Incubate [with a dry block heater] at 56°C for 2 hours or over night, followed by heating at 100°C for 10 minutes [to inactivate the enzyme]. Add 300 µl of a mixture of phenol:chloroform: isooamylalcohol (25:24:1 [v/v]) to the [blood] samples in 1:1 ratio [and 1000 µl to tissue samples]. Vortex and incubate at room temperature for 10 minutes. Centrifuge the samples at 16,060 g for 15 minutes at 4°C. Carefully collect the upper, aqueous phase and transfer into a clean 2.0 ml tube. Add two volumes of ice cold ethanol (100%) and 1/10 of 3 M sodium acetate. Place the samples at −20°C for 1 hour. Centrifuge again at 16,060 g [40,000 g] for 15 minutes at 4°C and discard the supernatant. Wash the pellets with ice cold ethanol (100 µl) and centrifuge at 16,060 g [40,000 g] for 1 minute at 4°C. Discard the supernatant and dry the pellets thoroughly. Suspend the pellets in 30 µl of nuclease-free water (Tuppurainen et al., 2005[26]).
  - iii) Add 2 µl [1 µl] of proteinase K (20 mg/ml [Invitrogen]) to blood samples and 10 µl of proteinase K to tissue samples. Incubate [with a dry block heater] at 56°C for 2 hours or over night, followed by heating at 100°C for 10 minutes [to inactivate the enzyme]. Add 300 µl of a mixture of phenol:chloroform: isoamylalcohol (25:24:1 [v/v]) to the [blood] samples in 1:1 ratio [and 1000 µl to tissue samples]. Vortex and incubate at room temperature for 10 minutes. Centrifuge the samples at 16,060 g for 15 minutes at 4°C. Carefully collect the upper, aqueous phase and transfer into a clean 2.0 ml tube. Add two volumes of ice cold ethanol (100%) and 1/10 of 3 M sodium acetate. Place the samples at −20°C for 1 hour. Centrifuge again at 16,060 g [40,000 g] for 15 minutes at 4°C and discard the supernatant. Wash the pellets with ice cold ethanol (100 µl) and centrifuge at 16,060 g [40,000 g] for 1 minute at 4°C. Discard the supernatant and dry the pellets thoroughly. Suspend the pellets in 30 µl of nuclease-free water (Tuppurainen et al., 2005[26]).
  - iv) The primers were developed from the viral attachment protein encoding gene and are described by Ireland & Binepal (1998[9]). The size of the amplicon is 192 bp (Ireland & Binepal, 1998). The primers have following gene sequences:
    - Forward primer 5’-TCC-GAG-CTC-TTT-CCT-GAT-TTT-TCT-TAC-TAT-3’
  - v) DNA amplification is carried out in a final volume of 50 µl containing: 5 µl of 10 × PCR buffer, 1.5 µl of MgCl₂ (50 mM), 1 µl of dNTP (10 mM), 1 µl of forward primer, 1 µl of reverse primer, 1 µl of DNA template, 0.5 µl of Taq DNA polymerase and 39 µl of nuclease-free water. The volume of DNA template required may vary and the volume of nuclease-free water must be adjusted to the final volume of 50 µl.
  - vi) Incubate the samples in a thermal cycler: first cycle: 2 minutes at 95°C [initial denaturation step], second cycle: 45 seconds at 95°C, 50 seconds at 50°C and 1 minute at 72°C. Repeat the second cycle 34 times. Last cycle: 2 minutes at 72°C [final elongation step].
  - vii) Mix 10 µl of each sample with dye solution and load on 1.5% agarose gel in TAE [Tris/acetate buffer containing EDTA]. Load a parallel lane with a 100 bp DNA-marker ladder. Separate the products at 100 V for 40–60 [30-40] minutes and visualise.

2. Serological tests

All the viruses in the Capripoxvirus genus share a common major antigen for neutralising antibodies and it is not possible to distinguish strains of capripoxvirus from cattle, sheep or goats using serological techniques.

a) Virus neutralisation

A test serum can either be titrated against a constant titre of capripoxvirus (100 TCID₅₀ [50% tissue culture infective dose]) or a standard virus strain can be titrated against a constant dilution of test serum in order to calculate a neutralisation index. Because of the variable sensitivity of tissue culture to capripoxvirus, and the consequent difficulty of ensuring the use of 100 TCID₅₀, the neutralisation index is the preferred method. The test is described using 96-well flat-bottomed tissue-culture grade microtitre plates, but it can be performed equally well in tissue culture tubes with the appropriate changes to the volumes used, although it is more difficult to read an end-point in tubes. The use of Vero cells in the virus neutralisation test has been reported to give more consistent results.

• Test procedure
Test sera including a negative and a positive control are diluted 1/5 in Eagle's/HEPES (N-2-hydroxyethylpiperazine, N-2-ethanesulphonic acid) and inactivated at 56°C for 30 minutes.

Next, 50 µl of the first inactivated serum is added to columns 1 and 2, rows A to H of the microtitre plate. The second serum is placed in columns 3 and 4, the third in columns 5 and 6, the positive control serum is placed in columns 7 and 8, the negative control serum is placed in columns 9 and 10, and 50 µl of Eagle's/HEPES without serum is placed in columns 11 and 12 and to all wells in row H.

A reference strain of capripoxvirus, usually a vaccine strain known to grow well in tissue culture, with a titre of over log<sub>10</sub> 6 TCID<sub>50</sub> per ml is diluted in Eagle's/HEPES in bijoux bottles to give a log dilution series of log<sub>10</sub> 5.0; 4.0; 3.5; 3.0; 2.5; 2.0; 1.5 TCID<sub>50</sub> per ml (equivalent to log<sub>10</sub> 3.7; 2.7; 2.2; 1.7; 1.2; 0.7; 0.2 TCID<sub>50</sub> per 50 µl).

Starting with row G and the most diluted virus preparation, 50 µl of virus is added to each well in that row. This is repeated with each virus dilution, the highest titre virus dilution being placed in row A.

The plates are covered and incubated for 1 hour at 37°C.

LT cells are prepared from pregrown monolayers as a suspension of 10<sup>5</sup> cells/ml in Eagle's medium containing antibiotics and 2% fetal calf serum. Following incubation of the microtitre plates, 100 µl of cell suspension is added to all the wells, except wells H11 and H12, which serve as control wells for the medium. The remaining wells of row H are cell and serum controls.

The microtitre plates are covered and incubated at 37°C for 9 days.

Using an inverted microscope, the monolayers are examined daily from day 4 for evidence of CPE. There should be no CPE in the cells of row H. Using the 0240 KSGP vaccine strain of capripoxvirus, the final reading is taken on day 9, and the titre of virus in each duplicate titration is calculated according to Kärber (1931). If left longer, there is invariably a ‘breakthrough’ of virus in which virus that was at first neutralised appears to disassociate from the antibody.

Interpretation of the results: The neutralisation index is the log titre difference between the titre of the virus in the negative serum and in the test serum. An index of ≥1.5 is positive. The test can be made more sensitive if serum from the same animal is examined before and after infection. Because the immunity to capripox is predominantly cell mediated, a negative result, particularly following vaccination in which the response is necessarily mild, does not imply that the animal from which the serum was taken is not protected.

A constant-virus/varying-serum method has been described using serum dilutions in the range 1/5 to 1/500 and fetal calf muscle cells. Because these cells have a lower sensitivity to capripoxvirus than LT cells, the problem of virus ‘breakthrough’ is overcome.

Antibodies to capripoxvirus can be detected from day 2 after the onset of clinical signs. These remain detectable for about 7 months, but a significant rise in titre is usually seen between days 21 and 42.

**b) Agar gel immunodiffusion**

The AGID test cannot be recommended as a serological test for the diagnosis of LSD because of the cross-reaction with antibody to bovine papular stomatitis and pseudocowpox virus. A consequence of this cross-reaction is false-positive results. Lack of sensitivity of the test can also lead to false-negative results.

**c) Indirect fluorescent antibody test**

Capripoxvirus-infected tissue culture grown on flying cover-slips or tissue culture microscope slides can be used for the indirect fluorescent antibody test. Uninfected tissue culture control, and positive and negative control sera, should be included in the test. The infected and control cultures are fixed in acetone at –20°C for 10 minutes and stored at 4°C. Dilutions of test sera are made in PBS, starting at 1/20 or 1/40, and positives are identified using an anti-bovine gamma-globulin conjugated with fluorescein isothiocyanate.

Antibody titres may exceed 1/1000 after infection. Sera may be screened at 1/50 and 1/500. Cross-reactions can occur with orf (contagious pustular dermatitis of sheep virus), bovine papular stomatitis and perhaps other poxviruses.

**d) Western blot analysis**

Western blotting of test sera against capripoxvirus-infected cell lysate provides a sensitive and specific system for the detection of antibody to capripoxvirus structural proteins, although the test is expensive and difficult to carry out.

Capripoxvirus-infected LT cells should be harvested when 90% CPE is seen, freeze–thawed three times, and the cellular debris pelleted by centrifugation. The supernatant should be decanted, and the proteins should be separated by SDS/PAGE (sodium dodecyl sulphate/polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis). A vertical discontinuous gel system, using a stacking gel made up of acrylamide 5% in Tris (125 mM), pH 6.8, and
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SDS (0.1%), and a resolving gel made up of acrylamide (10–12.5%) in Tris (560 mM), pH 8.7, and SDS (0.1%), is recommended for use with a glycine running buffer containing Tris (250 mM), glycine (2 M), and SDS (0.1%). Samples of supernatant should be prepared by boiling for 5 minutes with an appropriate lysis buffer prior to loading. Alternatively, purified virus or recombinant antigens may replace tissue-culture-derived antigen.

Molecular weight markers should be run concurrently with the protein samples. The separated proteins in the SDS/PAGE gel should be transferred electrophoretically to a nitrocellulose membrane (NCM). After transfer, the NCM is rinsed thoroughly in PBS and blocked in 3% bovine serum albumin (BSA) in PBS, or 5% skimmed milk powder in PBS, on a rotating shaker at 4°C overnight. The NCM can then be separated into strips by employing a commercial apparatus to allow the concurrent testing of multiple serum samples, or may be cut into strips and each strip incubated separately thereafter. The NCM is washed thoroughly with five changes of PBS for 5 minutes on a rotating shaker, and then incubated at room temperature on the shaker for 1.5 hours, with the appropriate serum at a dilution of 1/50 in blocking buffer (3% BSA and 0.05% Tween 20 in PBS; or 5% milk powder and 0.05% Tween 20 in PBS). The membrane is again thoroughly washed and incubated (in blocking buffer) with anti-species immunoglobulin horseradish-peroxidase-conjugated immunoglobulins at a dilution determined by titration. After further incubation at room temperature for 1.5 hours, the membrane is washed and a solution of diaminobenzidin tetrahydrochloride (10 mg in 50 ml of 50 mm Tris/HCl, pH 7.5, and 20 µl of 30% [v/v] hydrogen peroxide) is added. This is then incubated for approximately 3–7 minutes at room temperature on a shaker with constant observation, and the reaction is stopped by washing in PBS before excessive background colour is seen. A positive and negative control serum should be used on each occasion.

Positive test samples and the positive control will produce a pattern consistent with reaction to proteins of molecular weights 67, 32, 26, 19 and 17 kDa – the major structural proteins of capripoxvirus – whereas negative serum samples will not react with this pattern. Hyperimmune serum prepared against parapoxvirus (bovine papular stomatitis, pseudocowpox) will react with some of the capripoxvirus proteins, but not the 32 kDa protein that is specific for capripoxvirus.

e) Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay

A capripoxvirus antibody ELISA has been developed using the inactivated whole sheep pox virus (Babiuk et al., 2009) and the expressed structural protein P32 of capripoxvirus and MAbs raised against the P32 protein (Carn et al., 1994[9]) as an antigen.

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR VACCINES [AND DIAGNOSTIC BIOLOGICALS]

1. Background

a) Rationale and intended use of the product

Four [two] live attenuated strains of capripoxvirus have been used as vaccines specifically for the control of LSD (Brenner et al., 2006; Capstick & Coakley, 1961; Carn, 1993[4]): a strain of Kenyan sheep and goat pox virus passaged 18 times in LT or fetal calf muscle cells, Yugoslavian RM 65 sheep pox strain, Romanian sheep pox strain and lumpy skin disease virus strain from South Africa, passaged 60 times in lamb kidney cells and 20 times on the chorioallantoic membrane of embryonated chicken eggs. All strains of capripoxvirus examined so far, whether of bovine, ovine or caprine origin, share a major neutralising site, so that animals recovered from infection with one strain are resistant to infection with any other strain. Consequently, it is possible to protect cattle against LSD using strains of capripoxvirus derived from sheep or goats (Coakley & Capstick, 1961[40]). In 1989 and 1990 the Romanian strain of sheep pox vaccine was used to help control the LSD outbreak in Egypt (Michael et al., 1996[22]). However, it is essential to carry out controlled trials, particularly using the most susceptible breeds in peak lactation, prior to introducing a vaccine strain not usually used in cattle. Protection following vaccination is probably lifelong, although as immunity wanes, local capripoxvirus replication will occur at the site of inoculation, but the virus will not become generalised. All strains of capripoxvirus used routinely as vaccines can produce a large local reaction at the site of inoculation in Bos taurus breeds (Davies, 1991[4]), which some stock owners find unacceptable. This has discouraged the use of vaccine even though the consequences of an outbreak of LSD are invariably more severe.

2. Outline of production and minimum requirements for conventional vaccines

General requirements set for the facilities used for the production of vaccines and for the documentation and record keeping throughout the whole manufacturing process are described in Chapter 1.1.8 of this Terrestrial Manual. The documentation should include standard operating procedures (SOP) for the method of manufacture and each step for the testing of cells and reagents used in the process, each batches and the final product.
A new generation of capripox vaccines is being developed that uses the capripoxvirus genome as a vector for the genes of other ruminant pathogens, for instance genes of rinderpest and peste des petits ruminants viruses. The recombinant vaccine will provide protection against LSD and rinderpest in a single vaccination (24, 27).

1. Seed management

a) Characteristics of the seed

A strain of capripoxvirus used for vaccine production must be accompanied by a history describing its origin and tissue culture or animal passage. It must be safe to use in all breeds of cattle for which it is intended, including pregnant animals. It must also be non-transmissible, remain attenuated after further tissue culture passage, and provide complete protection against challenge with virulent field strains for a minimum of 1 year. A quantity of master seed vaccine virus should be prepared and stored in order to provide a consistent working seed for regular vaccine production.

i) Biological characteristics

Each seed strain of capripoxvirus used for vaccine production must be accompanied by records clearly and accurately describing its origin, isolation and tissue culture or animal passage history. A quantity of master seed vaccine virus should be prepared, frozen or desiccated and stored at low temperatures such as -40°C or -80°C in order to provide a consistent working seed for regular vaccine production. The virus should be cultured in primary or secondary LT cells of wool sheep origin for maximum yield. Vero cells may also be used.

Each seed strain must be safe to use in all breeds of cattle for which it is intended, including young and pregnant animals. It must also be non-transmissible, remain attenuated after further tissue culture passage, and provide complete protection against challenge with virulent field strains for a minimum of 1 year. It must produce a minimum clinical reaction in all breeds of cattle when given by the recommended route.

The necessary safety and potency tests are described in Section C.2.b.iv Final product batch tests.

i) Quality criteria (sterility, purity, freedom from extraneous agents)

Each master seed must be tested to ensure its identity and shown to be free from adventitious viruses, in particular pestiviruses, such as border disease and bovine viral diarrhoea virus, and free from contamination with bacteria, fungi and/or mycoplasmas.

The general procedures for sterility/purity tests are described in Chapter 1.1.9

b) Method of manufacture [culture]

The method of manufacture should be documented as the Outline of Production.

[Vaccine seed should be lyophilised and stored in 2 ml vials at -20°C. It may be stored wet at -20°C, but when wet, it is more stable at -70°C or lower. The virus should be cultured in primary or secondary LT cells of wool sheep origin for maximum yield. Vero cells may also be used.

Seed lots must be shown to be:

i) Pure: Free from adventitious viruses, in particular pestiviruses, such as border disease and bovine viral diarrhoea virus, and free from contamination with bacteria, fungi and/or mycoplasmas.

ii) Safe: Produce minimum clinical reaction in all breeds of cattle when given by the recommended route.

iii) Efficacious: Stimulate complete immunity to LSD in all breeds of cattle for at least 1 year.

The necessary tests are described in Section C.4.

2. Method of manufacture

i) Procedure

Vaccine batches are produced on fresh monolayers of secondary LT cells. A vial of seed virus is reconstituted with GMEM or other appropriate medium and inoculated on to an LT monolayer that has been previously washed with warm PBS, and allowed to absorb for 15 minutes at 37°C before being overlaid with additional GMEM. After 4–6 days, there will be extensive (50–70%) CPE. The culture is freeze–thawed three times, and the suspension is removed and centrifuged at 600 g for 20 minutes. Before harvest, the culture should be examined for any evidence of nonspecific CPE, medium cloudiness or change in medium pH. A
second passage may be required to produce sufficient virus for a production batch (to produce enough for
10³ doses, the yield from five 175 cm² flasks is required).

The procedure is repeated and the harvests from individually numbered flasks are each mixed separately
with an equal volume of sterile, chilled 5% lactalbumin hydrolysate and 10% sucrose, and transferred to
individually numbered bottles for storage at –20°C. Prior to storage, 0.2 ml is removed from each bottle for
sterility control. An additional 0.2 ml is removed; 2 ml pools composed of 0.2 ml samples taken from ten
bottles are used for virus titration. A written record of all the procedures must be kept for all vaccine batches.

ii) Requirements for substrates and media

The specification and source of all ingredients used in the manufacturing procedure should be documented
and the freedom of extraneous agents: bacteria, fungi, mycoplasma and viruses should be tested. The
detailed testing procedure is described in the Chapter 1.1.9. The use of antibiotics must meet the
requirements of the licensing authority.

iii)[3] In-process control

Cells: Records of the source of the master cell stocks should be maintained. The highest and lowest
passage numbers of the cells that can be used for vaccine production must be indicated in the outline of the
production. In case primary lamb testis cells are used, cells should be obtained from the testis of a healthy
young lamb from a scrapie-free flock of a wool sheep breed. During cultivation, cells must be observed for
any evidence of CPE, and for normal morphology (predominantly fibroblastic). They can usually be passaged
successfully up to ten times. When used for vaccine production, uninfected control cultures should be grown
in parallel and maintained for at least one additional passage for further observation. They should be
checked for the presence of noncytopathic strains of pestiviruses such as bovine viral diarrhoea or border
disease viruses by immunofluorescence or immunoperoxidase or by other appropriate techniques. If
possible, master cell stocks [cells] should be prepared and screened prior to vaccine production, and a stock
stored in sterile DMSO (dimethyl sulphoxide) in liquid nitrogen (1–2 ml aliquots containing 20 × 10⁶ cells/ml).

[Serum used in the growth medium must be free from antibody to capripoxvirus and contamination with pestivirus.]

Serum: Bovine serum used in the growth or maintenance medium must be tested free from antibody to
capripoxvirus and contamination with pestivirus or any other viruses, extraneous bacteria, mycoplasma or
fungi.

Medium must be tested free from antibody to capripoxvirus and contamination with pestivirus or any other
extraneous viruses, bacteria, mycoplasma or fungi.

Virus: Seed virus and final vaccine must be titrated in tissue culture tubes or microtitre plates. The minimum
recommended field dose of the Kenyan and South African vaccines is log₁₀ 3.5 TCID₅₀, although the
minimum protective dose is log₁₀ 2.0 TCID₅₀. Capripoxvirus is highly susceptible to inactivation by sunlight,
and allowance should be made for loss of activity in the field. The recommended field dose of the Romanian
sheep pox vaccine for cattle is log₁₀ 2.5 sheep infective doses (SID₅₀), and the recommended dose for cattle
of the RM65-adapted strain of Romanian sheep pox vaccine is log₁₀ 3 TCID₅₀ (Coakley & Capstick,
1961[14]). Vaccine samples must be examined for the presence of adventitious viruses including cytopathic
and noncytopathic strains of pestivirus, and should be mixed with a high-titre capripoxvirus-immune serum
that has previously tested negative for antibodies to pestiviruses to prevent the vaccine virus itself interfering
with the test. The vaccine can be held at –20°C until all sterility tests and titrations have been completed, at
which time it should be freeze-dried. A further titration is carried out on five randomly chosen vials of the
freeze-dried preparation to confirm the titre.

[4 Batch control]

iv) Final product batch tests

[a] Sterility/purity

Tests for sterility and freedom from contamination with biological materials may be found in Chapter
1.1.9.

[b] Safety and efficacy

The efficacy and safety studies should be demonstrated by statistically valid vaccination–challenge
studies using seronegative young European dairy breed cattle. Six cattle of known susceptibility to LSD
are placed in a high containment level large animal unit and serum samples are collected. Five
randomly chosen vials of the freeze-dried vaccine are reconstituted in sterile PBS and pooled.

Overdose studies: two cattle are inoculated with 100 times the field dose of the vaccine, the remaining
c vaccine is diluted with sterile PBS and two cattle are inoculated subcutaneously with the recommended

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field dose. The remaining two cattle are control animals. The animals are clinically examined daily and rectal temperatures are recorded. On day 21 after vaccination, the six animals are again serum sampled and challenged with a known virulent capripoxvirus strain by intradermal inoculation. The clinical response is recorded during the following 14 days. Control animals should develop the typical clinical signs of LSD, whereas there should be no local or systemic reaction in the vaccines other than a delayed-type hypersensitivity reaction, which should disappear after 4 days. Serum samples are again collected on day 30 after vaccination. The day 21 serum samples are examined for seroconversion to selected viral diseases that could have contaminated the vaccine, and the days 0 and 30 samples are compared to confirm the absence of antibody to pestivirus. Because of the variable response in cattle to LSD challenge, generalised disease may not be seen in the control animals, although there should be a large local reaction.

The fully reconstituted vaccine is also tested in mice and guinea-pigs. Two guinea-pigs are inoculated intramuscularly with 0.5 ml into the hind leg, and two guinea-pigs and six mice are inoculated intraperitoneally with 0.5 ml and 0.1 ml, respectively. Two guinea-pigs and four mice are kept as uninoculated controls. The animals are observed for 3 weeks, humanely killed and a post-mortem examination is carried out. There should be no evidence of pathology caused by the vaccine.

[c) Potency tests]

\[ Batch potency \]

Potency tests in cattle must be undertaken for vaccine strains of capripoxvirus if the minimum immunising dose is not known. This is usually carried out by comparing the titre of a virulent challenge virus on the flanks of vaccinated and control animals. Following vaccination, the flanks of at least three animals and three controls are shaved of hair. Log_{10} dilutions of the challenge virus are prepared in sterile PBS and six dilutions are inoculated intradermally (0.1 ml per inoculum) along the length of the flank; four replicates of each dilution are inoculated down the flank. An oedematous swelling will develop at possibly all 24 inoculation sites on the control animals, although preferably there will be little or no reaction at the four sites of the most dilute inocula. The vaccinated animals should develop an initial hypersensitivity reaction at sites of inoculation within 24 hours, which should quickly subside. Small areas of necrosis may develop at the inoculation site of the most concentrated challenge virus. The titre of the challenge virus is calculated for the vaccinated and control animals; a difference of log titre >log_{10} 2.5 is taken as evidence of protection.

[d) Duration of immunity

Immunity to virulent field virus following vaccination lasts 2 years with the Kenyan strain and 3 years with the South African vaccine, and protection against generalised infection following intradermal challenge is effectively lifelong. The duration of immunity produced by other vaccine strains should be ascertained in cattle by undertaking controlled trials in an environment in which there is no possibility of field strains of capripoxvirus confusing the results.

Stability

Properly freeze-dried preparations of LSD vaccine, particularly those that include a protectant, such as sucrose and lactalbumin hydrolysate, are stable for over 25 years when stored at –20°C and for 2–4 years when stored at 4°C. There is evidence that they are stable at higher temperatures, but no long-term controlled experiments have been reported.

[f) Preservatives

No preservatives other than a protectant, such as sucrose and lactalbumin hydrolysate, are required for the freeze-dried preparation.

[g) Precautions (hazards)

There are no precautions other than those described above for sterility and freedom from adventitious agents. Strains of LSD-virus are not a hazard to human health.

5. Tests on the final product

a) Safety

Safety tests should be carried out on the final product of each batch as described in Section C.4.b.

b) Potency

Once the potency of the particular strain being used for vaccine production has been determined in terms of minimum dose required to provide immunity, it is not necessary to repeat this on the final product of each batch, provided the titre of virus present has been ascertained.

c) Requirements for authorisation

i) Safety requirements
**Target and non-target animal safety**

The vaccine must be safe to use in all breeds of cattle for which it is intended, including young and pregnant animals. It must also be non-transmissible, remain attenuated after further tissue culture passage.

Safety tests should be carried out on the final product of each batch as described in Section C.2.b.iv Final product batch tests.

The safety of the vaccine in non-target animals must have been demonstrated using mice and guinea-pigs as described in Section C.2.b.iv Final product batch tests. There should be no evidence of pathology caused by the vaccine.

**Reversion-to-virulence for attenuated/live vaccines**

The selected final vaccine should not revert to virulence during a further passages in target animals.

**Environmental consideration**

Attenuated vaccine should not be able to perpetuate autonomously in a cattle population. Strains of LSD virus are not a hazard to human health.

**Efficacy requirements**

**For animal production**

The efficacy of the vaccine must be demonstrated in vaccination challenge experiment under laboratory conditions. Six cattle of known susceptibility to LSD are placed in a high containment level large animal unit. Five randomly chosen vials of the freeze-dried vaccine are reconstituted in sterile PBS and pooled.

Four cattle are vaccinated with recommended dose using the recommended route. The remaining two cattle are control animals. On day 21 after vaccination, the six animals are challenged with a known virulent capripoxvirus strain by intradermal inoculation. The clinical response is recorded during the following 14 days. Control animals should develop the typical clinical signs of LSD, whereas there should be no local or systemic reaction in the vaccinates other than a delayed-type hypersensitivity reaction, which should disappear after 4 days. Because of the variable response in cattle to LSD challenge, generalised disease may not be seen in the control animals, although there should be a large local reaction.

Once the potency of the particular strain being used for vaccine production has been determined in terms of minimum dose required to provide immunity, it is not necessary to repeat this on the final product of each batch, provided the titre of virus present has been ascertained.

**For control and eradication**

Vaccination is the only effective way to control lumpy skin disease outbreaks in endemic countries. Unfortunately, currently no marker vaccines allowing the differentiation of infected from vaccinated animals are available.

Immunity to virulent field virus following vaccination lasts 2 years with the Kenyan strain and 3 years with the South African vaccine, and protection against generalised infection following intradermal challenge is effectively lifelong. The duration of immunity produced by other vaccine strains should be ascertained in cattle by undertaking controlled trials in an environment in which there is no possibility of field strains of capripoxvirus confusing the results.

**Stability**

All vaccines are initially given a shelf life of 24 months before expiry. Real-time stability studies are then conducted to confirm the appropriateness of the expiry date. Multiple batches of the vaccine should be re-titrated periodically throughout the shelf-life to determine the vaccine variability.

Properly freeze-dried preparations of LSD vaccine, particularly those that include a protectant, such as sucrose and lactalbumin hydrolysate, are stable for over 25 years when stored at –20°C and for 2–4 years when stored at 4°C. There is evidence that they are stable at higher temperatures, but no long-term controlled experiments have been reported. No preservatives other than a protectant, such as sucrose and lactalbumin hydrolysate, are required for the freeze-dried preparation.

**3. Vaccines based on biotechnology**

A new generation of capripox vaccines is being developed that uses the capripoxvirus genome as a vector for the genes of other ruminant pathogens, for instance genes of rinderpest and peste des petits ruminants viruses. The recombinant vaccine will provide protection against LSD and rinderpest in a single vaccination (Romero et al., 1993; Wallace & Viljoen, 2005[24]).
Chapter 2.4.14. - Lumpy skin disease

a) Vaccines available and their advantages

Currently, no new generation recombinant capripox vaccines are commercially available.

b) Special requirements for biotechnology vaccines, if any

Not applicable at present.

REFERENCES


Chapter 2.4.14. - Lumpy skin disease


* * *

**NB:** There are OIE Reference Laboratories for Lumpy skin disease (see Table in Part 3 of this *Terrestrial Manual* or consult the OIE Web site for the most up-to-date list: www.oie.int).