



FEDERATION OF VETERINARIANS OF EUROPE

Press Release

19 September 2007

Workshop on Classical Swine Fever in S-E of Europe

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The eradication of Classical Swine Fever is an EU priority, stressed Jean-Pierre Vermeersch, of the European Commission (DG Sanco, Unit 04). Although classical swine fever (CSF) is close to eradication in the EU-25 (apart from some small areas where the disease is present in the wild boar population), it is still very prominent in Southeast Europe.

Regional approach

As a regional approach is the only approach for a disease without borders, a South East European workshop on CSF control was held in Poiana Braşov (Romania) on 17-18 September. The meeting, attended by over 100 participants, was organised by the Federation of Veterinarians (FVE) jointly with the Association of Romanian Veterinarians (AGMVR) and with support from the Technical Assistance Information Exchange department (TAIEX) of DG Enlargement, European Commission.

CSF is endemic on the whole territory of Romania, with over 800 outbreaks in domestic pigs reported in 2006¹ and 167 so far in 2007, while Bulgaria notified 7 outbreaks in 2006 and 3 so far in 2007. Representatives from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia all reported outbreaks in the last 12 months. Several of those countries apply a generalized vaccination programme for all domestic pigs. Most countries indicated wild boars as virus reservoirs and trade (both legal and illegal) as main sources for the outbreaks.

Most of the recent CSF outbreaks in Europe were caused by a pestivirus genotype 2 (mainly 2.3), which typically shows a moderate virulence, recalled Dr Sandra Blome of the EU Reference laboratory on CSF in Hanover (Germany). This means that the disease often shows vague symptoms (fever, anorexia) and may go unrecognized and undetected for a long period.

Prevention ‘cheaper than crisis’

Preparedness and alertness are essential to combat a CSF outbreak. The contingency plans should therefore be drawn up specifying all national measures that need to be taken in case of an outbreak. Realistic simulations should be exercised at least twice yearly, according to Dr Petras Maciulskis. All relevant stakeholders – including the media – should be involved in the contingency plan. A clear chain of command should be set up, with the Chief Veterinary Officer as close as possible to the political decision making level. The OIE and many international donors consider National Veterinary Services as Global Public Good. Every outbreak represents a great animal welfare challenge both on the farm as during killing’ reminded N. De Briyne and she requested to include possible solutions to alleviate these animal welfare concerns.

In the panel discussion on the end, the following statements were given:

- There is a need for good regional coordination with regular contacts between CVO’s & SVSs, coordinated contingency planning, exchange of advise/material/resources.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/controlmeasures/d10257R7_en.pdf

President

Walter Winding

Vice-Presidents

Ljiljana Markuš
Rainer Schneichel
Stephen Ware
Margareta Widell

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe AISBL
Rue Defacqz, 1
B – 1000 Brussels
Tel: +32.2.533.70.20 - Fax: +32.2.537.28.28
E-mail: info@fve.org - Internet: www.fve.org

- Honest and trust-based communication is necessary between all relevant partners.
- Efficient biosecurity measures are necessary to prevent disease entrance / spread.
- All parties have to work together (official vets, private vets, farmers, researchers,..) but official Sector of SVS have the end responsibility.
- Prevention is better than cure, prevention is cheaper than crisis. This has to be reflected in the management structure with the Chief Veterinary Officer as close as possible to the political decision making level.
- All countries should consider applying for evaluation to the PVS of OIE.
- Vaccination is important, hygiene protocols even more.
- The eradication of Classical Swine Fever is an EU priority.
- All stakeholders should take advantage of the experiences in other Member States.
- Do not forget CSF in feral pigs – work together to control it as it is transboundary problem.
- Planning should include looking at the possible welfare implications and how to alleviate them.
- The country of origin is responsibility to control the disease.
- Free movement of pigs and pig products is one of the core values of the EU. In Romania that free movement is blocked not because of the emergency vaccination used but because of the extend of the CSF presence.
- Relationship to stakeholder's esp. pig producers/industry. Government need the support/to work together with industry.

Notes for Editors:

1. The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of 43 veterinary organisations from 36 European countries, representing a total of around 200 000 veterinarians.
2. For further information, consult the fve website <http://www.fve.org> or contact the FVE Secretariat on tel +32 2 533 70 20 or by e-mail to info@fve.org
3. TAIEX is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument of the Institution Building unit of Directorate-General Enlargement of the European Commission. In operation since 1996, TAIEX provides centrally managed short-term technical assistance in the field of approximation, application and enforcement of legislation. TAIEX offers its services to new Member States, candidates for accession to the European Union, and the countries of the Western Balkans.
4. All presentations given during the conference can be downloaded from the TAIEX (<http://taiex.ec.europa.eu/>) and FVE web site (www.fve.org).