



Final Report from the European Union Reference Laboratory (EURL) for African Horse Sickness (AHS) on the National Reference Laboratories Annual Meeting, held in Brussels the 2nd December 2013

1. Opening of the meeting / Welcome.

The Director of the AHS European Union Reference Laboratory (EURL), Dr. Montserrat Agüero, opened the AHS annual meeting and welcomed all the representatives of the National Reference Laboratories (NRLs) and all other participants.

2. AHS Interlaboratory comparison test 2013: SEROLOGY AND RT-PCR RESULTS

Dr. Cristina Tena, from the AHS EURL, presented the serological and RT-PCR results data from the National Reference Labs (NRLs) in the inter-laboratory comparison test.

The EURL encouraged all the NRLs that could have new virus isolates, as well as sera from naturally infected animals, to kindly provide them to the EURL in order to be included in future PTs.

Dr. Carrie Baten (UK NRL) asked to add the virus titre of the samples included in the PCR panel in the final report.

Dr. Giovanni Savini (Italy NRL) was interested to know if the EURL had found difficulties in the robotic extraction of RNA from blood samples infected by AHSV as it had happened to them with blood samples infected by BTV. The EURL answered that, in their case, they have not found these difficulties and indeed the results between robotic and manual extraction were fully comparable.

3. Rationally designed vaccines for Orbiviruses using reverse genetics.

Dr. Piet van Rijn, from the Dutch NRL, Lelystad, The Netherlands, presented data on the development of efficacious and safe vaccine for AHS virus. First, reverse genetic for well known vaccine virus was developed and Seg-2 of different serotypes was exchanged. Further, AHSV with mutated Seg-10 was successfully generated, and combinations of exchange of Seg-2 and Segm-10 are in progress. Non horse trials are planned so far.

4. Progress in the retrospective study: AHS Spanish outbreak 1987-90

Dr. Montserrat Agüero updated the participants on the progress carried out by the EURL on the retrospective study of samples from the Spanish outbreak 1987-90.

Pair primers were designed to amplify and sequence segments 8, 9 and 10 for any AHSV serotypes. These sets of primers would be very useful tools for the rapid characterization of the virus involved and its phylogenetic relationship in case of an AHSV outbreak, even before the isolation of the virus is reached.



5. Working plan 2014

Dr. Manuel Durán, from the AHS EURL, presented the overview of the EURL activities planned to be carried out in 2014. Among them, it is interesting to highlight the comparison of the available molecular diagnostic RT-PCR methods currently in use in UE Member States, the development of RT-PCRs in order to sequence the different viral segments, or the revision of the technical Annex IV of the Directive 2009/156.

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