

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 6, 36, 39 and 46 Combined APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON BLUETONGUE AND RELATED ORBIVIRUSES
COMMITTEE ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF CATTLE, BISON
AND CAMELIDS
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND EMERGING DISEASES
COMMITTEE ON SHEEP AND GOATS

SUBJECT MATTER: SURVEILLANCE FOR BLUETONGUE AND EPIZOOTIC
HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE
CARIBBEAN REGION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since 1999, the discovery of nine new serotypes of bluetongue and epizootic hemorrhagic disease viruses in the United States (US) indicate that previously exotic viruses now are entering the US.

The emergence of seven serotypes of bluetongue virus into Europe since 1998 has been associated with extensive clinical disease in sheep and cattle, and serotype 8, in particular, is associated with a high incidence of vertical transmission.

Climate change (global warming) in the Mediterranean is generally accepted to have played a role in the spread of bluetongue viruses into Europe by creating suitable environments for colonization by competent vectors.

A similar climate change has occurred in the Caribbean region and might possibly have contributed to the introduction of new serotypes of bluetongue viruses into the US.

There is no coordinated surveillance for bluetongue virus or epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus in the US to detect potential introductions of new serotypes.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), working with universities and other agencies, establish a bluetongue and epizootic hemorrhagic disease surveillance program throughout the United States (US) and the Caribbean region to:

- Establish the current regional distribution and activity of the established and newly recognized viruses in the US;

- Detect the presence of introduced viruses in the US and the Caribbean Region; and
- Identify all species of insect vectors associated with the transmission of bluetongue and epizootic hemorrhagic viruses.

RESPONSE:

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) shares concerns about the continued discovery of new serotypes of bluetongue in the United States. In July 2008, VS held a symposium on bluetongue virus serotype 8. This meeting was attended by State animal health officials, academic researchers, industry representatives, and VS personnel and featured presentations by international experts.

VS has been supporting bluetongue and epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus surveillance since 1980 through cooperative agreements with the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS) at the University of Georgia. SCWDS provides annual nationwide data on the occurrence of orbivirus hemorrhagic disease in wild ruminants. Further, SCWDS is assisting VS with vector concerns by determining the species of *Culicoides* present in the southeastern United States and Puerto Rico. Maintaining this level of surveillance is a priority under our current budget; any expansion will require additional funding or a shift from other programs.