FVE Webinar Report

Lumpy Skin Disease in Europe: Containment of the recent LSD outbreaks in Italy and France

Introduction	First Detection of Lumpy Skin Disease in Italy	First outbreak of Lumpy Skin Disease in France	FESASS and EPRUMA's statement on LSD management	Q&A Session

Highlights

Introduction

FVE Vice President **Jane Clark** opened the webinar by presenting **FVE's mission** and delivering an overview of **Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)**, highlighting its **recent outbreaks in Europe.**

Gaia Muroni (IZS Sardinia)

Epidemiological Surveillance of the 2025 LSD outbreak in Italy

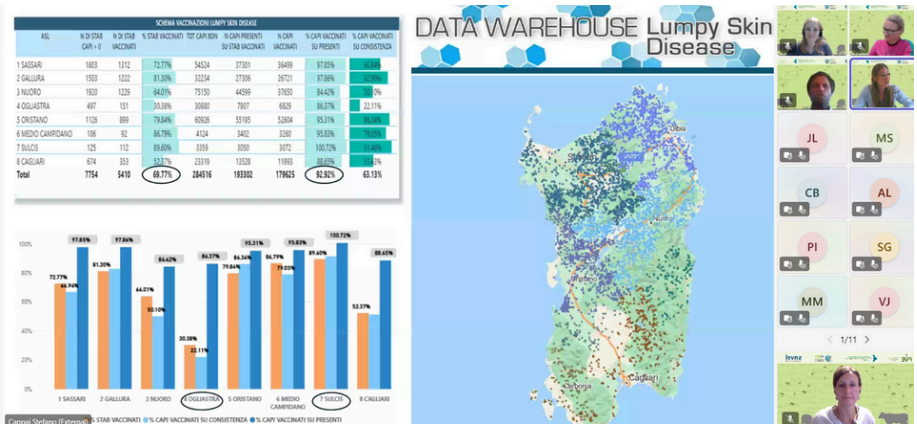
Gaia Muroni began her presentation by explaining the characteristics of **LSD**, a **Capripoxvirus** affecting cattle and **transmitted mainly by blood-feeding insects**. She noted its incubation period of 1-4 weeks and described the typical **clinical signs**, including fever, skin nodules, and systemic manifestations.

On June 20th, Italy's first-ever cases were **detected in Sardinia**, which immediately triggered **export restrictions**. Confirmation by CRN-CESME was followed the next day. Phylogenetic analysis linked the **strain to Nigeria 2018 (Cluster 1.2)**. By **early September**, Sardinia had reported **59 outbreaks with 6.2% mortality and 13.9% morbidity**. A separate **outbreak in Lombardy** led to the culling of 284 animals.

Gaia Muroni detailed the **control measures implemented: protection zones** (20 km), **surveillance zones** (50 km), and the launch of an **emergency vaccination campaign on July 23rd** using 300,000 doses from the EU vaccine bank. **Vaccination was generally considered to be safe**, though occasional local reactions and rare cases of "Neethling disease" were observed on 15 farms (0.28%). **DIVA tests** were employed to differentiate between vaccinated and infected animals.

She highlighted the **challenges** faced during the response: **social resistance** from farmers **opposing culling or fearing vaccination**, **legal appeals** that temporarily led to the **suspension of culling**, and **significant economic burdens** caused by a lack of local incineration plants, compensation issues, and undervaluation of local cattle breeds. **Additional costs** are expected from **vaccination purchase, culling, and carcass disposal**.

To conclude, Gaia Muroni stressed that the Italian experience illustrated the **complexity of managing a rapidly spreading vector-borne disease in an island** context, where logistical, social, and economic barriers are constrained. She emphasised that while **vaccination is the cornerstone of control**, its success ultimately depends on **farmer cooperation, transparent communication, and adequate infrastructure.**



Nicolas Berthollet (GTV-OVVT AURA)

Field Veterinarian Insights on France's 2025 LSD Outbreak

Nicolas Berthollet began by explaining the context of **France's first encounter with LSD**, noting that the outbreaks occurred in a **region with a strong dairy tradition**, seasonal transhumance, and production of geographically indicated raw milk cheeses.

He walked the audience through the outline of events:

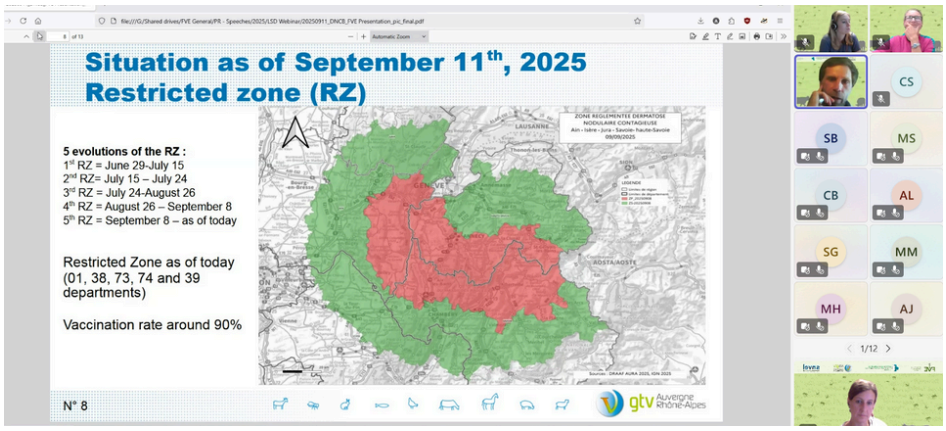
- The **first clinical suspicion** arose on **June 23rd**
- **Laboratory confirmation** followed on **June 29th**
- The **affected herd** was **stamped out** on **June 30th**
- The **emergency vaccination campaign** was launched on **July 18th**

Berthollet then outlined the range of **control measures** implemented: **surveillance** and **rapid diagnostics**, **stamping-out** of infected herds, **emergency vaccination** in restricted zones, **movement restrictions**, **epidemiological surveys**, and **active communication** with stakeholders. Alongside these measures, **psychological and financial support** was offered to farmers, with compensation amounting to approximately €2.5 million to date.

As of **September 11th** 2025, **78 outbreaks** have been reported across three French departments, with around **1,700 cattle culled**. **Restricted zones were expanded** several times, and **vaccination coverage reached nearly 90%.** The **outbreaks** remained **isolated**, occurring within a radius of less than 25 km in July.

Berthollet reflected on the **main challenges** of the response: **balancing strict disease control measures with local farming practices** such as mountain breeding and transhumance; **maintaining public trust** while facing criticism on social media regarding stamping-out; and **navigating the scientific and regulatory complexity** of managing an emerging disease with **limited preparedness**.

To conclude, he emphasised that the French experience demonstrated how **successful control** relies on **strong coordination between farmers, veterinarians, laboratories, and authorities** at all levels. He added that **vigilance must remain high**, as the outbreaks had only recently occurred.



FESASS statement on LSD management by Alain Cantaloupe

Alain Cantaloupe noted that **vector-borne diseases are an increasing threat**. He recalled for **management** and **coordinated activities from the European to farm level** in order to limit the spread of LSD. He highlighted the **key measures:** protective **vaccination**, enhanced **biosecurity** and animal **movement restrictions**, and the role of **culling**, if justified. He finished his statement by reinforcing that **progress will depend on vector surveillance and continued research.**

EPRUMA comment on LSD management by Catherine McLaughlin

Catherine McLaughlin stated that at the LSD ad hoc meeting, farmers, veterinarians, and allied professionals agreed that **prevention through vaccination is better than cure**. The **recent success** in **containment through vaccination** is a strong **incentive** for other countries to follow.

Q&A session

The discussion segment of the webinar addressed questions on **public trust**, **communication**, and **preparedness for emerging diseases**. Participants asked what strategies are most effective in building societal acceptance of controversial measures.

- Speakers noted that **media controversies highlighted the urgency of countering misinformation**, as fear of zoonotic transmission had quickly spread. In France, the **court-ordered suspension of culling further intensified public debate**, especially since stamping-out had not been implemented in over two decades. Many in society struggled to understand that apparently “healthy” animals could already be infected due to the incubation period.
- **Lessons** from the **LSD outbreaks in France and Italy** showed that **vaccination alone could not prevent all cases**, as some animals were already in the incubation phase when vaccinated. These breakthrough cases were confirmed to be **related to the field strain rather than vaccine failure**.
- In **Italy**, epidemiological investigations suggested that **vector transmission likely introduced the virus two months before the first detected outbreak**.
- In **France**, **the longer distance spread** appeared to be linked to **animal movements**, while **local spread** was attributed to **vector transmission**.
- Ongoing **genomic analyses** revealed that **strains circulating in both Italy and France matched the Nigerian cluster**, already present in North African countries.
- Incursion in **Italy** pointed to the **introduction through vector transmission 2 months prior to the first outbreak.** The upcoming **EUVet Mission report** will bring clarity on this matter. Insects from the period prior to the outbreaks will determine the most likely time of virus introduction.

Webinar Information

The webinar was recorded and made available to watch on YouTube:

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Slides are available on the FVE website:

Recap: FVE Webinar on Lumpy Skin Disease in Europe