Lumpy skin disease: Balkans outbreak-free in 2018

Vaccination and other control measures have succeeded in halting the epidemic of lumpy skin disease (LSD) in the Balkans, new data suggests.

EFSA’s latest report on the status of the disease in south-eastern Europe shows that there were no new outbreaks in 2018. The number of outbreaks had declined dramatically in 2017, down to 385 from 7,483 in 2016, and the latest data indicates that the disease is now absent from the region.

More than 2.5 million cattle were vaccinated in 2018, maintaining coverage above 70% across the region.

LSD is, however, still present in Russia, Turkey and Georgia, where there were 63, 46 and 6 outbreaks respectively in 2018.

Due to the continuing threat of reintroduction from LSD-affected countries, the report recommends that the vaccination programme be continued in 2019 in high-risk areas of the Balkans such as Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo, and the southern part of Serbia.

In addition, any country lifting its vaccination programme is expected to demonstrate that it is disease-free by setting up a surveillance scheme along the lines indicated by the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE). Croatia successfully implemented such a scheme last year.

Background

LSD is a viral disease of cattle that reached Greece via Turkey in late 2015. The disease returned in the spring of 2016, leading to outbreaks in Greece, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro. A regional vaccination programme started in 2016.

Lumpy skin disease III. Data collection and analysis