TITLE: MACROSCOPIC INJURIES IN BOVINE CARCASSES POSITIVE OR INCONCLUSIVE IN TUBERCULINIC TEST

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ABSTRACT

Tuberculosis is a zoonosis caused by bacteria of the genus *Mycobacterium* sp., transmitted to humans by direct contact with infected animals or ingestion of contaminated animal products. Thus, *ante-mortem* and *post-mortem* inspection of animals during slaughter is an important tool to control the disease. However, one of the challenges of sanitary inspection is the existence of cattle with initial infections of tuberculosis, without macroscopic lesions, and that did not undergo allergic tests. This is a phenomenon that can often lead to the release of carcasses for consumption contaminated with the microorganism. Therefore, the percentage of positive or inconclusive reactive bovine animals in the tuberculin skin allergic diagnosis that showed lesions suggestive of tuberculosis was investigated. 254 positive or inconclusive reactive animals for tuberculosis were inspected by the cutaneous allergic test. The post-mortem inspection of the carcasses followed the rules of the Regulation of Industrial and Sanitary Inspection of Products of Animal Origin. This visual inspection was performed through macroscopic examination, evaluating lymph nodes and bovine organs with lesions suggestive of tuberculosis, followed by deep longitudinal incision of the lymph nodes. Among the 254 inspected, positive or inconclusive carcasses for tuberculin, 81.5% had macroscopic lesions suggestive of tuberculosis. The percentage of cattle that did not present suggestive lesions was 18.5%. It should be emphasized that the appearance of lesions compatible with tuberculosis is mainly related to the stage of evolution of the disease. Even carcasses that do not present lesions suggestive of the disease still represent a source of tuberculosis contamination, since the bacterium is circulating in the lymphatic system and in the bloodstream. Therefore, inspection of these carcasses and identification of tuberculosis-compatible lesions is a key factor in ensuring the safety of animal products and preserving the health of the population. Even so, the implementation of the National Program for the Control and Eradication of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis is essential for the prevention of this zoonosis.

Keywords: tuberculosis, positive and inconclusive reagents, slaughter, suggestive lesions