



AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS

ELA presentation by Christine Bijl

ELA Secretary



What is ELA? And who are we?

- ❑ Founded in 2001 by concerned animal keepers, including Peter King and Betty Stickers both breeders, and scientists, like Dr. Paul Sutmoller and Dr. Simon Barteling, both virologists, and Genetic Conservation specialist Lawrence Alderson
- ❑ ELA has an expanding membership in UK, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, Scandinavia and even the USA



FMD in the Netherlands and in the UK triggered the start of ELA



The way to Brussels

- ▣ ELA was established as a platform for discussion and for exchange of sound scientific knowledge as an antidote to the widespread distribution of misinformation
- ▣ Our scientists' network all over the world → rapid and detailed discussion and action takes place
- ▣ ELA has developed into an organisation with its own opinions based on its reservoir of knowledge
- ▣ ELA delivers its views to governments, the EU Commission and Council, and cooperates with other organisations in this field



Participation and initiative

- ▣ ELA participated in the EU funded project FMD and CSF Coordination Action (IAH Pirbright) in 2004 and 2007
- ▣ Initiated the European Parliament conference on Animal Health in October 2007
- ▣ Participated in EC Conference on BTV
- ▣ ... and was present at the Lelystad symposium on vector borne diseases, both in 2008



Worries about AHS

- ▣ In the Netherlands we experienced the Bluetongue drama of suffering and dying sheep
- ▣ It took 2 years of misery before a combined EU action made vaccination possible
- ▣ Instead of 6000 outbreaks in 2007, we had only 60 cases in 2008, all of which concerned non-vaccinated animals
- ▣ AHS , as we know, is 10 times worse in fatalities and horses have a higher sentimental and financial value



EU Directive

- ❑ The EU Directive requires the killing of infected stock and of animals with clinical signs, which could even be only a fever
- ❑ Member States may undertake more widespread killing on suspicion and preventive killing in an emergency
- ❑ The result of which could be:
chaos, protest and
possibly an exodus of
horses being taken to
'safer places'



National Contingency Plans

- ▣ The Dutch follow the Directive
- ▣ Expert Group: no killing, but quarantine
- ▣ Request for possible adjustments to Directive.
Alf Füssel: “Not now, will be done in due course with CAHP revisions”
- ▣ The Commission is however concerned and willing to take action as soon as AHS reaches Morocco
- ▣ EU Vaccine bank provides for emergency vaccination only

What to do?

- EU vaccine bank contains OBP live-attenuated vaccines → certain risks
- Rudy Meiswinkel, entomologist:



“I feel the Commission should consider funding experimental work in South Africa – NOT IN EUROPE - during which both *C. imicola* and *C. bolitinos* should be fed for a few days on 5 -10 horses that have been vaccinated a few days previously. If some of the midges were to pick up the vaccine virus then it would be reasonable to assume that European midges would be able to do likewise. “



And ...

- ▣ Get all parties concerned, EU-wide, to work closely with Merial in order to further develop their canarypox vaccines
- ▣ EU funding and preferably co-funding by some umbrella organisations like the Int. Fed. of Horseracing Authorities and FEI
- ▣ We know how fast such development can go once the tenders have been given (see BTV)
- ▣ Like Merial also Intervet is ready to go



Because

- ▣ The first threat of AHS in Europe must be met with the possibility of preventive vaccination
- ▣ Rudy Meiswinkel: *'AHS is such a serious disease threat , we need to look it right in the eyes'*



Therefore ...

- ▣ Let's join forces here today!
- ▣ Let's do this together!



..... AHS could be here tomorrow

Thank you

