Reviewer's report

Title: Brucella spp. infection in large ruminants in an endemic area of Egypt: cross-sectional study investigating seroprevalence, risk factors and livestock owner's knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAPs).

Version: 2 Date: 31 January 2011

Reviewer: Henk Lucas Smits

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript by Holt and coworkers report on the seroprevalence, risk factors and livestock owner’s KAPs of brucellosis in a village in Egypt. The high seroprevalence of brucellosis in livestock in Egypt is in line with previous studies reporting on brucellosis in cattle, goat and sheep. Whereas knowledge of the seroprevalence of brucellosis in cattle is important the study lacks to report on the seroprevalence of brucellosis in sheep and goat in the same villages as keeping of small ruminants was found as the major risk factor. Related to this the study would have been more complete if the organism would have been isolated and typed to confirm the species.

Interviewing livestock owners revealed that most owners would ask the local veterinarian for advice if brucellosis is suspected in cattle or when aborting. As the owners would not separate the aborting (or suspected) animal but rather sell the animal it would be of interest to know the advice given by the veterinarian.

To better appreciate the seroprevalence rates reported it would be important to know the cut-off value use in ELISA. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 may be deleted and the reported values in the text suffice.

The authors report on the importance of waste water and water sources as a potential mode of transmission. Did the authors consider dogs as they might become infected after contact with abortion materials.

Presentation of Table 3 in the format of a figure could be considered.

B. melitensis is more infectious than B. abortus but is it also more pathogenic (stated in the background section)?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interest.