Updated Outbreak Assessment #1

Equine Infectious Anaemia in Europe

25th July 2017

Disease Report

As an update to our previous report on 5th July, Germany has now reported another 3 outbreaks of EI. Two were in the region of Viersen: one affecting just one out of 54 horses at one site and one out of 52 horses at another site, although 14 horses were reportedly culled for disease controls reasons. Another was reported in the region of Pinneberg, where one out of 41 horses tested positive. According to the German authorities, 13 polo ponies have now been tested positive at nine separate premises. The source of infection is a virus related to other viruses isolated outside Europe (most likely Argentina) and disease has been present since 2008 – 2012, when four horses were originally imported to Germany (EU Paff, 2017).

Spain has also reported an outbreak (affecting 2 out of 32 horses) of EIA in Avila region in central Spain. The horses were present at a stud farm and had not travelled outside Spain.
in the last 18 months. Five contact premises have been identified. According to the Spanish Authorities (Colvet, 2017), one of the horses had a German registered passport and both were identified as “mestizo” breed which could imply these are South America ranch horses often used to breed polo ponies.

Switzerland has also reported EIA in a 13 year old clinically sound horse which was imported into Switzerland with a Belgium passport in 2014. There was no information about the reasons for testing beyond “self control measures” or whether this was related to the German cases or to polo ponies in general.

Hungary has reported a case of EIA in Bacs Kiskun region, the second case this year. According to the disease report, the source of infection was infected insects, although as this is mechanical vector transmission, this would suggest other positive horses are present in the region.

Finally, the Republic of Macedonia has reported two outbreaks of EIA in Kumanovo region near the border with Kosovo, where three out of ten horses tested positive on one holding and two out of nine on another. There is no information on whether these premises are contacts. The outbreaks in Romania seen on the map are reported as part of their regular surveillance.

**Situation Assessment**

Disease control measures are in place in all the countries mentioned above and this includes culling infected animals. Restricting and tracing other contacts are also underway in Germany, Spain, Switzerland and Netherlands. Within that framework there are six equidae identified on one holding in the UK which have had some contact with infected horses and are therefore similarly under restriction while testing takes place. Because the contacts have been with horses not showing any clinical signs, these are more than likely to be low risk tracings, nevertheless we will continue to monitor the situation.

It is interesting to see that a very small number of horses in a particular sector have tested positive and even though they have been present in Europe for several years, this has not led to a widespread disease problem. This again suggests that the most important transmission routes are iatrogenic transmission or close contact with an animal showing clinical signs and therefore with a high viraemia; vector borne transmission in north Europe may be a lower risk level than in other warmer climates with very high biting fly numbers.

**Conclusion**

We will continue to report on the situation as regular updates or if significant changes in the epidemiology of the disease occur.
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References


Colvet (2017) Informe sobre la deteccion de un foco de anemia infectiosa equine (AIE) en Avila http://www.colvet.es/sites/default/files/2017-07/INFORME%20AIE.pdf

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