



Fédération Européenne pour la Santé Animale et la Sécurité Sanitaire

FESASS position paper on the future EU rules on Bluetongue

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The European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security (FESASS) welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to modernize the legislation to combat bluetongue from the aspects of simplification, sustainability, feasibility and adequacy. In particular, the concurrent validity of Directive 2000/75 and of Regulation 1266/2007 has always led to misunderstandings and problems of interpretation. The restriction to a single legislative text (in the framework of the EU Animal Health Law) would be a significant improvement.

We appreciate that animals, which are either vaccinated or shown to be naturally immunised may be moved without restrictions throughout the Community. However, under this scenario, the detection of a (new) serotype of bluetongue virus, for which no (authorized) vaccine is available, would lead to an absolute "stand still" in the affected regions, which is totally unacceptable for the sector. Therefore, a derogation is needed, at least until a vaccine is readily available. Under this temporary derogatory scheme it should be possible to move animals on the basis of serological and/or agent identification tests (in line with the OIE code).

Furthermore, it is imperative to grant exemptions for bulls in artificial insemination centres. So far the AI stations succeeded with considerable efforts to protect their bulls from an infection with the pathogen. Thus, the export (of semen) could be maintained, especially to Third countries. As of today, vaccination of the bulls would prevent the export to many destinations. But the stations rely on the movement of their animals due to zootechnical and economic reasons. This involves individual animals which are kept, regularly examined and moved under very safe conditions. Consequently, bulls in possession of an EU-approved AI centre should be allowed to be moved as before, on the basis of test results.

The current rules for putting semen on the market should remain. Due to the extensive and elaborate examination of the animals and mandatory waiting periods, there is no risk of spreading the disease by semen. In addition, the probability for a transmission of BTV by semen is very low. The Commission should consider allowing testing of the semen for the virus by PCR as an additional examination.

Finally, the new rules should enter into force outside of the grazing period in order to facilitate the implementation in the field.

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