INTRODUCTION

This workshop was carried out in the State hunting ground “Vitoshko-Studena”, in Bulgaria, in February 2016 for 22 wildlife/contingency planning veterinary officers from the Thrace and Balkan countries - Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Romania and Serbia aiming to improve the FMD contingency planning and preparedness in terms of wildlife management, disease surveillance and control strategies and to promote alternative diagnostic method - non-invasive sampling.

THE TRAINING

The theoretical part of the training introduced:

- Wildlife health and management - developing strategy and building capacity to holistically address animal health issues at the wildlife-livestock-human interface in Eastern and Central Europe. The Bulgarian experience with the FMD epidemics in 2011 with particular focus on wild boar surveillance, reinstatement of FMD free status when the disease was confirmed in wild animals.
- Results from telemetry studies in Bulgaria giving an insight to home ranges and the spatial and social interactions in wild boar population and also highlighting the role of wild boar in FMD disease epidemiology.
- Non-invasive sampling of wild boar for FMD and baits designed to demonstrate alternative sampling methods for the animal disease detection following ANIMO principle (active, non-invasive management of outbreaks), which need optimization and testing in the field condition.

The following practical exercises were focused on:

- Distribution of baits for non-invasive sampling of wild boar at feeding locations following observation of wild animals and collection of the baits on the next day.
- Presentation of different trapping systems for wild boar.
- Clinical investigation following dissection and sampling of hunted wild boar for contagious animal diseases and exercising biosafety and biosecurity in game collection center.

Wildlife management systems used in the participating countries, as well as surveillance and control systems used as a part of preparedness and early detection of animal contagious diseases were presented by the participants. Group activity work led to the development of the common strategies to be used for wildlife surveillance and animal disease control in the wildlife, followed by discussions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS (R&D)

As a result of the training the following main outcomes were identified:

- Wildlife management and surveillance strategy should be further developed with specific part in the Contingency plans dedicated for this particular purpose.
- Although the wildlife hunting and management practices in the Balkan countries differ, common strategies for the control of animal contagious diseases in wildlife are needed in the region.
- Manual on Biosafety during the game processing is needed and communication with the hunter associations should be addressed.
- Non-invasive sampling should be considered to be used as first indicator method for the early detection of FMD introduction. It is a need for further development of ANIMO principle (Active, Non-Invasive Management of Outbreaks), of sampling procedures and their inclusion in the national animal disease surveillance programmes.

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