

Intervention CVO WP 12-11-2020 SARS-CoV-2 in animals

- First cases of the new Corona virus were detected late 2019, the disease was declared pandemic in march 2020, human driven pandemic.
- First reports of infections in animals from Hong Kong in February and later on the cat in Belgium
- HK decided to report as an immediate notification, emerging disease under 1.1.4.
- Whether to report as an emerging disease has been discussed amongst the CVOs.
- According to the CVOs the definition was not met at that time and a letter was sent by the presidency and the EC to the OIE that we did not regard these detections of SARS-CoV-2 in animals as an emerging disease.
- The definition is: *a new occurrence in an animal of a disease, infection or infestation, causing a significant impact on animal or public health resulting*
- The cases in pet animals did not fulfil the definition "causing a significant impact"
- Instead we reported outbreaks of SARS-CoV-2 in animals under 1.1.6 as "other important animal health information"
- Since then the situation in animals has changed drastically
- We have experienced outbreaks in mink in several countries.
- We have seen reverse transmission mink-human and we know now that people in contact with mink may get infected.
- We have also seen the spread of virus strains, probably originating from animals in the human populations.
- Countries like the NL and DK have taken drastic measures to further protect public health.
- Measures were taken based on extensive research, spreading of the virus although strict biosecurity and the risk of mink become a reservoir of viruses.
- Even when the pandemic is human driven, mink may pose a risk for human health (not 1,5 m distance and up to 100.000 individuals together on a premises)
- The Netherlands believe that looking at the current situation SARS-CoV-2 in mink does meet the criteria of an emerging disease and would plead for a change of position. We propose to regard this under the TAHC as an emerging disease and to notify under 1.1.4.

- In the NL we have put in place an extensive research program. A presentation on this can be found on the conf website OIE Europe meeting.
- There is one other important point to mention coming from the research we have done. Through our early warning system we have detected 39 of the 69 farms where we did not see clinical signs but animals were found to be positive. In other words, on less than 50% of the infected farms the animals showed clinical signs, the others were sub clinical.
- I realise that we currently have no definition of emerging disease in our EU legislation.
- However the NL is convinced that putting in place surveillance for Mustelidae is important.
- We would therefore urge to make (harmonised) monitoring of SARS-CoV-2 in Mustelidae compulsory, as to make sure we do not create new unknown reservoirs of the virus.
- Lastly, in addition to monitoring, we think that it would be good to discuss possible control measures for this disease in mink