

Dear [FirstName] [LastName],

### **First EPIZONE Update**

2-4-2009 15:22:49

EPIZONE, 3 years running. "I am very pleased to send you the first EPIZONE Update. In June 2009 EPIZONE has been running for three years and has become a strong network. EPIZONE, is the EU funded Network of Excellence for Epizootic Disease Diagnosis...

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### **What is going on in the EPIZONE network, www.epizone-eu.net**

2-4-2009 16:14:47

Scientific integration. Inside the network integration is stimulated by organization of short term missions and training courses, scientific exchange visits relevant to EPIZONE objectives. By launching yearly an internal call for new integrating...

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### **EPIZONE initiate to strengthen the diagnostic capacities PPR in Europe**

2-3-2009 11:39:52

EPIZONE started an inter laboratory comparison trial for PPR genome and antibody detection, to strengthen the diagnostic capacities on Peste des Petit Ruminants within Europe. In summer 2008, Morocco reported the emergence of PPR outbreaks that could...

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### **Annual Report review from Brussels: "Good to Excellence"**

2-3-2009 9:46:45

All the hard work of everyone involved in EPIZONE has proven to be worthwhile. For the second time in a row EPIZONE scored a Good to Excellent on the review by Brussels! Good To Excellence means: This project has fully achieved its objectives and technical...

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### **Follow up EPIZONE workshop "Building Bridges" Shanghai**

2-4-2009 15:58:32

Collaboration between Bhutan, Denmark and Poland. As a follow up of the EPIZONE workshop "Building Bridges" in Shanghai in July 2008, Dr Åse Uttenthal (VET-DTU, EPIZONE partner), visited Dr Raika in Buthan to look into the pig production system...

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### **Invited EU projects at the 3rd Annual Meeting "Crossing Borders", 12-15 May 2009**

4-3-2009 16:38:06

10 projects, EuroPRRSnet, FLUTRAIN, FLUAID, EADGENE, ETPGAH, DISCONTOOLS, GFRA, ESNIP2, ARBOZONET and LAB-ON-SITE will attend the 3rd annual meeting EPIZONE. Some have booked their place on the market to present themselves or organize an open or closed...

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### **DISCONTOOLS**

26-3-2009 17:36:15

Wim van der Poel and Piet van Rijn (scientists from the Central Veterinary Institute of Wageningen UR) represent EPIZONE in Work Package 2 and Work Package 3 of DISCONTOOLS. The project (coordination action) DISCONTOOLS is coordinated by the International...

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### **Dr Wim van der Poel, the new Coordinator of EPIZONE**

4-3-2009 16:05:40

After 2,5 year EPIZONE, Coordinator Dr Piet van Rijn hands his job over to Professor Wim van der Poel of the Central Veterinary Institute of Wageningen UR (CVI). Wim has been involved in EPIZONE from the beginning. As the Theme 2 leader "Scientific...

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### **Short term mission Eefke Weesendorp to the IAH Pirbright**

2-3-2009 9:36:55

Eefke: "I can recommend it to everyone ". As a PhD-student I am working on underlying mechanisms of Classical Swine Fever (CSF) virus transmission at the Central Veterinary Institute of Wageningen UR (CVI Lelystad). My research group is currently...

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[EPIZONE update News gathering](#)

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[www.epizone-eu.net](http://www.epizone-eu.net)

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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## First EPIZONE Update

**EPIZONE, 3 years running.** "I am very pleased to send you the first EPIZONE Update. In June 2009 EPIZONE has been running for three years and has become a strong network. EPIZONE, is the EU funded Network of Excellence for Epizootic Disease Diagnosis and Control.

In my view EPIZONE, the Network of Excellence is the research network for combating epizootic animal diseases in Europe starting from the leading veterinary research institutes within Europe. In its first years EPIZONE has proven to be able to play an important role in this. EPIZONE has the ambition to function as a platform and provide a think-tank of highly qualified scientists that develop new strategies and tools to face new challenges in the future. In the coming years of EPIZONE we will work on expanding this role and I am confident we will find a sustainable structure for the network to continue our important role in future".

Wim van der Poel

Coordinator EPIZONE, Central Veterinary Institute of Wageningen UR

## What is going on in the EPIZONE network, [www.epizone-eu.net](http://www.epizone-eu.net)

### Scientific integration.

Inside the network integration is stimulated by organization of **short term missions and training courses**, scientific exchange visits relevant to EPIZONE objectives. By launching yearly an internal call for new integrating **projects**, the network can respond to new developments such as the unexpected outbreak of BTv in NW Europe and the threat of PPR in Morocco.

In 2008, a network of young scientists (PhD student and post-docs<4years) called **Young EPIZONE** started successfully. With Young EPIZONE the network invest in the future generation scientists.

EPIZONE already has produced a number of **joint scientific publications and peer reviews** in its research themes diagnostics, vaccine development, risk assessment and surveillance and epidemiology

### Meetings and workshops

To stimulate networking and to disseminate knowledge from the network, EPIZONE has organized several meetings and workshop in the past period.

Some examples:

- **The Annual Meetings** "EPIZONE inside out", 2007 in Poland, "The Need for Speed" 2008 in Brescia, with 300 participants from 21 countries, and this year in Turkey "Crossing Borders" , expected 300 participants, scientists and stakeholders, from 25 different countries.
- **A Bluetongue Satellite Symposium** was organized together with the annual Meeting in Italy was combined with organized by EPIZONE. Information on the latest research results was presented by keynote speakers and scientists from 24 countries in and outside Europe.
- **Three international workshops have been conducted** involving national crisis management personnel from EPIZONE and non-EPIZONE partners. During these workshops the **use and interpretation of DIVA diagnostics** for foot-and-mouth disease after vaccination in domestic herds were discussed.
- **A workshop on avian influenza**, including participants from outside the network also, was realized successfully in Italy
- **The "Building Bridges" workshop** on swine viral diseases, was organised in Shanghai together with the European Commission and the Shanghai Veterinary Research Institute. A report "Summary of presentations, conclusions and recommendations" is available on the EPIZONE website. 50 Scientists from Asia and Europe participated in this workshop.

### Networking for harmonization and standardization

On the scientific part there are several successes to mention, especially in the field of standardization of methodologies, some examples:

- **An interlaboratory comparison trial for PPR** genome and antibody detection was recently started by EPIZONE to strengthen the diagnostic capacities on Peste des Petit Ruminants within Europe. The reason for this initiative was the 2008 outbreak of Peste de Petit Ruminants in Morocco close to the EU border.
- **A first CSFV-RNA reference panel was distributed.** This so-called "EPIZONE REFERENCE RNA PANEL CSFV" can be used by all EPIZONE partners for a further harmonization of CSFV real-time PCR diagnostics, DNA-Chip diagnostics as well as pen-side testing
- **An unique pan viral DNA chip and DNA chips for accurate sub-typing** of important epizootic viruses were designed. A combined "EPIZONE Pan Viral DNA Chip" is under evaluation and will be tested during workshops and in a ring trial.
- **Two joint vaccine experiments** were organized by the ASFV group. This was done using funding from other projects and including expertise from different partners.
- **Discussion groups have been established** on bluetongue disease, African swine fever virus, Paramyxovirus vaccines, Rift Valley fever virus vaccines and DIVA vaccines.
- **An European Online Data Base on Epizootic Diseases** was build using a standard data set defined by the partners of the work package.
- **The GISAID (Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data) data base has started.** Avian influenza (AI) sequencing protocols of partner institutes are collated and distributed among partners of the Work Package for comparison. Sequencing data generated from the involved partners are to be uploaded into the database GISAID
- **In the surveillance and epidemiology of emerging viral diseases in aquaculture**, important progress has been made. Amongst others Koi herpes virus a rapid emerging disease, is now included in a surveillance.
- **Transmission parameters of FMDV and SVDV were quantified.** This was done under experimental conditions.
- **Potential disease threats to Europe as a result of changing environments were identified and prioritized.** Using a questionnaire based on a qualitative risk assessment framework relevant data were obtained and to assess the impact of climate change on the risks of incursion of vector-borne livestock viruses into the EU, an expert opinion workshop was held. The results of the expert opinion workshop allow predictions on emerging animal diseases in the next decades.
- **A technical aid that helps to assess the risk that classical swine fever is present in a herd** was evaluated. The results are a big step forward towards feeding an electronic tool with the field data required to detect classical swine fever in affected farms in different countries.

more information: [www.epizone-eu.net](http://www.epizone-eu.net)

## **EPIZONE initiate to strengthen the diagnostic capacities PPR in Europe**

**EPIZONE started an inter laboratory comparison trial for PPR genome and antibody detection**, to strengthen the diagnostic capacities on Peste des Petit Ruminants within Europe. In summer 2008, Morocco reported the emergence of PPR outbreaks that could threaten Europe. A large vaccination campaign was implemented that seems to have limited the disease spread. However, it is now important to strengthen the diagnostic capacities within Europe, taking advantage of the existence of an active network on epizootic animal diseases. Reference materials and protocols will be shared in order to allow national reference laboratories within the network to enforce their expertise. The first round in 2009 will be limited to EPIZONE laboratories. CIRAD, OIE/FAO reference laboratory on PPR, has accepted to lead this task. Results will be presented at the 3rd Annual Meeting in May 2009.

## **Annual Report review from Brussels: "Good to Excellence"**

All the hard work of everyone involved in EPIZONE has proven to be worthwhile. For the second time in a row EPIZONE scored a Good to Excellent on the review by Brussels! **Good To Excellence means:** *This project has fully achieved its objectives and technical goals for the period and has even exceeded expectations.*

**From the review report:** "This network for intervention and control of epizootic diseases has developed at a remarkable pace over the last year. Particularly interesting was a new creation "Young EPIZONE" where tomorrow's "to be" scientists could listen to talks and discuss with established experts. This coddling and interest in career development may develop into an excellent tool to keep the brains in Europe". "The project has had excellent progress in most areas and the objectives are still highly relevant. The work packages have mostly delivered as planned". "At this stage it may be relevant to add a wish for the future: It should be remembered that in addition to producing good science, which is extremely important, the participants in this network of excellence have a major obligation actually to do "networking". This is the major intent of the investment. Research groups of different backgrounds should interact and create mutual and collective comprehension. This is what could make the network even more powerful. It is certainly the purpose of the annual meeting but should also be kept in mind in daily business"

## Follow up EPIZONE workshop "Building Bridges" Shanghai

### **Collaboration between Bhutan, Denmark and Poland.**

As a follow up of the EPIZONE workshop "Building Bridges" in Shanghai in July 2008 , Dr Åse Uttenthal (VET-DTU, EPIZONE partner), visited Dr Raika in Buthan to look into the pig production system and pighealth in Bhutan. Dr Raika initiated also collaboration with Dr Tomasz Stadejek (NVRI, EPIZONE partner).

### **PRRS**

The two EU swine experts will collaborate and communicate on the improvement of pig health in Bhutan focusing on the newly detected problem of the introduction of PRRS. At the 3rd Annual Meeting EPIZONE Dr Tomasz Stadejek will present the latest results on a poster "**Highly pathogenic variant of porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus in Bhutan**"

**The report of the workshop Building Bridges** is available now: "[Summary of presentations, conclusions and recommendations](#)". This workshop on swine viral diseases was organized by the European Commission, the Shanghai Veterinary Research Institute (SVRI) and EPIZONE.

## **Invited EU projects at the 3rd Annual Meeting "Crossing Borders", 12-15 May 2009**

**10 projects, EuroPRRSnet, FLUTRAIN, FLUAID, EADGENE, ETPGAH, DISCONTTOOLS, GFRA, ESNIP2, ARBOZONET and LAB-ON-SITE** will attend the 3rd annual meeting EPIZONE. Some have booked their place on the market to present themselves or organize an open or closed meeting. We believe that by combining meetings for EPIZONE and related projects we shall stimulate interaction and collaboration between projects. The possibilities for networking and discussions are vast. This meeting is also open to stakeholders and scientists outside EPIZONE. [Sponsors](#) are welcome.

### **Over 200 abstracts submitted**

An overwhelming amount of abstracts has been submitted for the 3rd Annual Meeting EPIZONE "[Crossing Borders](#)" to be held in Antalya, Turkey from 12-15 May 2009. The slogan "Crossing borders" relates to our special topic this year, emerging and transboundary diseases, as well as international networking and its extra value, our network's mission and a prerequisite to control epizootic diseases.

### **Programme overview ([whole programme](#))**

**13th May 2009**, EPIZONE day session on "Emerging and transboundary diseases", amongst others: Bluetongue, PPR, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever.

**13th and 14th May 2009**, EPIZONE half day parallel sessions on epizootic diseases of ruminants, epizootic diseases of pig and poultry and on the EPIZONE themes: diagnostics, vaccine development, risk assessment, surveillance and epidemiology.

**Reminder: [Deadline Registration, 1 May 2009](#)**



## **DISCONTTOOLS**

**Wim van der Poel and Piet van Rijn** (scientists from the Central Veterinary Institute of Wageningen UR) **represent EPIZONE** in Work Package 2 and Work Package 3 of DISCONTTOOLS. The project (coordination action) DISCONTTOOLS is coordinated by the International Federation for Animal Health – Europe (IFAH-Europe). DISCONTTOOLS will optimise research efforts for the development of the most effective tools for controlling infectious animal diseases of major importance to the EU and the rest of the world.

Please find the minutes of the meetings at: <http://www.ifaheurope.org/EUPlatform/discontools.htm>

## **Dr Wim van der Poel, the new Coordinator of EPIZONE**

**After 2,5 year EPIZONE, Coordinator Dr Piet van Rijn hands his job over to Professor Wim van der Poel** of the Central Veterinary Institute of Wageningen UR (CVI). Wim has been involved in EPIZONE from the beginning. As the Theme 2 leader "Scientific Integration", he has been participating in the Executive Committee and he is the CVI representative in the Coordinating forum. In the last year he had been leading a Work Package on rabies and classical swine fever surveillance.

"I have always been an advocate of European research networks. I believe in bringing scientists together to do joint research and therefore I have been actively involved in EU research networks, besides EPIZONE including MedVetNet and several COST programs."

### **Visiting Professor**

Recently, Wim van der Poel is appointed as visiting Professor at the National Centre for Zoonoses Research (NCZR) of the University of Liverpool. Wim has worked at the Central Veterinary Institute of Wageningen UR (CVI) in Lelystad since November 2004. After he got his PhD (on the epidemiology of BRSV infections) at the Veterinary Faculty of the Utrecht University he moved to the National Institute of Public Health (RIVM) to undertake research on zoonotic viruses. At CVI he is research leader on emerging and zoonotic viruses of the Department of Virology. The viruses he research now include Rabies (lyssaviruses), Hepatitis E viruses, Caliciviruses and emerging viruses and food-borne viruses in gen.

## Short term mission Eefke Weesendorp to the IAH Pirbright

**Eefke: "I can recommend it to everyone ".**

As a PhD-student I am working on underlying mechanisms of Classical Swine Fever (CSF) virus transmission at the CVI (Lelystad). My research group is currently only working on CSF but starts working on African swine fever (ASF) next year. As we haven't been working on ASF for some years, there is only little knowledge on techniques like virus isolation and titration, or antibody detection methods. Therefore, I went for two weeks to the IAH in Pirbright to learn these techniques. In Pirbright I got the opportunity to watch these techniques being performed, to do them myself, and learn more about ASF by speaking with a lot of ASF experts.

Furthermore, it gave me the chance to look around in a different laboratory and experience different laboratory practices. During my stay I also gave a presentation about my work on CSFV. Afterwards I discussed with several people the results of my study. For me the short term mission was very instructive and I can recommend it to everyone who likes to learn different techniques, cultures or laboratory practices.

### Trip report

After my arrival in Pirbright the 17th of November I started with an introduction in the high containment unit. The next days I learned the following techniques:

- the collection of bones and lungs from piglets for primary cell cultures
- the preparation of bone macrophage cells
- the preparation of lung macrophage cells
- the preparation of PBMC
- the Haemabsorption assay
- ASFV RNA isolation and PCR
- the ASFV antibody ELISA

Furthermore, I had the opportunity to watch and help with several other techniques like

Western blotting and sequencing of ASFV strains The second week I gave a presentation about my project on CSFV to approximately 20 scientists. Afterwards I discussed the results of my study with several scientists. This gave me the opportunity to learn more from people working on other viruses, with different ideas. This also expanded my scientific network which could be useful in further collaborations.