

Enclosure 1 – Issues of Concern Identified During the Site Visit

1. Diagnostic testing capability

The site visit team found that the National Veterinary Laboratory (NVL) has a good infrastructure and is well equipped with well-trained personnel. However, they also found that the NVL has limited diagnostic capabilities for FMD, SVD, and CSF, which could hamper their ability to detect these diseases quickly.

First, the NVL performs only serology for FMD and SVD; samples for virus isolation are sent to the reference laboratory in Pirbright, England, which may significantly lengthen the time needed for confirmation of infection. Has the NVL considered developing immunological assays for detecting antigens of vesicular disease agents, or PCR assays to detect FMD virus and SVD virus nucleic acids?

Second, the direct immunofluorescence assay for CSF that the NVL is currently using incorporates a poor quality commercial conjugate that cannot effectively distinguish between negative and positive specimens. Has the NVL considered improving the quality of the conjugate or conducting an assay that is more sensitive? Please note that the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (FADDL), Plum Island Animal Disease Center, has agreed to provide standard operating procedures and reagents for a more sensitive assay that has been validated and used by FADDL, if that would be helpful.

In addition, has the NVL considered using more sensitive assays such as virus isolation and polymerase chain reaction tests on a routine basis? This is the approach recommended by the World Organization for Animal Health for detection of the CSF virus, especially on highly suspect CSF cases.

2. Disease recognition

Since Lithuania has not reported a case of FMD since 1982 or CSF since 1992, and has never reported a case of SVD, we are somewhat concerned about the ability of veterinarians, animal caregivers, and others in the livestock industries to recognize these diseases. The site visit team noted that few, if any, suspicious cases of these diseases were reported each year, and that knowledge of the clinical signs appeared to be somewhat limited among official and approved veterinarians.

What simulation exercises and other academic or practical training are planned for official and approved veterinarians in 2005 with regard to these diseases? What efforts will be made to increase public awareness of the clinical signs of these diseases?

Enclosure 2 – Additional Information Needed (please provide in English)

General information on all diseases under consideration:

1. A definition of the smallest unit in Lithuania that you consider to be an administrative unit, which means the smallest administrative jurisdiction that has effective oversight of normal animal movements into, out of, and within that jurisdiction, and that, in association with national authorities, if necessary, has effective control over animal movements and animal diseases locally.
2. A comparison table that lists the European Commission decisions, directives, and regulations regarding CSF, SVD, and FMD, and the corresponding Lithuanian regulations along with any noted differences.
3. Information regarding the size of the Lithuanian budget for veterinary services in 2004, including the total value of budgetary resources, the source of these resources (e.g., national budget, county/district budgets, user fees), and the major categories of expenditures.
4. A full description of the duties of the Customs Service with regard to inspection of passenger traffic from third countries for agricultural products of animal origin, including the procedures for disposition of seized commodities. If possible, please also include national estimates of (1) the percentage of vehicles, travelers and baggage inspected; and (2) the type and amount of commodities seized, rejected or diverted for veterinary inspection. An indication of the volume of passenger traffic at the busiest border crossings would also be helpful.
5. A list of trading partners and the volume and type of commodities traded from 2000-2004, focusing on live ruminants and swine and derived products.
6. A description of any required biosecurity procedures for live-haul trucks (loaded or empty) that enter from neighboring third countries.

For the CSF and SVD evaluations:

1. The number of swine in each defined administrative unit, and the geographic location and herd size of the swine operations most likely to be involved in export to the United States (maps would be helpful).
2. The estimated number of wild boar in each administrative unit.
3. A description of any future plans to increase the CSF testing of fallen wild boar.
4. A description of future plans to ensure that small swine operations are adequately represented in annual monitoring for CSF and SVD.

For the FMD evaluation:

1. The number of beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep, and goats in each administrative unit, and the geographic location of farms most likely to be involved in export to the United States (again, maps would be helpful).

2. A description of any future plans for FMD monitoring in the small ruminant population.
3. Complete figures for FMD monitoring in 2004, by county and species, when available.