Summary of meeting
Disease Categorisation Expert Group on Blue Tongue Virus (BTV)
Friday 26th April 2013 10:00 – 13:00
DG SANCO Rue Belliard 232 2-17A

Attendees:

- Chair: Silvia Bellini, European Commission
- Disease experts designated by the following Member States:
  - Austria
  - Finland
  - Greece
  - Italy
  - Lithuania
  - Malta
  - Slovenia
- European Commission representatives:
  - Helen Fasham
  - Barbara Logar
  - Ana Blass Rico
- Observer
  - Expert from EFSA

Apologies:

- Expert from France

1. Introduction from the Commission

Commission representatives explained the context of disease categorisation and prioritisation within the EU Animal Health Strategy, and outlined the study that had been commissioned in conjunction with the OIE. The result of that study had been a disease categorisation and prioritisation tool which is designed to capture key information about diseases of terrestrial animals and, where possible, to quantify that information to aid in the categorisation and prioritisation process.

The Commission then gave a short guide to the tool and its structure. The aim of the meeting was to complete the tool's fields for Blue Tongue Virus (BTV). The Commission had pre-filled many values, but the group could both challenge any of these values; and were asked to complete the values left blank.

2. Values in the tool filled in by experts with respect to BTV

The group progressed through the tool from start to finish, discussing pre-filled values where at least one group member wished to open the discussion, and completing blank values. The tool was filled in as far as possible through discussion and consensus.

General points included whether different serotypes of BTV could be included in one assessment (in particular BTV 8 vs. other serotypes). The group decided to take a case-by-case approach to scoring criteria where different serotypes led to different answers; but with relevant comments noted. There were also questions about how to take differences across the Union into account.

Specific questions or issues were raised on particular fields including:

- Which species and categories of animals to include in 'pets';
- Whether all the methods of transmission were sufficiently covered and separated out;

- Clarification on the questions about impact on production;
- How to score the diagnosis of the disease;
- Discussion of the level of importance of spread through wildlife;
- How to score the incidence and prevalence of the disease;
- How to score the disruption to trade;
- Which hypothetical or real situations to use when answering questions on impact;
- How to score the supply of vaccines;
- Certain wording or clarifications needed in the manual.

3. Conclusions

The Commission thanked the experts for their contribution and explained that all of their work, including the tool that they had filled in and the questions and comments they had raised on the tool itself, would be used, together with the work of the seven other disease-specific expert groups, in a full assessment of the tool by the Commission.