

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional Workshop on the Control of Peste des Petits Ruminants in Maghreb

Rabat, Morocco, 13-14 November 2008

Considering:

- 1) the importance of small ruminants in the pastoral systems of semi-arid and arid zones of Maghreb countries,
- 2) the central role of these animal species in the food and incomes of rural families of these disadvantaged regions,
- 3) the difficult world economic context and the instability of the food products prices,
- 4) the important social and cultural role and of small ruminants, in particular of sheep, in Maghreb countries,
- 5) the contagious and transboundary characteristic of Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), and its very heavy economic impact for families and for national economy,
- 6) the difficulty of the clinical diagnosis of PPR and its possible confusion with other diseases (rinderpest, foot-and-mouth disease, contagious ecthyma, bluetongue, caprine contagious pleuro-pneumonia, coccidiosis, etc.),
- 7) the emergent character of PPR in Morocco, first known irruption of this disease in a Maghreb country,
- 8) the risk of contagion to other countries of North Africa and South of Europe,
- 9) the remarkable success of the Global Rinderpest Eradication Campaign (GREP), disease similar to PPR,

The participants to the “Regional Workshop on the Control of Peste des Petits Ruminants in Maghreb” organized at Rabat on 13 and 14 November 2008 affirmed the need for eradication of this disease from Morocco and prevention of its extension to other Maghreb and Mediterranean countries. At the end of this meeting, they made **the following recommendations:**

- 1) Following the example of the rinderpest eradication campaign carried out on a global level, an eradication campaign of PPR in Morocco must be based on a mass vaccination of small ruminants of the country, associated with (i) an evaluation of the immunizing cover and (ii) an epidemiological surveillance of the disease in the country.
- 2) The possibility of an individual marking of the vaccinated animals must be explored, in order to facilitate the evaluation of the immunizing cover and the differential diagnosis between vaccinated/infected animals, or for animals affected by other diseases.
- 3) The possibility of vaccinating jointly goats and sheep against PPR and other infectious diseases, like sheep and goat pox, must be planned to reduce intervention costs.

- 4) It is necessary to quickly set up an epidemiological surveillance of PPR in the other Maghreb countries, combining passive and active methods.
- 5) Standardized and harmonized methods of diagnosis at regional level must be transferred in each country, accompanied by adequate staff training and the implementation of interlaboratory tests between the various Maghreb countries.
- 6) National and regional laboratories capacities must be reinforced to facilitate a fast diagnosis followed by an immediate notification to OIE by the national Delegate, even before the diagnostic confirmation by an OIE/FAO Reference Laboratory.
- 7) Adequate samples must be sent to the OIE/FAO Reference Laboratories to confirm PPR diagnosis at the beginning of an epizootic and genotype the viral strains in order to trace the viruses' origin.
- 8) A risk analysis of PPR introduction into other Mediterranean countries must be carried out including South of Europe to improve vigilance and surveillance of the disease (taking also wildlife into account).
- 9) Monitoring and vigilance must be reinforced and harmonised on the level of the Maghreb for an early diagnosis and alert (definition of suspicion cases and surveillance protocols, exchanges of sanitary information at regional level).
- 10) An immediate notification, and weekly follow-up reports, must be sent to OIE via WAHIS tool. It is highly recommended to communicate the information directly with regional partners to maintain a climate of trust and collaboration with all transparency.
- 11) Partnership between public and private veterinary services must be reinforced to improve management of animal health, and to facilitate the adhesion of stockbreeders to the policies of sanitary crises management.
- 12) Regional and international partnership must be reinforced and coordinated to carry out support research actions (differential diagnosis of vaccinated and infected animals, variability of the sensitivity of Maghreb small ruminants' breeds to PPR, evolution of viral strains, possible role of bovines, dromedaries and wildlife in PPR epidemiology, etc).
- 13) A strategic stock of vaccines against PPR, produced under quality control, must be set up to allow emergency actions as per what is proposed currently by OIE within the framework of the world animal and welfare fund, and by FAO for avian influenza.
- 14) The feasibility study of a Euro-Mediterranean Network of Animal Health (REMSA, which stands for "Réseau Euro-Méditerranéen de Santé Animale") must be finalised in accordance with the recommendations of the co-ordinating meetings of Avila (April 2008) and Tunis (August 2008). This proposal will be discussed during the third regional co-ordinating meeting for North Africa organized by the AHRC-NA (or CRSA-AN) at the beginning of February 2009.
- 15) FAO, OIE and AU-IBAR must take advantage of the lessons learned from the positive results of the GREP in order to elaborate and initiate a similar programme for PPR control in Africa.