

# Conclusions

## Conference on "Vaccination strategy against bluetongue"

Brussels, 16 January 2008

### GENERAL

- The Commission's political line, with regards to bluetongue has been outlined today and is now clear: mass vaccination with all available vaccines.
- Estimating the actual losses due to bluetongue is difficult, but the figures already provided suggest that they are substantial.
- We now realise and acknowledge the very valuable expertise gathered in the southern Member States previously affected by bluetongue, and especially as regards the successful use of vaccination using the two different types of vaccines.
- It is clear that the use of both types of vaccines is better than developing the disease.
- We need to strike a balance between harmonisation and flexibility.
- The OIE Code confirms that vaccination is the best solution for safe trade.
- Solid and accurate standards for trade are provided in the OIE Code but efforts should still be made as regards the OIE Manual.
- Some stakeholders have suggested that the authorities should consider the possibility that farmers administer the vaccine.

- The local epidemiological situation largely influences the choice of the most adequate type of vaccine and vaccination strategy.
- It would be hard to justify adopting the same approach in controlling the disease in 2008 as in 2007, given that vaccines against BTV-1 and BTV-8 are now available.

### THE DISEASE AND ITS CONTROL:

- We have gained a lot of expertise and knowledge of the disease in recent years.
- A particular European characteristic is the unprecedented waves of bluetongue epidemics affecting in some cases high production areas.
- We have learned that emergency mass vaccination is the most efficient strategy, taking into account the current EU situation.
- In principle, there is no scientific, economic or management justification to exclude the use of any of the existing vaccines for emergency vaccination.
- This should be done within the existing EU legal framework for bluetongue control and eradication, as is the case for any other former list A diseases of the OIE.

### THE VACCINE

- Sufficient and timely availability of vaccines for rapid vaccination remains a concern. Vaccine supplies can now be ensured taking into account all types of vaccines.
- Control and direct supervision of the official veterinary services should ensure correct vaccine administration.
- Adequate surveillance and control mechanisms should be put in place.

### **FINANCIAL ASPECTS**

- The Community's co-financing for 2008 is covered in the framework of emergency veterinary measures at the rate of 100% of the costs of the purchase of the vaccine and 50% of the costs of the administration, subject to certain ceilings.
- The rest of the involved parties, and especially the Competent Authorities of Member States, should immediately deploy the necessary resources, including human resources.

### **NEXT STEPS**

- Vaccination plans fulfilling all the necessary requirements should be swiftly submitted by Member States.
- The follow-up and evaluation of the results of this emergency vaccination approach will be carried out in 2009.