



BWDS NEWSLETTER

2011/01

29 AUGUST 2011

Website : www.bwds.be

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2. Short editorial

This Newsletter includes the reports of the two general assembly meetings held in 2011 until now. A third meeting will be organized at the end of the year, after the Symposium in October.

The preparations for the 4th BWDS Symposium are progressing on schedule. We are still accepting poster presentations for the Symposium, the initial deadline for submitting abstracts (30 July) has been extended with five weeks following some requests and in order to allow new applicants to submit their work as yet. If you intend to bring a poster presentation, please send your abstract as soon as possible and before September 5th to info@bwds.be

The BWDS board hopes to meet as many of you as possible at the coming Symposium in Tervuren and wishes you a sunny month of September after this long wet summer..

3. Meeting Report of the General Assembly, March 25, 2011 (Food Safety Centre, Brussels)

Present: *Charlotte Sohier (KBIN), Sophie Roelandt (CODA/CERVA), Jean De Borchgrave (ITM), Ahmad Gholamiandekhordi (DVM, Brussels), Filip Barbé (DGZ), Wesley Tack (UGent), Thierry van den Berg (CERVA), Kris De Clercq (CODA), Brigitte Caij (CODA), Jozef Hooyberghs (FAVV), Pierre Naassens (FAVV), Mihai Szalo (Ulg FMV), Patrick Butaye (CODA/CERVA), Christel Cochez (RLVBD), Vandecan Michaël (AFSCA/FAVV), Victor Luyasu (ULB), Jim Casaer (INBO), Redgi De Deken (ITM), Leen Claes (ITM), Paul Tavernier (UGent), Stefan Roels (CODA), Alexandre Dobly (CERVA), Paul Heyman (RLVBD), Kristof Baert (INBO)*

Excused: *Koen Mintiens, Muriel Vervaeke, Dominique Vandekerchove, Thierry Jauniaux, Lies Beernaert, Paul Hermans, Wouter Deconinck, Edwin Claerebout, Marc Dispas, Daisy Van Rompaey, Paul Simoens, Luc Vanholme, Katrien Tersago.*

Introduction: The meeting is opened by Paul Tavernier who welcomes the participants and expresses in the name of the BWDS his thanks to the FAVV for allowing to meet in the Food Safety Building, and for providing the lunch.

Agenda:

1) Presentations

1. R. De Deken (ITM, Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp): Biting midges and the Bluetongue outbreak in North West Europe
2. Jim Casaer (INBO, Instituut voor Natuur en Bos Onderzoek , Flanders): Wildlife management in Flanders : structure and current issues
3. Stefan Roels : Short feedback of the OIE Wildlife Conference, Paris, February 23-25 2011
4. Kristof Baert: Presentation of the new BWDS website

2) Administrative part

Abstracts of the presentations

1. Redgi De Deken (ITM, Antwerp) :

Biting midges and the Bluetongue outbreak in North West Europe

Redgi gave a presentation about the family of Ceratopogonidae, with a focus on the genus *Culicoides*. First, the biology of these nematoceres was discussed and their role as disease vector. The Bluetongue outbreak in North-West Europe was highlighted, as well as the effect of the vaccination on the eradication and the potential role of wildlife as a reservoir. Finally, it was discussed how several institutes were involved in the surveillance of the vector in Belgium, how the monitoring of the vector is carried out and how the vector free period can be established.

2. Jim Casaer (INBO, Geraardsbergen):

Wildlife management in Flanders : structure and current issues

A PDF file of this presentation is available on the BWDS website: www.bwds.be

3. Stefan Roels (CODA/CERVA/VAR, Brussels):

The OIE Global Conference on Wildlife : a review

This Conference was organised in Paris from 23 to 25 February 2011 by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the EcoHealth Alliance, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Its main goal was to analyse the interactions between the health of wildlife, domestic animals and people and their relations with the environment. As a reason for these increasing interactions, one could identify different causes: changes in land use including expansion into new geographic areas and the intensification of production to meet increasing needs for food, including animal proteins. These changes have altered the equilibrium between domestic animals and wildlife and the interactions have changed both in frequency and in nature.

As 60 % of human pathogens, 75 % of emerging diseases and 80 % of agents with potential bioterrorist use are zoonotic, the importance of zoonotic potential of animal pathogens is growing.

In order to improve human health and conditions, the FAO has set 8 millennium development goals, namely to 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) Achieve universal primary education, 3) promote gender equality and empower women, 4) reduce child mortality, 5) improve maternal health, 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, 7) Ensure environmental sustainability, and finally 8) global partnership for development. For the moment, the major achievements are gained in goals 4 & 5. One of the results of the improvement of the human development and technology is the increasing global transport. However, this includes also that it becomes easier for pathogens and species to spread all over the world. Another impact of this improvement is the climate change, which has been described as the most important challenge facing humanity in the 21st century. In fact, eleven of the last twelve years rank among the twelve warmest years in the instrumental record of global surface temperature. A key challenge will be to break the link between economic outputs and emissions. Critically, how can the human species achieve development that is both environmentally and socially sustainable?

The increasing transport possibilities have also stimulated the regulated, but more importantly the unregulated wildlife trade, which is largely underestimated and should be followed up more intensively. The high volume trade concerns mainly reptiles, fish and insects and a low volume trade mainly including mammals, birds and amphibians.

In the 20th century human health improved dramatically due to improved nutrition and reduction of spread of diseases. This resulted in a tripling of the global human population, a growth of the consumption of Earth's resources and the unprecedented transformation of life on Earth (with loss of species and disruptions to ecosystems vital to all animal life, including man). So, in large contrast to the human population, the animals were not so lucky. The red list index (International Union for Conservation of Nature) of threatened species indicates that one fifth of the vertebrates are threatened (especially amphibians).

Participants recommended an enhanced cross-sector communication and cooperation among all parties involved including the tourism industry and relevant non-governmental organisations such as foundations, naturalists, hunters and fishermen associations and many others, to ensure coordinated risk management approaches at the wildlife / domestic animal / human ecosystems interface.

Reference : **Contributing to One World, One Health - A Strategic Framework for Reducing Risks of Infectious Diseases at the Animal-Human-Ecosystems Interface,**

<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/aj137e/aj137e00.pdf>

4. Kristof Baert (INBO, Geraardsbergen):

Presentation about the new BWDS website :

The website is now online on www.bwds.be. We thank Kristof for his creative and skilful work.

Structural and content updates can be easily carried out by the BWDS board from now on. Though not meant to be a so called “dynamic” website, we will try to update within regular intervals with relevant

information. For those who did not yet visit our new website, please have a look, you will discover “latest news” items, new links to other websites and an agenda with coming meetings and events. Also new is a call to notify abnormal wildlife mortalities, offering an additional tool in the passive surveillance of wildlife diseases in Belgium.

Administrative part

1) Call for participation for the yearly reporting of wildlife diseases to the OIE via the Belgian focal points and the appointed national delegate

In connection to the objectives of our society at its creation, the BWDS offers an informal network of reporters active in diverse areas in relation to wildlife diseases. This network allows to collect efficiently detailed information which would, otherwise be difficult to access.

On the BWDS website the possibility will be created to submit information using a copy of the official OIE form (Excel file with several sheets). The first sheet contains guidance on how to fill in the sheets. Do not send your information directly to the national delegate but forward it to the focal points or to Paul Tavernier, mentioning your e-mail-address for possible follow up: stroe@var.fgov.be
a.linden@ulg.ac.be paul_tavernier@skynet.be

From now on, relevant info can already be submitted throughout the current year. Early 2012, researchers and institutes will be contacted by e-mail as usual, as a reminder: we will complete the mailing list as much as possible.

2) 4th BWDS Symposium “Consequences of Wildlife Introductions“ on Friday October 7th, 2011, at the CODA-CERVA (VAR) site of Tervuren (Brussels)

The budget plan and sponsoring were completed and the BWDS gratefully acknowledges Bayer Animal Health, Bio-Rad, INBO, the Ministry of Defence and CODA/CERVA/VAR. The lay-out of the Symposium program is based on the three ways to look at introduced wildlife: the consequences for biodiversity, the impact on the epidemiology of endemic pathogens and the introduction of new pathogens. The Belgian and foreign invited speakers have all confirmed their participation. Information and practical guidelines have been provided to the invited speakers by mail. The abstracts of their presentations are expected by the end of July. After evaluation of the abstracts (oral and poster presentations) by the scientific committee we should be able to compile and start the printing of the abstract book by the end of August.

The BWDS board calls urgently for poster presentations for the Symposium. Subjects for posters do not need to be linked to the general theme of the Symposium, but a strong link with “wildlife diseases” in general is necessary. Abstracts for posters should reach the BWDS board and scientific committee at latest on August 1st, 2011. An award for the best poster will be granted after evaluation of the posters by the scientific committee

In continuity to the former Symposiums, a prize for the best student thesis (master degree) on wildlife diseases will be awarded. The amount of this prize is reduced to 300€, in relation to the budget, the new concept of masters theses (case studies) at the veterinary faculties, and the previously small number of submissions

Announcement of the Symposium will start in April via flyers, posters and the new BWDS website.

Registration possibility via the new BWDS website is now activated

The practical organization (catering, welcome invited speakers, collaborators, allocation of duties at the symposium venue, etc...) will be further developed by the BWDS board members. who will report the progress at the next general assembly.

3) Next general assembly : For next year, two speakers have kindly proposed to give a presentation: Victor Luyasu (UCL) and Mihaï Szalo (Faculté Vétérinaire, Université de Liège). For the first coming general meeting (the suggested date is somewhere in June 2011), speakers will be looked for. The next BWDS meeting could be organized in the FAVV Food Safety Centre (depending on the availability of the meeting rooms) or at the Flemish Institute for Nature and Forestry (INBO) near to the Brussels South railway station).

Close down and wrapping up

A warm word of thanks is given to the presenters, the FAVV and the participants

4. Meeting Report of the General Assembly, June , 2011

Present: Jo Maris (DGZ), Walter Fagot (DVM, Ghent), Paul Tavernier (UGent), Stefan Roels (CODA/CERVA), Sophie Roelandt (CODA/CERVA), Alexandre Dobby (CODA/CERVA), Michel Vandecan (FAVV/AFSCA), Victor Luyasu (IREC-UCL), Thierry Jauniaux (ULiège), Ides Boone (ITG), Kristof Baert (INBO), Martine Van Den Broeck (UGent)

Excused: Jim Casaer, Luc Vanholme, Pierre Naassens, Wendy Altobello, Muriel Vervaeke, Dominique Vandekerchove, Annick Linden, Mihai Szalo, Jozef Hooyberghs, Leen Claes, Bertrand Losson, Goedele Verbeylen, Paul Heyman, Charlotte Sohier, Herwig Leirs, Redgi De Deken, Gert Michels, Denis Volckaert, Jan De Paepe, Dieter Heylen, Jan Stuyck..

Introduction and agenda: This meeting was held in Brussels at the Institute for Nature and Forestry (INBO; Flemish Community) which kindly provided the meeting room and the lunch. The agenda included two presentations followed by a short administrative part

Abstracts of the presentations

1. Walter Fagot (DVM, Ghent):

Forensische Diergeneeskunde

Below you will find the original abstract of this presentation in Dutch; The English abstract will be published after translation in the next Newsletter

Aan de hand van een PowerPoint presentatie worden enkele forensische technieken toegelicht die eenvoudig en met weinig middelen kunnen toegepast worden. In de diergeneeskunde is het daarmee mogelijk om het moment van de dood te schatten. Dit wordt het postmortem interval of PMI genoemd. Dit PMI kan belangrijk zijn in verband met het oordeel of een dier al dan niet dood gebleken is. Men kan bij het KMI plaats en ogenblik van inslagen op een kaart uitgezet krijgen om te vergelijken met de geschatte PMI. Het PMI kan ook gebruikt worden om doodgevonden wild te linken aan stropers activiteiten.

Een eerste techniek is de analyse van het corpus vitreum. Uit de verandering in gehalte aan ureum, creatinine, natrium, kalium, calcium en fosfor kan men schatten hoelang een kadaver kadaver is. De moeilijkheden van interpretatie en betrouwbaarheid worden besproken in de presentatie. In dat verband zou verder onderzoek nuttig zijn naar standaarden voor langere PMI dan 48 uur en voor nog meer diersoorten dan rund, paard en varken.

Er wordt ook aangegeven welke veranderingen in het corpus vitreum andere aandoeningen doen vermoeden die niets met een plotse dood te maken hebben.

Een tweede techniek bestaat erin eitjes en larven van lijkvliegen te verzamelen. Uit deze eitjes en larven kan men volwassen vliegen kweken voor betrouwbare determinatie. De groeifase en lengte van de larven worden bepaald. Met grafieken en cijfergegevens uit de literatuur kan men dan ook een PMI schatten. Ook hiervan worden moeilijkheden in betrouwbaarheid besproken. Maar er wordt ook meteen aangetoond hoe men met het samen leggen van de twee technieken tot betrouwbaarder PMI schattingen kan komen. Het meten van de temperatuur ter plaatse en in het lijk blijkt ook van groot belang te zijn omdat al deze basis gegevens over corpus vitreum samenstelling en larvenontwikkeling erg afhankelijk zijn van temperatuur.

Men kan al heel wat met deze technieken, maar verder onderzoek zou de toepassing voor diergeneeskunde kunnen verfijnen.

2. Jo Maris (DGZ, Veepeiler) :

Anaplasmosis (“pasture fever”)

As an introduction, a brief description is given of the organisation of Dierengezondheidszorg Vlaanderen (DGZ) and Veepeiler (a 2nd line diagnostic support and surveillance network for farm animals). A brief outline of the history of anaplasmosis in the last decades is given.

Anaplasmosis in cattle is caused by *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* and other *Anaplasma* species. The etiologic agent is an obligatory intracellular bacterium and is vector transmitted. In our regions the main vector is the tick *Ixodes ricinus*. The life cycle of *Anaplasma* and of *Ixodes ricinus* are explained and the importance of wildlife in this life cycle is emphasized. The percentage of infected ticks in endemic areas is variable.

The involvement of Veepeiler in relation to Anaplasmosis arose from several reports from the field. These reports mentioned an until now unknown cluster of symptoms for our region. *Anaplasma* could be confirmed in several of these cases, confirming the occurrence of anaplasmosis in Flanders. This occurrence seems not to be restricted to tick sensitive regions. A map with the distribution of anaplasmosis cases in cattle in Flanders is presented.

Diagnosis, treatment and prevention of the disease in cattle are discussed.

Anaplasma is also important as a zoonosis, the disease in man is called human granulocytic ehrlichiosis (HGE). People at risk are those in close contact with nature, veterinarians and foresters. As for cattle, the etiologic agent is transmitted to humans by the tick *Ixodes ricinus*.

A case report (case diagnosed by Veepeiler) is presented, illustrating the importance of *Anaplasma* for the Belgian cattle population.

Administrative part

A short administrative part of the meeting was dedicated to some subjects concerning the 4th BWDS Symposium. The further practical organization of the Symposium will be discussed during the board meetings that will take place in the following months.

5. Postscript

From now on, announcements for congresses, meetings and other events will be displayed at the BWDS website and will not be included in the Newsletters anymore. The Newsletters themselves will no more be distributed by mail in the future, but will be available on the website. Nevertheless those on the BWDS mailing list will receive a newsflash at the moment a new Newsletter will be available. If you are not on the BWDS mailinglist yet, please send us your E mail address and we will be happy to add your address to the list.

We invite you to have a look at our new website and to send us information about new events, (Belgian) publications and other interesting items that could be of interest within the wildlife diseases context.

See you in October !

The BWDS board