

About this dossier

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Eradication: Final report for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies 2019

For each approved annual or multi-annual programme Member States shall submit to the Commission by the 30 April each year an annual detailed technical and financial report covering the previous year. That report shall include the results achieved and a detailed account of eligible costs incurred (Art 14 of Regulation (EU) No 652/2014).

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ID: 20200617-GOHU2L21

Country code: EL

Reporting period

From: 2019

To: 2019

Year of implementation: 2019

1. Technical implementation of the programme

1.1 Description and evaluation of the evolution of the epidemiological situation, the technical implementation of the activities foreseen under the programme and the cost-effectiveness of the programme.

Brief description of the BSE surveillance programme:

I. Implementation of rapid BSE diagnostic tests listed in Annex A Part I.

Subject to examination for the detection of the BSE agent are bovine animals of all categories according to the risk assessment methodology.

Sampling is carried out in accordance with Annex B.

A special derogation has been provided for certain remote islands which have been excluded from sampling due to practical and epidemiological reasons.

Examination of BSE suspect bovines:

a) All bovine animals classified as "BSE suspects" due to the presence of relevant clinical symptoms are subject to a special examination for BSE.

b) The above mentioned animals are killed and sampled after a special decision is issued by the competent veterinary authorities of the prefecture concerned.

20200518-Q6RD6P9Q, output on 2020/06/17 13:13 (Europe/Luxembourg) Page 2/8

c) While issuing such a decision, the competent authorities, along with the clinical evaluation of the animals in question, take into consideration whether:

i. the suspect animals are originating from countries where indigenous BSE cases were detected,

- ii. there is a possibility that the animals may have consumed feed infected with the BSE agent,
- iii. they gave birth to animals that were subsequently detected as BSE infected or they are offsprings of such female animals,
- iv. during the first year of their life they were reared together with animals that were subsequently diagnosed as BSE cases.

II. Surveillance in slaughterhouses.

1. Examination of bovine animals prior to slaughter

In the framework of BSE surveillance the following activities shall be carried out in slaughterhouses:

- a) Compulsory ante mortem examination of all bovines slaughtered for human consumption, aiming to detect symptoms that could raise a BSE suspicion.
- b) Thorough check of all accompanying documents (e.g certificates, movement permits) and animal identification and registration aiming to determine their origin.

2. Checks on bovine carcasses

2.1 All carcasses originating from bovine animals being subject to a BSE rapid test are kept under official supervision. They are not given a health mark, as provided for to Regulation (EC) No 2019/627 unless the rapid test produces a negative result.

2.2 All parts of the body of a bovine animal being subject to a BSE rapid test, including the hides, are stored and kept under official control until a negative result is available (a relevant special document is issued by the veterinarian in charge of sanitary inspections). Otherwise, they are destroyed in accordance with the Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009.

2.3 All parts of the body of the above mentioned animals, with a negative result on BSE testing, receive a health mark, after the exclusion of the specific risk materials, and are placed into the market upon a release document issued by the veterinarian in charge of sanitary inspections at the slaughterhouse.

2.4 Positive or inconclusive results on BSE rapid tests have never been occurred so far.

III. Surveillance of BSE in bovine holdings

Surveillance of BSE in holdings is carried out on the occasion of delivering routine veterinary services, such as medical treatment, implementation of disease control/eradication programmes, issuing certificates or movement permits, identification animal process, epidemiological inquiries, collection of samples etc. During the performance of the above-mentioned activities, a clinical evaluation of the animals is carried out aiming to spot out any clinical symptoms that could raise a BSE suspicion.

In case a BSE suspicion arises, all relevant measures defined in the present programme are put into force in order to prevent spreading of the disease and to ensure the protection of public health.

Along with the above-mentioned BSE surveillance, special care is taken to ensure briefing of the farmers on the symptoms, pathogenesis and epidemiology of BSE, as well as the legal provisions in force pertaining to the requirement of compulsory notification of the disease.

1. Active surveillance

All bovine samples collected in the framework of the programme are examined using a BSE rapid test, as defined in Annex A, Part I, and are considered negative upon negative results of the rapid test.

If any positive results emerge the samples originating from suspect animals, are forwarded, by the competent laboratory in which the BSE rapid test was carried out, to the National Reference Laboratory for further examinations (confirmatory).

2. Passive surveillance

All BSE suspect animals, on the basis of relevant clinical symptoms, are subjected to a rapid test and a confirmatory test. Double confirmatory testing of suspect animals has not been performed during the past few years. During the last seventeen years there has not been detected any positive BSE in cattle.

Brief description of the TSEs in small ruminants programme:

Subject to examination for the detection of the TSEs agent are ovine and caprine animals of the following classes:

I. Animals slaughtered for human consumption

- a) A number of random samples from ovine and caprine animals, over 18 months of age, which are slaughtered for human consumption are tested with one of the approved rapid tests for the diagnosis of TSEs, mentioned in Annex I, Chapter A, Part I.
- b) The samplings are representative of each Regional Unit of the country and of each season of the year.
- c) The sample selection is designed in such a way to avoid the over-representation of any group regarding the origin, species, age, breed, production type or any other characteristic of the animals. If it's possible, multiple sampling in the same flock is avoided.
- d) The number of samples tested is presented in section 4.6.2 and 4.6.3.

II. Animals not slaughtered for human consumption

a) A number of random samples from ovine and caprine animals, over 18 months of age, which have died or have been killed neither for human consumption nor in the framework of an epidemic, such as foot-and-mouth disease, are tested with one of the approved rapid tests for the diagnosis of TSEs, mentioned in Annex I, Chapter A, 20200518-Q6RD6P9Q, output on 2020/06/17 13:13 (Europe/Luxembourg) Page 3/8

Part I.

b) The samplings are representative of each Regional Unit of the country and of each season of the year.

c) The sample selection is designed in such a way to avoid the over-representation of any group as regards

the origin, species, age, breed, production type or any other characteristic of the animals. If it's possible, multiple sampling in the same flock is avoided.

d) The number of samples tested is presented in section 4.6.2 and 4.6.3.

III. Animals suspect of TSE infection due to the presence of clinical signs

Ovine and caprine animals showing clinical signs that lead to the suspicion of infection by TSE, undergo the detection procedure for the identification of the infectious agent.

IV. Genotyping

a) The prion protein genotype is determined for each positive TSE case in sheep.

b) All TSE cases found in sheep with genotypes encoding either alanine on both alleles at the codon 136, arginine on both alleles at the codon 154, or arginine on both alleles at the codon 171, are immediately reported to the Commission authorities.

c) Moreover to the positive TSE cases that undergo genotyping, the prion protein genotype is determined in a number of random samples from negative sheep cases of all subcategories whatever the purpose of the sample was taken for.

V. Laboratory tests for ovine and caprine tissues

A. Active surveillance

a) Tissues from ovine and caprine animals sent for laboratory testing from animals mentioned in Chapter I and II (in the framework of the monitoring programme of TSEs in ovine and caprine animals) are examined by a rapid test (mentioned in Annex I, Chapter A, Part I).

b) When the result of the rapid test is inconclusive or positive, the tissues are examined with the confirmatory tests mentioned in Annex I, Chapter A, Part II(a), at the reference laboratory nominated for this purpose.

c) If the result of a confirmatory test is negative or inconclusive the tissue is subject to additional confirmatory test according to the guidelines of the Community reference laboratory.

d) If the result of at least one of the confirmatory test is positive, the animal is regarded as a positive TSE case.

e) Positive TSE cases (as mentioned above) are further examined with immuno-blotting, for the differentiation of classical scrapie from the atypical form, and only the index cases of them are further examined with a discriminatory test (CEA) mentioned in Annex I, Chapter A, Part III, for the differentiation of scrapie from BSE (except the atypical scrapie cases).

B. Passive surveillance

a) Tissues originating from TSE suspect ovine and caprine animals are examined with one of the confirmatory tests mentioned in Annex I, Chapter A, Part II(a).

b) When the result of the histopathological examination is inconclusive or negative, the examined tissues are subject to further examination with one of the other confirmatory tests.

c) When the initial examination method is the rapid test and the result is inconclusive or positive, the examined tissues are subject to further examination with one of the other confirmatory tests, mentioned in Annex I, Chapter A, Part II(a).

d) If the result of one of the confirmatory test is positive the animal is regarded as a positive TSE case.

e) All of the samples that are regarded as positive TSE cases are further examined, as mentioned above in Part A par.e).

C. Collection and transportation of samples

a) Samples due to be tested, in the framework of ovine and caprine TSEs monitoring programme, must be collected according to the instructions mentioned in Annex I, Chapter C.

b) The samples' container must be identified properly, referring to animal identification, and must be sent to the competent authorized laboratory for the diagnosis of TSEs, by courier.

VI. Authorities responsible for the implementation of the programme and description of their responsibilities

1. The Department of Infectious Diseases, Animal Health Directorate, General Directorate of Veterinary Services, Ministry of Rural Development and Food (MRDF):

a) Co-ordinates and manages the programme throughout the country, regarding both specific provisions thereof and in its entirety.

b) Collects and processes all data obtained in the framework of the programme at national level and informs the competent services of the European Commission as regards its implementation.

c) Creates the appropriate legal basis for the measures to be implemented in accordance with the programme.

d) Secures and allocates funds and resources required for the implementation of the programme.

e) Keeps, for seven years, records of:

i. the number of sheep and goats subject to movement restrictions due to TSE suspicion, 20200518-Q6RD6P9Q, output on 2020/06/17 13:13 (Europe/Luxembourg) Page 4/8

ii. the number and the results of clinical and epidemiological investigations carried out on ovine and caprine populations in relation to TSEs' suspicions,

iii. the number and the results of laboratory tests carried out on ovine and caprine animals when a potential TSE infection could not be ruled out,

iv. all data required for the evaluation of the programme's implementation.

f) Organizes training courses for the personnel of the authorities involved in the programme's

implementation, providing the most updated knowledge pertaining to diagnosis, interpretation of laboratory results and epidemiology of the disease.

2. The Regional & Local Veterinary Authorities:

- a) Are responsible for the implementation of the TSE monitoring and eradication programme throughout the region of their competence.
- b) Nominate an official veterinarian as a regional coordinator of the programme.
- c) Collect and dispatch the appropriate brain tissue samples to the competent laboratories conducting diagnostic tests for the detection of the TSEs' agents.
- d) Collect and dispatch samples of blood from sheep of infected flocks for genotyping.
- e) Carry out clinical examinations of ovine and caprine animals prior to slaughter, in order to prevent TSE suspect animals from being slaughtered.
- f) Supervise removal, identification and disposal of specific risk materials at the slaughterhouses.
- g) Keep the data of animals dying on the holdings, supervise their removal and disposal and ensure collection and dispatch of the appropriate brain tissue samples to the competent laboratories for the detection of the TSEs' agents.
- h) Issue the appropriate order/s for the implementation of all measures foreseen in the programme in case of a TSE suspicion or confirmation in a sheep or goats holding, such as the restriction of movements of animals and products of animal origin. The Department of Infectious Diseases, in Animal Health Directorate, MDRF, must be notified for these actions.
- i) Are responsible for the supervision of the implementation of all measures for the eradication of TSEs.
- j) Conduct an epidemiological investigation upon confirmation of a TSE case, in order to trace all animals epidemiologically linked to the TSE case, in compliance with the provisions of the national legislation in force.
- k) Keep for seven years all the documents issued for the implementation of the programme, as well as the documentation of the results of the tests conducted in the framework of the programme.
- l) Organize informative campaigns addressed to veterinarians, breeders' associations and all other parties involved in the implementation of the programme. The content of these campaigns is about the objectives of the programme and the measures foreseen for the eradication of the disease.

3. The National Reference Laboratory for TSEs, is as follows:

3.1. The following laboratory is nominated as National Reference Laboratory for TSEs:

The Veterinary Laboratory of Larisa, MRDF, for approved TSEs rapid tests, confirmatory tests, primary molecular testing and genotyping (info same as in BSE).

3.2. There are three laboratories, mainly the same as in BSE that are conducting the rapid tests deriving from small ruminants from the several geographical departments of the country.

Evolution of the epidemiological situation in Greece from 2001 to 2016:

Bovines

Since 2001, when the only so far positive case of BSE (cattle aged >30 months, slaughtered for human consumption) was confirmed, all samples continue to be negative.

2001: 17.079 tests : 17.078 negative , 1 positive

2002: 23.735 tests all negative

2003: 26.542 tests all negative

2004: 28.804 tests all negative

2005: 31.684 tests all negative

2006: 32.694 tests all negative

2007: 30.445 tests all negative

2008: 33.782 tests all negative

2009: 25.809 tests all negative

2010: 23.260 tests all negative

2011: 22.221 tests all negative

2012: 14.611 tests all negative

2013: 14.875 tests all negative

2014: 14.496 tests all negative

2015: 13.037 tests all negative

2016: 12.105 tests all negative

2017: 12.512 tests all negative

2018: 13.680 tests all negative

2019: 12.899 tests all negative

20200518-Q6RD6P9Q, output on 2020/06/17 13:13 (Europe/Luxembourg) Page 5/8

Ovine and Caprine Animals

2002: 34.036 tests 108 positives for Scrapie

2003: 30.905 tests 146 positives for Scrapie

2004: 12.648 tests 150 positives for Scrapie

2005: 11.214 tests 293 positives for Scrapie

2006: 18.112 tests 318 positives for Scrapie

2007: 17.793 tests 403 positives for Scrapie

2008: 26.316 tests 689 positives for Scrapie

2009: 31.320 tests 774 positives for Scrapie
 2010: 34.238 tests 619 positives for Scrapie
 2011: 39.346 tests 939 positives for Scrapie
 2012: 31.189 tests 639 positives for Scrapie
 2013: 21.273 tests 343 positives for Scrapie
 2014: 27.492 tests 594 positives for Scrapie
 2015: 24.301 tests 651 positives for Scrapie
 2016: 9.419 tests 241 positives for Scrapie
 2017: 10.803 tests 272 positives for Scrapie
 2018: 10640 tests 236 positives for Scrapie
 2019: 8.231 tests out of which 371 resulted positive for Scrapie.

During the reporting period, data has shown that we keep the same level of surveillance with the precedent annual period, as regards the BSE program in terms of quantity and quality.

Speaking about the level of implementation of the TSE program, there is a decline of the number of animals tested. The main reason is the insufficiency of the manpower at the veterinary departments of the country. Apart from that, a large number of sheep and goat holdings are located to remote or semi mountainous areas, that stand a long distance away from the center of a region. The movements of the veterinarians to these farms, poses difficulties due to the pressure of the time and the fiscal obstacles for the expenses of the fuels.

As regards the cost - effectiveness of the BSE surveillance programme, it seems to have a low ratio of effectiveness due to the large number of clinically healthy animals tested per year and the non detection of positive ones and the small number of suspects.

1.2 Details on the level of achievement of the targets set in the approved programme and technical difficulties.

During the reporting period, data has shown that we keep the same level of surveillance with the precedent annual period, as regards the BSE programme in terms of quantity and quality.

Speaking about the level of implementation of the TSE programme, there is a decline of the number of animals tested. The main reason is the insufficiency of the manpower at the veterinary departments of the country. Apart from that, a large number of sheep and goat holdings are located at remote or semi mountainous areas, that stand a long distance away from the center of a region. The movements of the veterinarians to these farms, poses difficulties due to the pressure of the time and the fiscal obstacles for the expenses of the fuels.

In order to confront the low implementation rates of the programme, the central competent authority has planned again to allocate national funds for 2020, (Specifically, eight (-8-) veterinarians will be recruited to support five (5) Directorates of Rural Economy and Veterinary Services (local veterinary authorities), in regional units with high populations of ruminants, and the other three (3) will support the authorized Veterinary Laboratories for TSEs.

The Central Competent Authority held a meeting with regional veterinary authorities of Central Macedonia, on May 24 2019. This region is very active and effective in the implementation of programmes of the animal health sector. The output of that meeting was that even though veterinarians reassured that they have good knowledge of the critical points of the diseases and they keep inspecting the high risk and suspect animals, it was not feasible to achieve the targets of the programme due to different reasons but mainly due to the limited staff resources etc. In addition due to the fact that the efforts of the veterinary authorities in the country were focused in 2019 on ASF preparedness (Bulgaria cases, Part i Categorisation in the North part of Greece etc), the implementation of other veterinary activities was less intensive especially in areas with higher risk for ASF introduction.

1.3 Epidemiological maps for infection and other relevant data on the disease/activities (information on serotypes involved,...) (Please attach files of data using the PDF attachment feature) Use the textbox below to provide clarifications for the maps you attach, if needed.

N. A.

2. Tables for TSE monitoring outcome of the year

VERY IMPORTANT: Please fill out the following tables with figures corresponding to measures performed during the implementing period (1/1 to 31/12).

NB: the Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 is thereafter quoted as the TSE Regulation.

Table A

	Total positive cases detected during the implementing period		
	Classical cases	Atypical cases	Unknown
TSE	44	0	334
Scrapie (ovine animals)	35	0	316

Scrapie (caprine animals)	9	0	18
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Table B

RAPID TESTS ON BOVINE ANIMALS		
	Age limit applied (in months)	Number of tests cases
Risk bovine animals from MSs listed in Annex to Decision 2009/719/EC	48	2,238
Risk bovine animals from MSs NOT listed in Annex to Decision 2009/719/EC	24	3
Healthy slaughtered bovine animals from MSs listed in Annex to Decision 2009/719/EC	72	10,639
Healthy slaughtered bovine animals from MSs NOT listed in Annex to Decision 2009/719/EC	30	8
Suspect animals and confirmatory tests		11
Total		12,899

Table C

Population of ewes and ewe lambs put to the ram in the Member State

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RAPID TESTS ON OVINE ANIMALS	
	Number of tests
Healthy slaughtered ovine animals	2,562
Dead ovine animals	2,671
In the context of measures of control/eradication on holdings affected by TSE as described in Annexes III and VII of the TSE regulation	
Ovine animals from holdings affected by classical scrapie	1,552
Ovine animals from holdings affected by atypical scrapie	0
Ovine animals from holdings affected by BSE	0
Suspect animals	24
Total number of tests	6,809

Table D

Population of goats which have already kidded and goats mated in the Member State

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RAPID TESTS ON CAPRINE ANIMALS	
	Number of tests
Healthy slaughtered caprine animals	611
Dead caprine animals	724
In the context of measures of control/eradication on holdings affected by TSE as described in Annexes III and VII of the TSE regulation	
Caprine animals from holdings affected by classical scrapie	118
Caprine animals from holdings affected by atypical scrapie	0
Caprine animals from holdings affected by BSE	0
Suspect animals	2
Total number of tests	1,455

Table E

Confirmatory and discriminatory tests	
	Number of tests
Confirmatory tests other than rapid tests on bovine animals	11
Confirmatory tests on ovine and caprine animals	376
Discriminatory tests on bovine animals	0
Discriminatory tests on ovine and caprine animals	44
Total number of confirmatory tests	387
Total number of discriminatory tests	44

Table F

Genotyping tests	
	Number of tests
Positive TSE case	93
Randomly selected ovine animals	137
Animals in scrapie infected flocks	9,854
Breeding programme - ewes	1,108
Breeding programme - rams	351
Total of number of tests	11,543

Table G

COMPENSATION FOR ANIMALS In the context of suspicion, control and eradication of TSEs	
Animals culled and destroyed	Number of animals compensated
Bovine animals	0
Ovine animals	3,494
Caprine animals	981
Animals slaughtered	Number of animals compensated
Ovine animals	24
Caprine animals	2
Total Bovine	0
Total Ovine + Caprine	4,501

COMMENT / ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION

I have to confirm that seven out of nine caprine samples that have been tested and resulted positive, index cases for scrapie are of CYPRUS.

Therefore seven out of 44 confirmatory and discriminatory tests conducted within the annual period in the National Reference Laboratory had to do with the above mentioned samples from Cyprus due to a specific collaboration between the two countries (Greece-Cyprus). Four of those samples were examined under the subcategory of dead animals. The three of them were examined under the subcategory of animals slaughtered for human consumption.