

Clarification of the exemptions from the exit ban for domestic movements

1. Movements to a slaughterhouse

- a) *Movement from areas without restrictive measures to slaughterhouses in zones where BT-restrictive measures are in force.*

Council Directive 2000/75/EC does not mention anything with respect to ruminants from BT-free areas entering the surveillance zone, either for direct slaughter or for fattening or breeding purposes. From the veterinary point of view this indeed is not necessary; such movements do not constitute a significant further risk of spread of the infection.

The text of 2000/75/EC, article 10, could give rise to misunderstanding as regards movement of ruminants from the surveillance zone to the inner protection zone and from there to the 20 km zone. "Leaving the zone" (art.9-1 (c) could mean both ways, but we interpret the text, based on the veterinary reasoning mentioned above, to mean that only movements are forbidden into zones or area's with a higher disease status.

NB: This discussion is also relevant for the movement of live products from ruminants, i.e. semen, embryos and ova. For these commodities we also understand 2000/75/EC to mean that only transport into regions with a higher disease status is forbidden.

- b) *Movements of ruminants from higher risk zones to slaughterhouses in lower risk zones or BT-free areas.*

Directive 2000/75/EC clearly forbids such movements, but allows exemptions. Commission Decision 2005/393/EC includes provisions to allow such exemptions (article 4) for instance:

- case by case risk assessment taking several epidemiological factors into consideration;
- clinical inspection before transportation;
- controlled transport (sealed transport vehicles, prior notice to slaughterhouse, direct transport; arrival checks).

We want to make use of these provisions and allow slaughter in lower risk zones and the remaining BT-free area of the Netherlands.

NB: Article 4 of Decision 2005/393/EC does not specifically mention domestic transport of semen, embryos and ova from zones with a higher risk to zones with a lower BT risk (article 5 deals with intercommunity trade).

2. Transport of animal through the BT restriction zones

Commission Decision 2005/393/EC includes provisions to allow transit through zones with BT restrictions. As transit through the Netherlands will be possible without staying at a staging post, we do not foresee problems to use this exemption. We propose the major highways through the country with exemption of the 20 kilometre zones.

3. Exemption from exit for semen, ova and embryos

As semen, ova and embryos produced before the first of May 2006 were obtained from animals protected from *Culicoides* attack for well over a period of 100 days, these commodities fulfil the necessary obligations as described in 2005/393/EC under Annex II (B1 and C1)

The spread of Bluetongue is directly related with the activity and number of flying sensible *Culicoides* spp. Because the last decade Bluetongue infected areas tended to move to the north, the Netherlands decided to make an inventory of *Culicoides*. This program started last year. Due to the cold spring period this year, the first *Culicoides* appeared only in May and successively the number rose till a peak period in July. During the winter the *Culicoides* are not active in the infected region. Therefore all semen and embryos produced before 1 May 2006 can be used and exported safely. Of course this is also the case for semen or embryos imported into the Netherlands from the neighbouring countries.

We propose to allow the domestic use and the export of all ruminant semen produced in EU approved semen collection centres in the Netherlands before May 1, 2006 and for EU qualified semen not produced in the Netherlands (imported).

Final remark

The initial source of the outbreak is still unknown as well as the location of the true first outbreak in the region. It is not even certain in which country the disease was imported first.