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**RABIES IN FRANCE
in an imported bat**

EMERGENCY REPORT

Text of a fax received on 9 August 1999 from Dr Jean-Pierre Bournigal, Head, International Health Coordinating Mission, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Paris:

Report date: 28 July 1999.

Nature of diagnosis: laboratory.

Date of initial detection of animal health incident: 12 May 1999.

Outbreak:

Location	No. of outbreaks
Gard department (in the south of the country)	1

Description of affected population: a bat (African rousette) that died suddenly on the owner's premises in Gard department. The animal had been purchased on 3 March 1999 from an animal dealer in Bordeaux (Gironde department), who had imported it from Belgium on 7 January 1999.

Total number of animals in the outbreak:

<i>species</i>	<i>susceptible</i>	<i>cases</i>	<i>deaths</i>	<i>destroyed</i>	<i>slaughtered</i>
Fau	5	1	1	5	4

Diagnosis:

- A. Laboratory where diagnosis was made:** Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments (AFSSA, Nancy).
- B. Diagnostic tests used:** immunofluorescence, cell culture, inoculation into mice.
- C. Causal agent:** a viral strain close to the African strain Lagos bat virus (analagous to the RV Lagos bat isolate, Dakar 1985).

Epidemiology:

- A. Source of agent / origin of infection:** non-European origin. Following investigations by the Belgian authorities, the bat was found to have been imported from the African continent by a wholesaler supplying animal dealers.

- B. Other epidemiological details:** four animals were euthanised and destroyed: a squirrel, a rat, a mouse and a possum (*Phalanger* sp.), these animals having been in contact with the bat held by the animal dealer in Bordeaux. Laboratory tests for rabies carried out on these animals gave negative results. A total of 122 persons received anti-rabies treatment.

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EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANAEMIA IN NEW ZEALAND in an imported horse (final report)

Text of a fax received on 10 August 1999 from Dr Barry O'Neil, Chief Veterinary Officer, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Wellington:

End of previous report period: 9 June 1999 (see *Disease Information*, **12** [23], 83, dated 18 June 1999).

End of this report period: 6 August 1999.

Epidemiological details:

The report of 9 June 1999 advised that an imported horse which had tested positive to equine infectious anaemia (EIA) was destroyed on 8 June 1999. Since then, no new cases have been detected.

Trace-back established that eleven horses had direct or indirect contact with the imported case. The horses were on four separate properties in Waikato region, North Island, following movements of horses in the same consignment as the imported case. Movement restrictions were imposed on all four properties, and the in-contact horses were isolated and received daily treatment with prophylactic insecticide sprays. Insect trapping early in the isolation period indicated that *Stomoxys calcitrans* (the only likely vector present in New Zealand) was present but in very low numbers.

All isolated horses were tested using the agar gel immunodiffusion (AGID) test (Coggins test) at the start of the isolation period, after 30 days, and after 60 days. All results were negative for EIA. Although isolation was originally intended to run for 45 days, this period was extended to 60 days on the advice of experts in order to provide an appropriately conservative level of confidence that a horse would have seroconverted by the final test if infected.

Upon completion of testing with negative results, all restrictions on in-contact horses and their premises have been removed. Stamping out has been completed, and New Zealand is once again considered free from EIA.

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BLUETONGUE IN GREECE
serological findings in the north-eastern part of the country

(Date of last previously reported outbreak: December 1998).

EMERGENCY REPORT

Text of a fax received on 12 August 1999 from Dr Vasilios Stylos, Head, Animal Health Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, Athens:

Report date: 12 August 1999.

1. Background - Date of entry into force
 - 1.1 A Level C alert was declared throughout Greece on 8 July 1999, as soon as the emergence of bluetongue in Bulgaria was officially notified.
 - 1.2 A Level B-1 alert was declared in the Prefectures of Evros and Rodopi on 28 July 1999, as soon as the spread of the disease to the Bulgarian Provinces of Yambol and Haskovo, and possibly into Kardjali, was notified.
2. Description of surveillance measures taken in the first instance
 - 2.1 A Level C alert is declared when a List A disease is known to be present in a neighbouring country, but its spread into Greek territory is not considered probable or imminent.

Depending on the disease, standard precautionary measures include, in particular:

 - a) Import controls and suspension of import permits
 - b) Awareness of field Services
 - c) Random clinical surveillance
 - d) Laboratory investigation of suspect cases
 - 2.2 A Level B-1 alert is declared when a List A disease occurs in a neighbouring country and its spread into Greek territory is considered probable and imminent.

Standard precautionary measures include, in addition to those described in paragraph 2.1:

 - a) An updated census of susceptible animals in areas at risk
 - b) Publicity and awareness campaign aimed at the agricultural community at the local level
 - c) Animal movement controls in areas at risk
 - d) Targeted clinical surveillance and serological screening
 - e) Supplementary measures, depending on the disease
3. Results of surveillance available to date
 - 3.1 The results of clinical surveillance are negative to date throughout Greece, and in particular in Evros and Rodopi.
 - 3.2 The results of preliminary serological screening in Evros and Rodopi are presented in Table 2. Serological tests were carried out at the Athens Laboratory of Virology by means of AGID (agar gel immunodiffusion) and ELISA techniques, the latter in combination with monoclonal antibodies.

Table 1. *Bluetongue virus susceptible livestock population in Evros and Rodopi (1998-99 census)*

Prefecture		Bovines sampled		Sheep/goats sampled	
		Herds	Animals	Flocks	Animals
Evros		1,358	14,239	1,402	148,943
Rodopi	Entire Pref.	3,093	19,920	2,336	227,275
	Areas at risk	1,194	9,637	696	104,834

Table 2. *Results of preliminary serological screening for bluetongue carried out in Evros and Rodopi*

Prefecture	Date of sampling	Bovines		Sheep		Goats	
		Total	Positive	Total	Positive	Total	Positive
Evros	3-6 August 1999	115	13	71	0	80	0
Rodopi	5-6 August 1999	160	6	548	7	80	0

Note: results for Rodopi are based only on AGID; ELISA is in progress.

4. Discussion of preliminary results of serological screening in Evros and Rodopi

- 4.1 On the basis of the serological results presented in Table 2, a primary incursion of bluetongue in Evros and Rodopi can be established on purely serological evidence.
- 4.2 In Evros, infection appears to be geographically confined to the vicinity of Petrades village, (north-western Evros) and Mandra village (mid-eastern Evros).

The findings in Petrades are probably related to the cluster of outbreaks reported the week before in the Bulgarian Province of Haskovo, the disease spreading along the valley of the river Ardas.

The relatively high percentage of seroconversion observed in herds in the two villages is consistent with the hypothesis of a recent and massive wind-borne incursion of infected vectors from a known nearby source. The outbreak in Mandra, on the other hand, may be independent of the other outbreaks, both in Evros and in Bulgaria, and is the object of special investigations.

- 4.3 In Rodopi, there is low sporadic evidence of seroconversion, indicating either a low level incursion of wind-borne infected vectors from an unknown source to the north or animal movement.

The first hypothesis is doubtful because of the presence of mountains (altitude of more than 1,500 m) along the border between Greece and Bulgaria.

However, if the origin of infection is to the north, it must be assumed that the disease has spread beyond the Haskovo Province in Bulgaria and the level of infection across the border is quite high. The second hypothesis is highly unlikely, especially for bovines, because all bovines and most sheep and goats in Rodopi are individually identified. The exact origin, circumstances of incursion and the spread of the disease in Rodopi are being further investigated. Until the situation in Rodopi has been further clarified, no outbreaks will be declared.

- 4.4 In all cases, blood with EDTA has been collected from sero-positive (and probably viraemic) animals in an attempt at virus isolation and typing.

5. Follow-up measures taken in the light of preliminary serological screening

5.1 Measures imposed on sero-positive herds in Evros and Rodopi:

- a) Killing and destruction on the spot of sero-positive animals.
- b) Intensive application of vector control measures inside and nearby infected premises by means of an approved insect-repellent.
- c) Regular sampling (every week) of all remaining sero-negative animals with a view to monitoring the presence and activity of bluetongue virus and the efficacy of vector control measures.
- d/ Emergency vaccination is NOT contemplated by the Greek Authorities.

5.2 Measures taken or planned in the entire territories of Evros and Rodopi

- a) A Level A-1 alert has been declared, signifying primary incursion from an exotic List A disease into the Greek territory.
- b) Prohibition for movements of live susceptible animals, their semen and ova from the entire territories of the Prefectures of Evros and Rodopi.
- c) Standstill for animals within the Prefectures of Evros and Rodopi.
- d) Large-scale targeted serological surveillance around the outbreaks, as well as in the entire territory of Evros.
- e) Placement of sentinel bovines in selected areas at risk in north-western Evros and north and north-eastern Rodopi and regular sampling thereof.
- f) Application of vector control measures in likely vector breeding sites.
- g) Placement of light traps in selected areas at risk and classification of midges with a view to identifying the vector species involved and monitoring its presence, population size and geographical distribution.

5.3 Notifications, publicity and awareness

- a) A General Notice to the public and the media, accompanied by a detailed report on the emergence and evolution of bluetongue in Evros, has been issued and published on the Internet site of the Ministry of Agriculture (<http://www.minagric.gr>). It will be regularly updated to reflect the current situation.
- b) The OIE, the European Commission, FAO and the neighbouring countries of Bulgaria and Turkey have been duly and promptly notified.

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