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DEVELOPMENT OF SCREENING AND MONITORING SYSTEMS FOR EMERGING DISEASES AND PREVENTION OF CROSS-BORDER EPIDEMICS IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT



NEWSLETTER 3 - Preventing Cross-Border Animal Diseases: Terms of Reference

This newsletter presents the latest developments in cross-border animal health monitoring. At the heart of these efforts is the Terms of Reference for the “Analysis of Emerging Animal Diseases in the Cross-Border Area,” which provides a clear, shared roadmap to detect and prevent the spread of dangerous diseases across Romania and Ukraine.

How do we stop dangerous diseases before they turn into cross-border epidemics?

The answer begins with a clear, shared roadmap — the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the “Analysis of emerging animal diseases in the cross-border area.”

This key document lays the foundation for coordinated scientific action in the Romania–Ukraine border region, addressing major threats to animal and public health such as African swine fever, West Nile virus, avian influenza, leptospirosis, and toxoplasmosis. As these diseases do not respect national borders, the ToR brings together Ukrainian and Romanian experts to work as one team, sharing data, expertise, and resources.

The urgency of this cooperation is especially evident in the Danube Delta cross-border area, a unique ecosystem where migratory wild birds, domestic animals, and local communities coexist. While rich in biodiversity, this environment also creates ideal conditions for the rapid spread of diseases across borders, making harmonized monitoring and prevention measures essential.

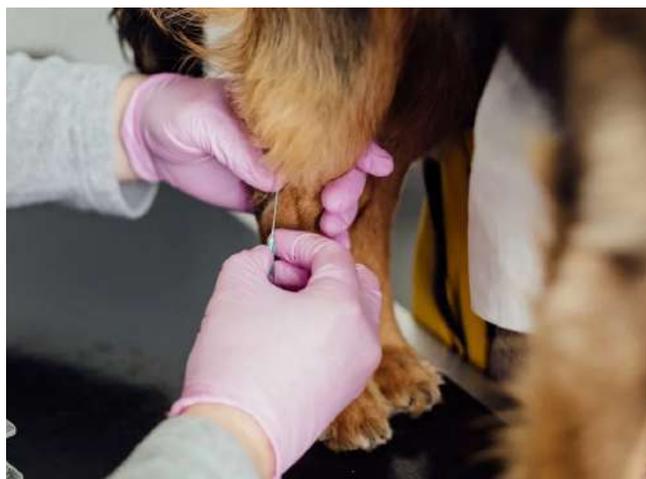
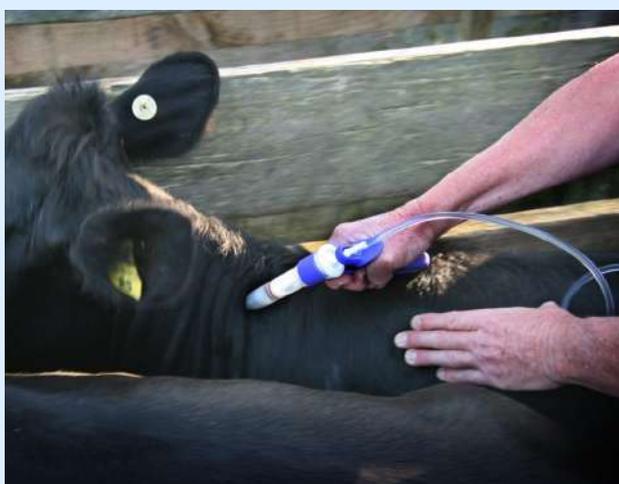
Inside:

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- Field activities
- Cross-border expert cooperation
- Laboratory work

The Terms of Reference translate complex scientific objectives into clear and practical actions. They define who does what, when, and how, covering the systematic collection of blood samples from domestic and wild animals, sampling of water and soil, clinical examinations, and laboratory analyses using modern diagnostic methods. Common standards and procedures ensure that data collected in Romania and Ukraine are reliable, comparable, and suitable for joint interpretation.

Importantly, the ToR was developed with contributions from all project partners, with a leading scientific role played by Odesa State Agrarian University and the Veterinary Sanitary and Food Safety Directorate Tulcea—the institutions responsible for carrying out the laboratory analyses. Their expertise ensured the scientific accuracy, feasibility, and relevance of the document.

Based on this Terms of Reference, project partners have already launched field activities, including the first wave of sample collection and laboratory analysis in the cross-border area. The initial results have already been received, marking an important milestone and confirming that the project has moved from planning to concrete implementation.



In addition, the cross-border team is actively performing advanced laboratory testing to stay ahead of emerging threats. Using molecular biology and genetic analysis techniques such as RT-PCR, they detect viruses directly, while serology-immunology tests using the ELISA method identify antibodies in animals. These efforts provide accurate, timely data that help pinpoint outbreaks early and guide effective prevention measures, reinforcing the health and resilience of communities on both sides of the border.

Through systematic monitoring, joint analysis, and cross-border expert cooperation, the ToR supports the development of an early warning system capable of identifying high-risk areas and detecting emerging disease threats at an early stage. Ultimately, this approach helps protect farmers' livelihoods, safeguard food security, and strengthen the health and resilience of communities on both sides of the Romania-Ukraine border.

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