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Sheep pox in Greece: follow-up reports

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SHEEP POX IN GREECE
Follow-up reports

Text of a fax received on 17 August 1998 from Dr V. Stylas, Director of Animal Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Athens:

FOLLOW-UP REPORT NO. 1

End of previous report period: 15 July 1998 (see *Disease Information*, 11 [28], 100, dated 17 July 1998).

End of this report period: 24 July 1998.

On 21 July 1998, a secondary outbreak of sheep pox (No. 2/98) was reported also in the village of Inoi, prefecture of Evros.

Total number of animals in the new outbreak:

<i>species</i>	<i>susceptible</i>	<i>cases</i>	<i>deaths</i>	<i>destroyed</i>	<i>slaughtered</i>
ovi	92	25*	...	92*	0
cap	24	0**	0	24*	0

* by 21 July 1998; ** all goats were free from clinical signs and seronegative.

From 21 to 23 July 1998, a team of senior veterinary officers from Headquarters in Athens, comprising the Head of the Animal Health Directorate and the Head of the Infectious Diseases Section visited Evros to assess the situation on the spot, to coordinate and advise on the appropriate disease control measures and to boost epidemiological enquiries. Follow-up actions taken in the village of Inoi, as described below, were stipulated largely as a result of this visit.

Diagnosis: suspicion in outbreak No. 2 was raised on 19 July 1998 on the basis of inconclusive and mild clinical signs (redness of the skin on the inner hind legs) which, however, developed dramatically within 48 hours, so that by 21 July the disease was fully expressed, with fever, inappetence, skin eruptions and subcutaneous nodules. Laboratory confirmation was subsequently obtained.

Diagnostic tests used: agar-gel immunodiffusion (AGID) and virus neutralisation (VN).

Epidemiology:

A. Source of agent / origin of infection: with regard to on-going epidemiological investigations in outbreak No. 1/98, a detailed documentary and physical check, as well as an interview with the owner, failed to establish the exact origin and mode of infection.

Transmission of infection across the borders by fomites and/or insects was ruled out due to the distance from the borders (> 5 km), the prevailing winds and the local topography.

Documentary checks, both in the infected holding and the alleged holdings of origin, failed to account for all the animals present in the holding and raised suspicions as to the true origin of the animals. These suspicions are strengthened by the owner's unprofessional conduct, his poor relations with the local veterinary and agronomic authorities and his previous and recent record of frequent business visits of uncertain purpose across the borders.

- B. Mode of spread:** outbreak No. 2/98 is easily explained by close contiguity (< 30 m) with outbreak No. 1/98 and direct contact with the latter in common grazing areas and watering points, up to the date of depopulation of outbreak No. 1/98. Otherwise, there were no recent movements of animals into or out of the infected flock, as determined from its well kept and updated records and registers.
- C. Other epidemiological details:** there were three sheep flocks, comprising 400 animals in total, contiguous to the infected farms (situated within a 200-m radius). These flocks were under clinical surveillance since outbreak No. 1/98 was reported, with negative results. Furthermore, preliminary random sampling on 14 July 1998 produced negative serological results in all three flocks.

Control measures during reporting period:

- All susceptible animals in outbreak No. 2/98 were slaughtered and destroyed by burial on the spot on 21 July 1998.
- In view of their close proximity to the outbreaks, the animals of the three in-contact flocks were preventively slaughtered on 24 July 1998; at the same time, new blood samples were collected.
- Routine control measures were applied as provided for in European Commission Directive No. 92/119/EEC, and described in the emergency report, with the addition of collection of blood samples for epidemiological evaluation from all stamped-out flocks.

FOLLOW-UP REPORT NO. 2

End of previous report period: 24 July 1998 (see above).

End of this report period: 11 August 1998.

1. There have been no further reports of suspected or confirmed cases of sheep pox anywhere in Evros.
2. Results of serological tests in the in-contact flocks are not yet available.
3. Disease control and safeguard measures are still in place.

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