



**Reference Laboratories Network Meeting,
IAH-Pirbright, 14:00 – 16:00, Tuesday 6 December and
9:00 – 12:00, Wednesday 7 December**

Report

Present:

David Paton, Jean-François Valarcher, John Bashiruddin (Rapporteur) George Matlho	World Reference Laboratory for FMD, IAH-Pirbright, UK Regional Reference Laboratory for the Sub-Saharan continent, Botswana
Natalia Mudrak, Svetlana Kremenchugskaya	FGI-ARRIAH, Russia

David Paton welcomed all present.

Appologies were accepted from Ingrid Bergmann, Panaftosa, Brazil.

David Paton explained some of the history and the reasons for the consolidation of the Network and updated the meeting of its progress. These were partly the effects of the EU Coordination action and its efforts in getting people together, the OIE/FAO notion of a virtual laboratory for FMD. A draft agreement document was discussed at a meeting in April 2005 and there it was agreed to adopt a less legalistic Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) for the Network. This document was previously circulated, modified and agreed by all parties including Panaftosa and a penultimate version was tabled.

1. Annual report

A joint Annual Report for the OIE prepared by IAH and circulated for comments and additions to the other OIE reference laboratories was an output of the Network and was reviewed by JFV. The first part of the report was a summary of the report prepared for the OIE and the second was information that is not captured by OIE and FAO. Those present were asked to update the table of isolates in the report to better reflect the virus characterisation work being done by the Network. NM, SK and GM agreed to provide this information within the next few days. More samples from Africa were required and the WRL was addressing this problem. The report lacked world wide coverage in

the list of recommended vaccines that presently covered FMD free countries; the need for inclusion of endemic regions - Africa, Asia, S. America and Russia was stressed. It was suggested that the publication of these reports be web based and 'alive' by regular updating.

There was a lack of general awareness of the global situation and the WAHIS from OIE was reported to be a very good system that would help this situation.

2. Finalize MOU for Reference Laboratories Network.

DP, JFV and JB had a teleconference with IB 8 Nov 2005 when minor modifications that were made previously were agreed. DP agreed on behalf of IAH, GM agreed on behalf of RRLSS, NM sought approval from the Director who subsequently agreed. It was not clear who the actual signatories of the MOU were to be, but all agreed that this was an interlaboratory agreement. Comments were taken about the MOU that concerned training and funding and these are reported below.

3. Finalize interlaboratory comparative testing.

DP proposed a framework for a vaccine matching interlaboratory study. Issues were raised regarding exchange of vaccine strains but these could be overcome. A list of common reagents and testing techniques were made and the proposal was accepted with some modifications. It was agreed that the study should be completed by November 2006.

4. Expansion of Network

Although there were some desirable aspects of expanding the network to more laboratories i.e. to increase coverage, it was noted that the resulting increase in expenses made this unsustainable under present funding restrictions.

5. Further meetings or visits

It was deemed necessary to meet once a year. It was proposed that Botswana host the next meeting to be held in November 2006 and GM accepted the proposal.

6. Financing of the network

One off cost of GBP£20000 and recurring costs of GBP£40000 based on the participation of four laboratories were discussed. Funding of around GBP£12000 may be available from FAO and ways of filling the clear shortfall were discussed.

Financing training was also discussed and clearly laboratories would have to fund their own personnel.

7. Discuss meeting on next day and discuss information systems under development at Pirbright

JFV provided an overview of the International workshop on the integration of laboratory based information into global animal disease reporting systems (held 7-8 December 2005).

John Bashiruddin

15 December 2005