

Dear [FirstName] [LastName],

An overview 3rd Annual Meeting EPIZONE "Crossing Borders"

13-6-2009 9:16:43

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Special Topic Annual Meeting "Transboundary and emerging diseases"

13-6-2009 9:31:20

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Other (EU) projects participated in the EPIZONE Annual Meeting

13-6-2009 12:26:28

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Young EPIZONE programme on Annual Meeting

13-6-2009 9:39:54

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4th Annual Meeting EPIZONE 7-10 June 2010 in Saint Malo, France.

14-6-2009 16:03:49

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Biorisk management training workshop, April 20-21, 2009

13-6-2009 9:41:21

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Short Term Mission Marine Baud

13-6-2009 9:55:58

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Short Term Mission Liu Lihong

13-6-2009 9:57:25

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Course Design and analysis of transmission experiments

13-6-2009 9:44:33

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EPIZONE 2 days Training Course in Science Communications

13-6-2009 9:46:20

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Contact information:

E-mail: epizone.cvi@wur.nl

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EPIZONE is the Network of Excellence for Epizootic Disease Diagnosis and Control, supported by funding under the Sixth Research Framework Programme of the EU.

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An overview 3rd Annual Meeting EPIZONE "Crossing Borders"

EPIZONE held its **3rd Annual Meeting** from 12-15 May 2009 in the sunny tranquil setting of Antalya, Turkey. The conference was organized in close co-operation with SAP, FMD Institute Ankara. More than 320 participants from 26 countries all over the world attended this meeting; EPIZONE members, members from 10 other (EU) projects, scientists, sponsors and other stakeholders from outside the network. 217 abstracts were submitted, and during the meeting 48 oral presentations were given and 150 poster presentations were set up on the market fair.

As is the case with all EPIZONE meetings, it was multi-focused and covered recent developments, [See programme](#). [Abstract book](#) is available on the website as download

13 May

This international annual meeting, entitled "Crossing Borders", was opened 13th May in the "Welcome session" by **Professor Wim van der Poel**, Central Veterinary Institute of Wageningen UR (CVI), the coordinator of EPIZONE, and **Dr Isabel Minguez Tudela**, Scientific Officer EPIZONE, Research Directorate General, Directorate of Biotechnology, Agriculture, Food of the European Commission.

Dr Francisco Javier Reviriego Gordejo, European Commission, Health & Consumers Directorate General (DG SANCO) as special guest delivered a speech entitled: "[Transboundary and emerging diseases in context of the new EU Animal Health Strategy](#)". He spoke about the New EU Animal Health Strategy 2007-2012, introduced in 2007 under the slogan "Prevention is Better than Cure".

Because of the slogan "Crossing Borders" the meeting was focused 1 day, 13th May, on the special topic "**emerging and transboundary diseases**", such as Bluetongue, West Nile disease, and Avian Influenza which are increasingly becoming a greater threat, particularly within Northern Europe. Keynote speaker **Professor Manfred Stock** from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research presented the "[Predictions, projections, and perspectives of climate change](#)" in which he carefully described the difficulty of forecasting the exact effect that climate change would have on individual local regions. The afternoon session was opened by **Dr Louis Rodriguez** with the keynote lecture '[The Role of the Leader Protein of Foot-and-Mouth Disease Virus as a Virulence Factor](#)'. Unfortunately, Dr Marvin Grubman was not able to attend the meeting but, his colleague, gave the keynote presentation instead. He described the work done with the leader protein (Lpro) of foot-and-mouth disease virus (FMDV) by Dr Grubman and his co-workers at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, USA.

14 May

On 14th May there was a morning session on the topic "**Epizootic diseases of pig and poultry**". The day's first presentation was by keynote speaker Ankara University **Professor Aykut Ozkul**, "[Life threatening Crimean Congo Haemorrhagic Fever in Turkey: Characteristics, Epidemiology and Future Perspectives](#)". The presentation contained a detailed description of the epidemiology and ongoing research into the life threatening tick-borne Crimean Congo Haemorrhagic Fever in Turkey.

The afternoon session on "**Epizootic diseases of ruminants**" started with the keynote speakers **Dr. Geneviève Libeau**, Centre de coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement, and **Ashley Banyard**, VLA Weybridge, titled '[Peste des petits ruminants virus \(PPRV\): Application of molecular technologies to understanding and controlling the disease](#)'. Dr. Libeau described the Lineage 4 PPRV epidemic in Morocco from July to November 2008 and the successful emergency vaccination program which was implemented there. Ashley Banyard was formerly involved on reverse genetics of morbilliviruses at IAH Pirbright, in the Tom Barret's group. He spoke in length of the ongoing research into Rinderpest and the development of effective emergency vaccines.

13 and 14 May

In addition parallel sessions were held on 13th and 14th of May with oral presentations on the **EPIZONE Themes: Diagnostics, Vaccine development, Risk Assessment and Epidemiology and Surveillance**.

There was a market fair with the EPIZONE posters, with booths of our sponsors, (EU) projects and a EPIZONE booth. During the **meet and greet sessions** in the market fair the (EU) projects presented themselves by giving a presentation of their project.

12 and 15 May

On Tuesday 12 May, many EPIZONE work package meetings were held and (EU) project meetings, and there was a Young EPIZONE programme. For the first time we invited other (EU) projects to present themselves and gave them the opportunity to organize meetings. On Friday (15 May) there were 2 open sessions/workshops organized: [a GFRA workshop](#) and an [ARBO-ZOONET: WNV and CCHFV BTV Epidemiology \(IC 6.6\)](#). .

Special Topic Annual Meeting “Transboundary and emerging diseases”

An important theme throughout the first day was the influence that climatic change is having on the pathogenesis of emerging diseases. Keynote speaker **Professor Manfred Stock** from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research presented the [“Predictions, projections, and perspectives of climate change”](#) in which he carefully described the difficulty of forecasting the exact effect that climate change would have on individual local regions. Oral presentations followed. **Ides Boone** started with a presentation on prioritization of indicators to monitor animal health effects due to climate change. **Mariano Domingo** presented evidence of recent Rift Valley Fever virus circulating in Mayotte, a French island in the Indian Ocean. **Ana Moreno** from the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale in Lombardia and **Emilia Romagna** described the surveillance and research results obtained during the West Nile virus outbreak in Northern Italy last year. These demonstrated a very high degree of homology with strains isolated in France in 2004 and Spain in 2007. From Denmark **Preben Willeberg** described the results of the study to quantify the time-space clustering of highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks in wild birds reported in Denmark in 2006, and **Ase Uttenhal** presented Achievement and dissemination of the LAB-ON-SITE project of the EC, novel trends to combat the transboundary animal diseases.

Afternoon session was opened by **Dr Louis Rodriguez** with the keynote lecture [‘The Role of the Leader Protein of Foot-and-Mouth Disease Virus as a Virulence Factor’](#). He described the work done with the leader protein (Lpro) of foot-and-mouth disease virus (FMDV) by Dr Grubman and his co-workers at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, USA.

Helen Guis presenting research from the University of Liverpool, demonstrated the effect that climatic change had on bluetongue transmission in Europe. Given its geographical location and favourable climate, Italy was the first country in which Bluetongue and West Nile disease was noted. Not only had the increase in temperature allowed for higher virus replication but it had also allowed for the northward expansion of the Afro-Asian midge *Culicoides imicola*. Importantly, the Bluetongue virus has now also involved indigenous European *Culicoides* vector species in northern and eastern Europe.

Gill De Deken had a presentation on Micro-arrays as a molecular identification tool for possible BTV-8 vectors. Belgium started a national vector monitoring programme after the 2006 outbreak of bluetongue virus serotype 8 (BTV-8). **Stephanie Galleau** demonstrated the effectiveness of vaccination on transplacental transmission of BTV-8. 40% of the BTV-8 contaminated cows gave birth to RT-PCR positive calves. In contrast immunization of the pregnant dams with the tested vaccine appears to have completely prevented transplacental contamination of the calves.

Mahesh Kumar was able to demonstrate the effectiveness of vaccines in combating epidemiological outbreaks using the West Nile disease epidemic in the United States as a model. The whole virus vaccine manufactured by Fort Dodge and now approved for use throughout the EU, achieved a 94% efficacy during this outbreak. Other presentations on the day included a description by **Barbara Thuer** of a novel bluetongue virus detected in goats from Switzerland which has been named Toggenburg orbivirus (TOV).

Piet van Rijn had a presentation about the bluetongue virus serotype 6 (BTV-6) in the Netherlands, and another presentation on bluetongue, held by **Andreas Froehlich**, concerned the evaluation of the Monitoring and Surveillance System of the European Union.

[See abstract book](#) for abstracts all oral presentations

Other (EU) projects participated in the EPIZONE Annual Meeting

EuroPRRSnet, FLUTRAIN, FLUAID, EADGENE, ETPGAH, DISCONTOOLS, GFRA, ESNIP2, ARBOZONET and LAB-ON-SITE participated in the Annual Meeting. During the meet and greet sessions in the market fair the (EU) projects presented themselves in their booth and by giving a presentation of their project.

Presentations [\(EU\) projects](#) in the market fair.

13 May morning: *Tahar Ait-Ali:* Introduction to EuroPRRSnet.

Cyril Gay: Global Foot-and-Mouth Disease Research Alliance (GFRA): Future Goals and Direction.

13 May afternoon: *Gaëlle Kuntz-Simon:* Introduction to ESNIP2.

Keith Sumption: EUFMD, netspertise and FMD control: maintaining regional expertise needs a global network solution.

14 May morning: *Michèle Bouloy:* Introduction to ARBO-ZONET. *William Dundon:* FLUAID – “Project achievements.

14 May afternoon: *Declan O'Brien:* Introduction to DISCONTOOLS and ETPGAH. *Mari Smits:* EADGENE overview and results.

Friday, 15 May, there were 2 open sessions/workshops organised: a GFRA workshop, [summary](#) and [programme](#), and an ARBO-ZONET: WNV and CCHFV BTV Epidemiology (IC 6.6) meeting , [summary](#) and [programme](#).

Young EPIZONE programme on Annual Meeting

The first day of the 3rd Annual Meeting was dedicated to meetings of Work Package Leaders and to Young EPIZONE. There was a full day for the Young EPIZONE programme. Members of Young EPIZONE had the opportunity to learn about the **possibility of going on a short-term mission** in another lab from the lips of the same people that took advantage of this excellent break.

Furthermore, companies from around the world, **Merial, IDEXX, QIAGEN, Fort Dodge and Irish Equine Centre, gave presentations** about their company's infrastructure, mission and career opportunities, which gave Young EPIZONE participants a good opportunity to learn more, and consider their career prospects after the end of their Ph.D.s/Post-Docs.

In addition, **Dr. Piet van Rijn headed an excellent networking exercise** simulating the Netherlands Bluetongue outbreak of 2008. The exercise provided all of us with the chance to think logically and quickly about the steps that should have been taken to contain the outbreak and to improve research and legislation, as well as to get to know each other better. Finally, **a presentation workshop** provided members with feedback and helped them improve their presentation skills

4th Annual Meeting EPIZONE 7-10 June 2010 in Saint Malo, France.

4th Annual Meeting entitled "Bridges to the Future" will be held from 7-10 June 2010 in Saint Malo, France.

Further information can be found on www.epizone-eu.net

Biorisk management training workshop, April 20-21, 2009

The workshop was held at the Institute of Virology and Immunoprophylaxis in Mittelhäusern, Switzerland. The **evaluation** from the participants was that the course was successful and they would recommend it 100% to their colleagues.

The workshop had the following objectives:

- Acquisition of knowledge on biosafety and biosecurity aspects of highly contagious animal diseases
- Gaining insights in principles and methods underlying risk assessment for activities involving highly contagious animal diseases (laboratory activities and animal experiments)
- Getting particulars on technical, organisational and personal safety measures for work with highly contagious animal diseases.

The first part of the workshop was dedicated to presentations on different important animal diseases such as food-and mouth disease, avian influenza and other zoonotic disease. **The second part of the workshop** involved group work (case study) looking at the principles and methods underlying risk assessment for activities involving hazardous biological materials involving animal experiments. The case study approach was used to allow participants to work in smaller groups and to develop and understand the process of risk assessment as it relates to biosafety. Participants were split into two groups. Both groups visited the high containment laboratory to gain an inside view of such facilities and the safety measures in place.

The target audience were PhD students or postdocs who wanted to learn more about risk assessment for laboratory activities involving highly contagious animal diseases and who wanted to learn more about safety measures in high containment facilities.

Short Term Mission Marine Baud

Marine Baud from AFSSA, France, participated in **the training course in Molecular Diagnostics of Fish Diseases** organized by DTU VET in Aarhus, Denmark from 22-30 April 2009.

The whole meeting was an opportunity for several **technicians and scientists** from different European laboratories to share their bench experiences for fish virus diagnosis. "**My main objective** was to obtain protocols and methods from the host laboratory to detect some important fish viruses by qPCR. A second objective was to exchange experiences and discuss advantages and disadvantages of other more conventional molecular methods for several fish virus genotyping (for instance direct sequencing of PCR products versus cloning). Both objectives were fulfilled during the period".

"First of all, it must be mentioned that the training was perfectly organized in all aspects by the host team, with great conviviality. **The atmosphere was clearly conducive to the exchange of experiences, tips and methods.** The planned diagnostic experiments were all performed and discussed openly between participants. Many discussions were related with the type of controls to perform (positive and negative), particularly with qPCR, to avoid both false negatives and positives samples. More generally, the validation of methods was largely discussed between partners. An interesting part concerned the open database of strains of fish viral haemorrhagic rhabdoviruses: how to use this tool to obtain and deposit viral sequences associated with outbreaks. This tool should help us to identify strains of VHSV in future outbreaks in France and more generally to share between colleagues a unique database for VHSV surveillance".

"**I would recommend this short term mission program to everybody else.** Exchanging bench experiences with colleagues who confront the same difficulties is always of great interest. All diagnostic teams face problems of contaminations, sensitivity thresholds, yield of macromolecules, kits efficiency, etc. It seems crucial to share knowledge in these domains. In this respect, a 10 day meeting at the bench with only a few participants is much more productive than discussions in a congress or reading documents. This meeting was invaluable allowing discussion of crucial experimental details".

Short Term Mission Liu Lihong

Liu Lihong, from [The National Veterinary Institute \(SVA\), Uppsala, Sweden](#) made a visit to Harbin Veterinary Research Institute, China from 22-31 May 2009.

The reason for the visit was to evaluate our recent real-time PCR assay for improved detection of classical swine fever virus (CSFV) using primer-probe energy transfer (PriProET) technology (Liu et al., 2009). The study itself was also supported by the EPIZONE workpackage 4.3 DIVA diagnostics.

"During my visit, I was able to perform evaluation of PriProET assay in a different platform using 50 CSFV samples at HVRI, and later transferred technology to HVRI. In the meantime, I was talking to different groups working with swine infectious diseases, e.g. CSF and PRRS. I thoroughly enjoyed the topics/areas that HVRI are currently working on. As each group focus on one disease, they could perform in-depth studies at different levels. Of those, molecular diagnostics and epidemiology of CSF have potential for further collaboration between us.

The visit is so fruitful and I truly recommend this short term mission to others".

Course Design and analysis of transmission experiments

The course will be held **in Wageningen, The Netherlands, 2-6 November, 2009** .

The aim of this course is to increase knowledge on biological and mathematical aspects of transmission experiments. The design and (statistical) analysis of transmission experiments are the main subjects. Following this course, the participant should be able to design, to do basic analyses and interpret the outcomes of transmission studies and to evaluate relevant literature.

Maximum of 20 students

This course/workshop is primarily aimed at persons working in the field of veterinary microbiology, bacteriology, virology, and epidemiology who are interested in executing or are involved in (transmission) experiments with infectious diseases. The course is suitable for both Masters and PhD students. It is assumed that participants have knowledge about basic statistics and some experience using spreadsheet programme Microsoft Excel.

Contents

Within this advanced course several aspects of transmission experiments will be dealt with.

This course consists of lectures, and intensively supervised computer practicals. Participants are required to bring their own laptops. Microsoft Excel must be installed on the laptop.

For more information about costs, preliminary programme and registration, [click here](#).

NOTICE ! registration form will be online week 26.

EPIZONE 2 days Training Course in Science Communications

Training Course in Science Communications will be held in **Aarhus, Denmark, October 28-30, 2009.**

Why? Transforming complicated research results into clear messages that can be communicated outside the research community is a skill that does not come easy to most researchers.

However, help is on its way: EPIZONE is now offering a two days Training Course in Science Communications.

Contents

The course will cover the basic essential skills needed for successful communication, such as understanding your audience, writing, interviewing and working with the media.

Maximum 20 scientists

The course attendance is limited to 20 persons from EPIZONE partner institutes.

Costs of training, board and lodging as well as travel costs is free and covered by EPIZONE.

For more information about programme and registration, [click here](#)

Notice! Application **deadline for the course is August 1st 2009**; read more about the course contents and learning objectives at (link to attached file).