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EURL activities in 2012

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Abstract:

The duties of the EURL are described in Council [Directive 2006/88/EC of 24 October 2006](#) (Annex VI). The duties mainly concern fish diseases listed as exotic diseases: EHN, EUS; and fish diseases listed as non-exotic diseases: ISA, VHS, IHN and KHV disease.

The 16th Annual Meeting of the NRLs for Fish Diseases was held in Aarhus, Denmark, 30-31 May 2012 at the premises of the Section for Fish Diseases at DTU Veterinary. A total of 44 participants from 28 countries attended over the two day period. A report was submitted in August 2011.

Again this year an inter-laboratory proficiency test was distributed to the NRLs mainly within the EU but there were also participants from countries outside EU. For the third year, the proficiency test consisted of two tests, PT1 and PT2. PT1 was designed to primarily assess the ability of participating laboratories to identify VHSV, IHNV and EHN + SVCV and IPNV (upon request from laboratories being accredited for these pathogens). PT2 was developed in order to test the proficiency of participating laboratories to identify ISA and KHV and in addition also spores of the oomycete *Aphanomyces invadans* causing EUS. Thereby the proficiency test is covering all 6 listed exotic and non-exotic diseases. 44 National Reference Laboratories (NRLs) participated in the proficiency test, the highest number ever. A report was submitted in February 2012. Most laboratories performed very well.

An important focus of the EURL is to update the standard operating procedures of the non-exotic and exotic listed diseases. Diagnostic manuals for VHS, IHN, ISA, KHV and EHN are now available at the EURL web page. Diagnostic manual for EUS has been uploaded in 2012. This disease was, however, delisted by the EU Commission in autumn 2012 and might thus be removed from our web page again. We have nevertheless decided to keep it updated until discussions on listing/no-listing is finalised. Unfortunately the manual on sampling and diagnostic procedures for the listed diseases has still not been adapted by the EU, the diagnostic methods therefore still relies on the former Commission Decision 2001/183/EC for VHS and IHN and 2003/446/EC for ISA while no legislative text exist for KHV, EHN and EUS.

Another important focus area was the development, implementation and validation of diagnostic tools for identification of the listed diseases and their accreditation. One outcome of these efforts was the publication on the generation of a real-time RT-PCR assay for detection of all genotypes of VHSV that has been proposed for the OIE to be used as an alternative to surveillance for VHS by cell cultivation!

During 2012, resources were also used to collate data on surveillance, health categorisation, and diagnostics in EU; to identify and characterise selected virus isolates; to type, store and update a library of listed virus isolates; to develop, update and maintain the database containing information on fish pathogens (www.fishpathogens.eu); to supply reference materials to NRLs; to provide training courses in laboratory diagnosis; to produce antisera; to update the EURL webpage (www.eurl-fish.eu); and finally to attend international meetings and conferences.

The permanent staffs of the Section for Fish Diseases in Aarhus, Denmark consists of approx. 22 academic and technical staff, primarily involved in research, diagnostics and consultancy with special focus on fish virology.