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### **TECHNICAL MANUSCRIPT 561**

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# THE AGGLUTININ RESPONSE OF RABBITS TO COMBINED <u>PASTEURELLA</u> <u>TULARENSIS</u> AND <u>BRUCELLA</u> <u>ABORTUS</u> VACCINATION

John E. Nutter

OCTOBER 1969



### DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY Fort Detrick Frederick, Maryland

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY Fort Detrick Frederick, Maryland 21701

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TECHNICAL MANUSCRIPT 561

### THE ACCLUTININ RESPONSE OF RABBITS TO COMBINED PASTEURELLA TULARENSIS AND BRUCELLA ABORTUS VACCINATION

John E. Nutter

Medical Bacteriology Division BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES LABORATORIES

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October 1969

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In conducting the research described in this report, the investigator adhered to the "Guide for Laboratory Animal Facilities and Care," as promulgated by the Committee on the Guide for Laboratory Animal Facilities and Care of the Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources, National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The excellent technical assistance of John D. Harrison and Harry U. Tachiki is gratefully acknowledged.

#### ABSTRACT

A schedule was developed for the simultaneous production of a <u>Pasteurella tularensis</u> and <u>Brucella abortus</u> antiserum in rabbits. Three doses of  $10^8$  viable <u>P. tularensis</u> LVS organisms were given intravenously at weekly intervals. One day prior to the final dose of <u>P. tularensis</u>, the rabbits received  $10^9$  viable cells of <u>B. abortus</u> strain 19 intravenously. The use of live vaccines, administered in this sequence, resulted in high agglutinin titers within 3 weeks. The maximal agglutinin titer to either organism was observed 1 week after the final injection.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION\*

A single antiserum capable of reacting with more than one bacterium would facilitate serological testing and studies. A procedure was developed for the production of anti-<u>Pasteurella tularensis</u> antisera in rabbits, employing the attenuated live vaccine strain (LVS).<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the present study was to determine the feasibility of producing a bivalent antiserum by combined vaccination of rabbits with viable <u>Brucella abortus</u> strain 19 and <u>P. tularensis</u> LVS.

#### 11. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### A. ANIMALS

New Zealand white rabbits weighing between 1.8 and 2.5 kg were used. Except where noted, all experimental groups contained five animals.

#### **B. VACCINES**

The production and administration of viable tularemia vaccine have been reported.<sup>1</sup> Desiccated <u>Brucella abortus</u> strain 19 vaccine was obtained from the Haver-Lockhart Laboratories, Kansas City, Mo., and reconstituted according to the manufacturer's directions. The reconstituted vaccine was diluted in saline to obtain the desired concentrations. The number of viable bacteria in either vaccine was estimated by plating appropriate dilutions of the vaccines on glucose-cysteine-blood agar.<sup>3</sup>

#### C. AGGLUTINATION TECHNIQUES

Anti-<u>P. tularensis</u> agglutinin titers were determined using a formalinized suspension of the virulent strain SCHU organisms.<sup>3</sup> <u>Brucella</u> tube agglutinating antigen was obtained from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the same technique was used to assess <u>Brucella</u> agglutinins.

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#### III. RESULTS

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#### A. INTRAVENOUS VACCINATION WITH VIABLE B. ABORTUS STRAIN 19

The <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> agglutinin titers of sera from three groups of rabbits administered various intravenous (IV) doses of viable <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> strain 19 organisms are presented in Table 1. Three of five rabbits survived the initial administration of  $10^{10}$  organisms but only one of these survived revaccination at this dose; all rabbits survived the procedure when doses of  $10^9$  or  $10^8$  organisms were used.

	Mean Reciprocal Ag of <u>B</u> , <u>abc</u>	glutinin Titer Af <u>ertus</u> Strain 19 Or	ter Indicated Dose ganisms <sup>a</sup> /
Day	$1 \times 10^{10}$	$1 \times 10^9$	1 x 10 <sup>8</sup>
7	2,560	2,560	1,280
14	5,120	1,280	640
21, ,	2,560	1,280	640
28 <u>5</u> /	2,560	640	320
35	5,120	1,280	1,280
42	2,560	1,280	1,280
49	2,560	1,280	640
56	2,560	640	320

 TABLE 1.
 EFFECT OF INTRAVENOUS DOSE OF BRUCELLA ABORTUS

 STRAIN 19 VACCINE ON AGGLUTININ PRODUCTION IN RABBITS

a. Pooled serum samples.

b. All animals revaccinated.

The highest primary and secondary response titers (1:5, 120) were observed with vaccine doses of  $10^{10}$  organisms but lethality at this concentration precluded its use for routine vaccination. Vaccination with  $10^9$  cells elicited an agglutinin response of 1:2,560 within 7 days after primary administration; at this time animals administered  $10^8$  organisms had a titer of 1:1,280. Both of the latter vaccine doses induced peak secondary response titers of 1:1,280, but the maximum secondary response was of slightly greater duration in the group that received  $10^9$  organisms.

#### B. HYPERIMMUNIZATION WITH VIABLE B. ABORTUS STRAIN 19

The agglutinin response was determined for rabbits vaccinated with eight IV doses of 10° viable <u>B. abortus</u> strain 19 organisms at weekly intervals. The maximal <u>B. abortus</u> agglutinin titer (1:2,560) was observed on the 14th day; all subsequent weekly titers were 1:1,280.

#### C. SUBCUTANEOUS ADMINISTRATION OF B. ABORTUS VACCINE

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Following the subcutaneous (SC) administration of 10<sup>9</sup> viable organisms of the <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> vaccine to rabbits, the maximal agglutinin titers were fourfold lower than those observed in rabbits that received the same vaccine by the IV route. Revaccination of the animals on the 28th day did not result in an anamnestic response.

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#### D. SIMULTANEOUS COMBINED P. TULARENSIS AND B. ABORTUS VACCINATION

A group of rabbits was vaccinated IV with both 10<sup>9</sup> viable <u>P. tularensis</u> LVS and 10<sup>9</sup> viable <u>B. abortus</u> 19 organisms. Control groups received 10<sup>9</sup> organisms of either the <u>P. tularensis</u> or the <u>B. abortus</u> vaccine. All animals were revaccinated with the respective vaccines on the 28th day. Following revaccination, four of the five animals that received the combined vaccine and one of five that received LVS died; deaths occurred within 48 hours.

The P. tularensis agglutinin titers of animals that received the combined vaccine were not markedly different from those of the animals that were administered the P. tularensis vaccine alone (Table 2). The animals vaccinated with B. abortus alone had a low level of cross-reacting P. tularensis agglutinins on the 7th and 14th days.

	Mean	Reciprocal Agglutin	in Titer
Day	Combined Vaccine <sup>d</sup> /	P. tularensis <sup>b</sup>	B, abortusb/
7	416	768	34
14	544	480	34
21_/	240	160	<10
28 <sup>c</sup> /	272	160	<10
35	320	384	<10
42	320	272	<10
49	320	192	<10
56	160	160	<10

# TABLE 2. PASTEURELLA TULARENSIS AGGLUTININ TITERS OF RABBITS INOCULATED INTRAVENOUSLY WITH COMBINED PASTEURELLA TULARENSIS AND BRUCELLA ABORTUS VACCINE OR WITH ONLY ONE VACCINE

a. Approximately 10% cells of each bacterium.

b. Approximately 10<sup>9</sup> cells.

c. All animals revaccinated.

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Brucella agglutinin titers are presented in Table 3. There were no appreciable differences between titers of rabbits inoculated with combined vaccine and those of animals receiving the Brucella vaccine alone. Rabbits given the P. tularensis vaccine alone had a low level of cross-reacting antibodies on the 7th day but little or none on the 14th day and thereafter.

TABLE 3. BRUCE	LLA ABORTUS	AGGLUTININ TI	TERS OF RABBITS
INOCULA	TED INTRAVE	NOUSLY WITH A	COMBINED
PASTEURELLA	TULARENSIS	AND BRUCELLA A	BORTUS VACCINE
	OR WITH ON	LY ONE VACCINE	

	Mean	Reciprocal Agglutin	in Titer
Day	Combined Vaccine <sup>a</sup> /	P. tularensis <sup>b</sup> /	<u>B. abortus</u> b/
7	1,088	15	1,280
14	<b>384</b>	<10	640
21	192	<10	272
28 <u>°</u> /	120	<10	272
35	160	<10	416
42	320	<10	384
49	320	<10	320
56	160	<10	320

a. Approximately 10<sup>9</sup> cells of each bacterium.
b. Approximately 10<sup>9</sup> cells.

c. All animals revaccinated.

Anamnestic responses were not observed following revaccination with either vaccine alone; the one animal surviving revaccination with the combined vaccine did not show an anamnestic response to either vaccine.

In a subsequent study of the lethality of combined simultaneous vaccination of rabbits with 10<sup>9</sup> viable P. tularensis LVS and 10<sup>9</sup> viable B. abortus strain 19 organisms, death occurred in nine of 15 animals following primary vaccination and in five of six following secondary administration.

#### SEQUENTIAL ADMINISTRATION OF B. ABORTUS AND P. TULARENSIS VIABLE VACCINES E.

Bacterial agglutinin titers in rabbits following sequential IV administration of  $10^9$  viable <u>B. abortus</u> strain 19 and of  $10^9$  <u>P. tularensis</u> LVS (in either order after 24 hours) are presented in Table 4. When the vaccination sequence was P. tularensis LVS followed 24 hours later by <u>B. abortus strain 19, three of the five rabbits died within 4 days after</u> primary vaccination. Agglutinin titers of the two surviving animals were at least 1:1,280 to either organism during the primary and secondary responses.

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AGGLUTININ RESPONSES OF RABBITS VACCINATED BY THE IV ROUTE SEQUENTIALLY WITH BRUCELLA ABORTUS STRAIN 19 AND PASTEURELLA TULARENSIS LVS TABLE 4.

Vacctan									
Sequence	Agglutinatio	c	Recipro	cal Aggl	utinin T	iter on	Dav Indi	rated /	
	Ancıgen	7	14	21	286/	35	64	7.0	
							;	¢†	ŝ
<u>P. tularensis;</u> after 24 hoyrs,	P. tularensi	<u>s</u> 1,280	1,280	1,280	640	1,280	1,280	640	160
B. abortus <sup>C</sup> /	B. Abortus	2,560	2,560	1,280	1,280	1,280	2,560	2.560	1.280
B. abortus; after 24 hours.	P. tularensi	e40	640	320	320	1,280	1,280	640	320
P. tularensis <sup>d</sup>	B. abortus	2,560	2,560	2,560	1,280	2,560	2.560	1.280	1 280
a. Pooled serum sa	mples.								
b. Animals revacci	nated in same								

Three of five rabbits died within 4 days after primary vaccination. No deaths resulted from vaccination procedure. 

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When the vaccination sequence was <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> strain 19 followed 24 hours later by <u>P</u>. <u>tularensis</u> LVS, none of the animals died. During the primary response to this vaccination procedure <u>P</u>. <u>tularensis</u> but not <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> agglutanin titers were slightly lower than those obtained when the sequence was theresed. Secondary response anti-<u>P</u>. <u>tularensis</u> titers and both the primary and secondary response <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> agglutanin titers were similar to those obtained with the reverse (<u>P</u>. <u>tularensis</u> LVS -<u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> strain 19) vaccine sequence. With the minor exception noted above, these agglutanin titers were comparable to those previously obtained when each vaccine was administered alone.

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Previous studies<sup>1</sup> had demonstrated that short-term hyperimmunization with <u>P. tularensis</u> LVS increases the <u>P. tularensis</u> agglutinin titers of rabbits. This precedure was combined with that of sequential immunization used in the current studies. Three doses of  $10^8$  viable <u>P. tularensis</u> LVS cells were administered IV at weekly intervals to 10 rabbits; 24 hours prior to the final dose, the animals received  $10^9$  viable cells of <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> IV.

The agglutinin titers are presented in Table 5. The highest mean titer to either organism (1:1,408) was obtained 7 days after the last <u>P. tularensis</u> injection; titers declined to 1:320 or less 56 days after the initial inoculation with <u>P. tularensis</u> LVS. This procedure did not result in desth of any animals and is recommended for rapid production of a bivalent <u>P.</u> <u>tularensis</u> and <u>B. abortus</u> antiserum in rabbits.

TA BLE	5.	AG(	LUT	ININ	RES	PONSES	OF	RABBITS
	FO	LO	/ING	HYP	RIM	IUNI ZA'	TIO	N
. V	VITH	PA S	STEU	RELL	TU	ARENS	IS I	LVS
	AN	DA	SIN	GLE /	DMI	ISTRA	IIO	N
(	DF B	RUCI	LLA	ABOI	RTUS	STRAI	N 19	<u>9ª</u> /

Day	<u>Mean Reciprocal</u> <u>P. <u>tularensis</u></u>	Agglutinin Titer <u>B. abortus</u>
7	272	
14	704	-
21	1,408	1,408
<b>2</b> 8	896	1,280
<b>3</b> 5	544	768
42	352	640
49	256	448
56	208	320

 a. foses of 10<sup>8</sup> viable LVS given IV at three weekly intervals to 10 rabbits;
 4 hours prior to the final LVS dose,
 9 viable cells of strain 19 were iministered IV.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> strain 19 vaccination schedule for the production of maximal antibody levels in rabbits was similar to a regimen successfully used with virulent organisms.<sup>4</sup> One IV dose of  $10^9$  viable cells was sufficient to produce high agglutinin titers. A hyperimmunization procedure did not result in improved titers; this is in contrast to some procedures for nonviable vaccines and chemically purified antigens that require prolonged administration schedules. This example, as well as one involving <u>P</u>. <u>tularensis</u>,<sup>1</sup> is indicative of the subtleties one may encounter when viable attenuated organisms are used. Antibody formation is dependent on the in vivo growth and antigen production of the bacteria and probably varies with the host-parasite combination.

Mortality occurred in some experiments on combined vaccination with the two live vaccines. <u>Pasteurella tularensis</u> does not have classic endotoxin<sup>5</sup> but <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> does possess endotoxic activity.<sup>6</sup> Possibly <u>P</u>. <u>tularensis</u> administered prior to or simultaneously with <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> can prime the rabbit for the action of <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> endotoxin. It is known<sup>1</sup> that larger doses of viable <u>P</u>. <u>tularensis</u> LVS are toxic for the rabbit when administered by the IV route. The mortality in the present study might be attributable to potentiation of this system by <u>B</u>. <u>abortus</u> endotoxin. Regardless, the observations made point up the necessity for employing various schedules when developing a satisfactory procedure for administration of two live vaccines to produce maximal simultaneous antibody responses.

The cross reactivity between B. abortus and P. tularensis agglutinins was generally low (<1:40). Reduction of the antisera with 2-mercaptoethanol completely abo'ished che heterologous reactivity in sera from abbits given a single vaccine; chemical reduction also resulted in approximately an eightfold decrease in homologous titers against both organisms on the 21st day of the combined procedure.\*

A procedure for the rapid production of a bivalent antiserum with antibody levels comparable to those produced by single vaccination with each organism was established. It is a practical procedure because both live vaccines are produced from attenuated strains and can be used without extensive safety equipment; both vaccines can be easily prepared in the laboratory or purchased; the antiserum can be collected within 3 weeks after initiation of the vaccination; and there is the theoretical advantage of employing live vaccines with unaltered antigens for the production of antibodies.

\* Unpublished observations.

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hn E. Nutter	
DRT DATE	78. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 76. NO. OF REFS
tober 1969	
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DJECT NO. 186627064071	Technical Manuscript 561
	9. OTHER REPORT NOIS) (Any other numbers that may be scalged the report)
	CMs 6595
TRIBUTION STATEMENT ified requesters may obtain copies o tign announcement and dissemination o take or announcement to the public is	f this publication from DDC. If this publication by DDC is not authorized.
PLEMENTARY NOTES	12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY
	Department of the Army
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A schedule was developed for the sin arensis and Brucella abortus antiser tularensis LVS organisms were given prior to the final dose of <u>P. tular</u> . Is of <u>B. abortus</u> strain 19 intraveno- ninistered in this sequence, resulted exs. The maximal agglutinin titer to er the final injection. Key Words Vaccination Agglutinin <u>Brucella abortus</u> <u>Pasteurella tularensis</u> , LVS Titers Hyperimmunization Combined vaccines	Department of the Army Fort Detrick, Frederick, Maryland, 21701 multaneous production of a <u>Pasteurella</u> um in rabbits. Three doses of QD viable intravenously at weekly intervals. One <u>ensis</u> , the rabbits received QO <sup>9</sup> viable usly. The use of live vaccines, in high agglutinin titers within 3 either organism was observed 1 week
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A schedule was developed for the sin <u>arensis</u> and <u>Brucella</u> <u>abortus</u> antiser- <u>tularensis</u> LVS organisms were given prior to the final dose of <u>P. tular</u> ls of <u>B. abortus</u> strain 19 intravenous inistered in this sequence, resulted is. The maximal agglutinin titer to er the final injection. Key Words Vaccination Agglutinin <u>Brucella abortus</u> <u>Pasteurella tularensis</u> , LVS Titers Hyperimmunization Combined vaccines	Department of the Army Fort Detrick, Frederick, Maryland, 21701 multaneous production of a <u>Pasteurella</u> um in rabbits. Three doses of 40° viable intravenously at weekly intervals. One <u>ensis</u> , the rabbits received 40° viable usly. The use of live vaccines, in high agglutinin titers within 3 either organism was observed 1 week

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