Brussels, 3 September 2007

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RE: ANIMAL HEALTH:
1) Foot and mouth disease - UK
2) Bluetongue (BTV-8) - BE / NL / FR / DE / LU
3) Bluetongue (BTV-1) - ES
4) Bluetongue - working group EU Commission / Member States
5) Classical Swine Fever - RO
6) Avian influenza - DE / IT

1) Foot and mouth disease - UK

Re-opening of livestock markets and shows outside the surveillance zone in the UK
Since today 3 September the activities in livestock markets and animal shows outside the surveillance zone (Surrey) have resumed in the UK. Here below a press release from DEFRA.

New temporary arrangements for livestock markets and shows outside of surveillance zone
From 00:01 on Monday 3 September, livestock markets for cattle, sheep, and pigs will be allowed to resume in England and Wales, outside of the Surveillance Zone in Surrey. Also from this date, animals susceptible to Foot and Mouth Disease can be taken to shows involving animals, outside of the Surveillance Zone.

Debby Reynolds, Chief Veterinary Officer, said:
“Having considered carefully a veterinary risk assessment of allowing animals to move to livestock markets and agricultural shows, I have concluded that these can restart from Monday as part of our staged risk-based approach to easing movement controls. A number of additional conditions apply while the Surveillance Zone remains in place and it is critical that these are adhered to strictly by everyone involved. This represents another milestone in the good progress we are making towards regaining our disease free status.”

Defra has worked closely with the core group to develop these new arrangements.

The core group said:
“This is an important development for the industry, whilst everyone has been 100% behind the disease control strategy, we have also been mindful that we had to allow the industry to resume operations as soon as the disease status allowed. The return of markets, shows and sales, albeit under tighter controls until the surveillance work is completed in Surrey, is vitally important as they allow planning for the autumn breeding and store sales and will provide much needed boost of confidence to the industry.
“We urge the whole industry to remain vigilant and fully support the operators of markets and shows in complying with the additional controls they must operate under until the controls can be further relaxed.”

Controls within the Surveillance Zone remain unchanged, including rules on standstill arrangements. Any further changes are dependent upon completion of the current surveillance in Surrey, which will not be before 8 September.

Notes to editors
1. Copies of the general licences and conditions that must be met for movements of animals, including to markets and shows can be found on the Defra at:
Further advice can be obtained from the Local Animal Health Office or Local Authority.

2. The same conditions apply to livestock markets in Wales, which also restart from Monday.

3. Livestock markets are currently licensed on an annual basis and will receive a letter on the conditions that will apply to holding markets for the time being. Shows and other gatherings are licensed on a specific basis and appropriate conditions will be included in the licence for each event.

4. The core group of stakeholders is comprised of senior individuals from the following organisations, attending in a personal capacity: Ben Messer Bennetts (Livestock Auctioneers Association), David Catlow (British Veterinary Association), Duff Burrell (National Beef Association), Kevin Pearce (NFU), Peter Morris (National Sheep Association), Stewart Houston (British Pig Executive), Stuart Roberts (British Meat Processors Association)

5. FMD susceptible animals includes camelids, for example alpacas and llamas.

6. Collection centres and dedicated slaughter markets resumed from 00.01 23 August.

7. Defra public helpline (08459 33 55 77) is open Mon-Fri: 9.00am to 5.00pm.

8. The latest information on the current Foot and Mouth disease can be found on the Defra website: www.defra.gov.uk/footandmouth

Future EU legislation
Next Standing Committee relating to animal health issues will take place in Brussels on 11-12 September. It is probable that a new Decision will be voted repealing Decision 2007/554/EC now in force (which, as last amended, will expire anyway on 15 September). The new Decision should also include the requirement to exclude, for a couple of months more, export of animals from the surveillance zone in Surrey to other Member States, until regaining of the OIE FMD free status by the whole country.

EU Commission chronology
Link to the chronology of events made by the EU Commission: FMD chronology.

2) Bluetongue (BTV-8) - BE / NL / FR / DE / LU

BELGIUM (BTV-8)

The last update on the number of outbreaks officially recorded is of 1.338, with a majority of the cases having being described in sheep. In the map on the right red spots are cases in sheep and blue spots are the ones in cattle. However, it seems that in reality the cases are 3-5 times higher than this. Some operators are of the opinion that nearly all susceptible animals are touched by the infection. Many dead sheep are collected daily and sent to the rendering, proving the severity of the situation, in particular with respect to last year.

NETHERLANDS (BTV-8)

The official reports (dated 23/08) talks about 401 outbreaks reported in the Netherlands. However, according to the Dutch organisation for agriculture the number of outbreaks in the practice is definitely higher, especially in the south of the country, where severe clinical signs including several deaths of sheep are occurring. As already indicated in the past, all the Netherlands are now included in the 20km zone.
FRANCE (BTV-8)

Cases of disease have increased in France too. So far over 100 cases have been described since the detection of the first case in summer 2007. Certain new findings have been recently recorded in the departments of Aisne, Somme and Pas-de-Calais. Due to that the overall zone subjected to restrictions (surveillance zone) has been enlarged, with effect since 31 August, and is reported in the map on the right.

GERMANY (BTV-8)

The number of outbreaks has increased also in Germany. The last official report from the German authorities (23 August) indicates 856 outbreaks recorded in 2007. However, some other information report a number of around 1,400 outbreaks. Clinical signs seem to have a serious impact in Germany too.

The disease has been for the first time described also in central-eastern part of the country (Thuringia). Due to the new cases the zone subject to restrictions has been enlarged (since 25 August), including parts of Thuringia and the northern part of Bayern.

LUXEMBOURG (BTV-8)

After the first finding in August, the total number of outbreaks officially reported by Luxembourg is of 29, with the whole country having been declared as 20km zone.

3) Bluetongue (BTV-1) – ES

SPAIN (BTV-1)

“Authorities in Spain have detected bluetongue in cattle in 47 farms in the southern region of Andalusia, a regional government official said Friday [31 Aug 2007]. The councilor in charge of agriculture in Andalusia’s regional government, Isaias Perez Saldana, told a news conference the disease could spread to the southwestern region of Extremadura and the central region of Castile-La Mancha.”

[Source: ProMED]
4) Bluetongue – working group EU Commission / Member States

The EU Commission has organised a working group with a number of Member States on Wednesday 5 September. The objectives of the meeting are:
- making a state of play of the situation in the different countries and discussing its evolution;
- discussing over a proposal of replacing Decision 2005/393/EC now in force by means of a new text including measures for controlling the disease, conditions for movements from affected areas and rules concerning the monitoring and surveillance of the disease.
More details on the subject will follow after the meeting.

5) Classical Swine Fever - RO

ROMANIA

No new outbreaks have been reported following the three outbreaks in the big companies in the western part of the country.
The Romanian authorities have reported a lack of biosecurity measures but also some deficiencies in carrying out the vaccination procedures as the reasons for such outbreaks.
A total of around 50,000 pigs have been interested, with half of them having already been culled and the other ones still to be culled.

6) Avian Influenza – DE / IT

GERMANY (highly pathogenic AI)
A new outbreak was confirmed in Bavaria in a farm where around 170,000 ducks were reared. Contact farms are being inspected, with no positive results so far.

ITALY (low pathogenic AI)
A few new outbreaks of low pathogenic AI have been recently described in the country. So far in 2007 outbreaks of LPAI have been described in the regions of Lombardia, Veneto and Emilia-Romagna (North) and Basilicata (South).
An emergency vaccination plan has been submitted to the EU Commission.
No high pathogenic avian influenza has been detected in Italy.