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French Authorities and Industry Mobilize to Contain Recent Bluetongue Outbreak

Thermo Fisher Scientific working with laboratories to limit impact

LISSIEU, France — (October 26, 2015) — French authorities, veterinarians and farmers have mobilized to manage a recent outbreak of bluetongue virus (BTV), thanks to support from Thermo Fisher Scientific. Officials understood that rapid response with reliable diagnostic testing and vaccination would be crucial in the effort to protect the industry from significant financial loss.

Bluetongue is an infectious arthropod-borne viral disease that primarily affects domestic and wild ruminants. Authorities discovered the virus on a farm in central France in August this year. To determine if the case was isolated or widespread, authorities activated a bluetongue virus laboratory network within 24 hours. Testing confirmed a case of BTV genotype 8 (BTV-8), last seen in Europe about six years ago, a virus spread primarily to cattle by *Culicoides*, otherwise known as biting midges.

After confirming the outbreak, officials turned to Thermo Fisher Scientific, which quickly responded by ramping up production of its LSI VetMAX Bluetongue Virus NS3 Real-Time PCR Screening Kit.

“Several months ago, we had reactivated our BTV assays portfolio to help manage a sporadic resurgence of other BTV virus serotypes in the Balkans and other areas,” said Laurent Thiery, Thermo Fisher Scientific site leader in Lissieu, France. “That enabled us to provide necessary BTV diagnostic assays to French laboratories immediately. Our manufacturing team quickly shifted production plans so that substantial quantities of the LSI VetMAX Bluetongue Virus NS3 Real-Time PCR Screening Kit and other BTV diagnostics were readily available to laboratories throughout the BTV network.”

The French Ministry of Agriculture acted quickly to not only find the best solutions for managing the disease, but also to ensure the continuing trade of live animals. At this point, animals that test negative for BTV using the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay, and that also are part of a disinfection program, may be exported to Spain and Algeria. Additional discussions about live-animal trade with European Union members and other countries are also underway.

“From co-developing BTV diagnostic tools with a World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) laboratory to working with French animal health experts, we’re pleased that we can play a role in controlling serious animal diseases,” said Thiery. “Our experts strive to be reliable partners in managing animal health issues, and they are backed by a large portfolio of ready-to-use diagnostic tools.”

Thermo Fisher markets a portfolio of BTV diagnostic products for screening and strain-typing under the VetMAX brand. It offers real-time PCR assays for all genotypes of the virus. For more information, visit thermofisher.com/animalhealth.

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