

Self-declaration by Romania of its scrapie-free-zones status

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Background information

The National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (NSVFSA) is the Central Veterinary Authority responsible for the surveillance and control of animal diseases in Romania.

The NSVFSA comprises 42 Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety County Directorates (SVFSCD), which are responsible for the surveillance and control of animal diseases in the 42 administrative zones of Romania.

Romania is divided into 42 administrative territorial zones ('*județe*'), including Bucharest Municipality.

In Romania, scrapie has been a compulsory notifiable disease since 1974, according to the Animal Health Act No. 60/1974. Thus, the NSVFSA requires compulsory notification of any suspicion of scrapie by any owner or keeper of sheep and goats (susceptible animals).

The risk analysis for scrapie has shown that the following administrative zones (*județe*) in Romania are free of this disease: Arges, Bacau, Botosani, Brasov, Covasna, Dimbovita, Giurgiu, Gorj, Harghita, Maramures, Mehedinti, Neamt, Olt, Salaj, Tulcea, Vaslui, Vilcea, Vrancea and M. Bucuresti

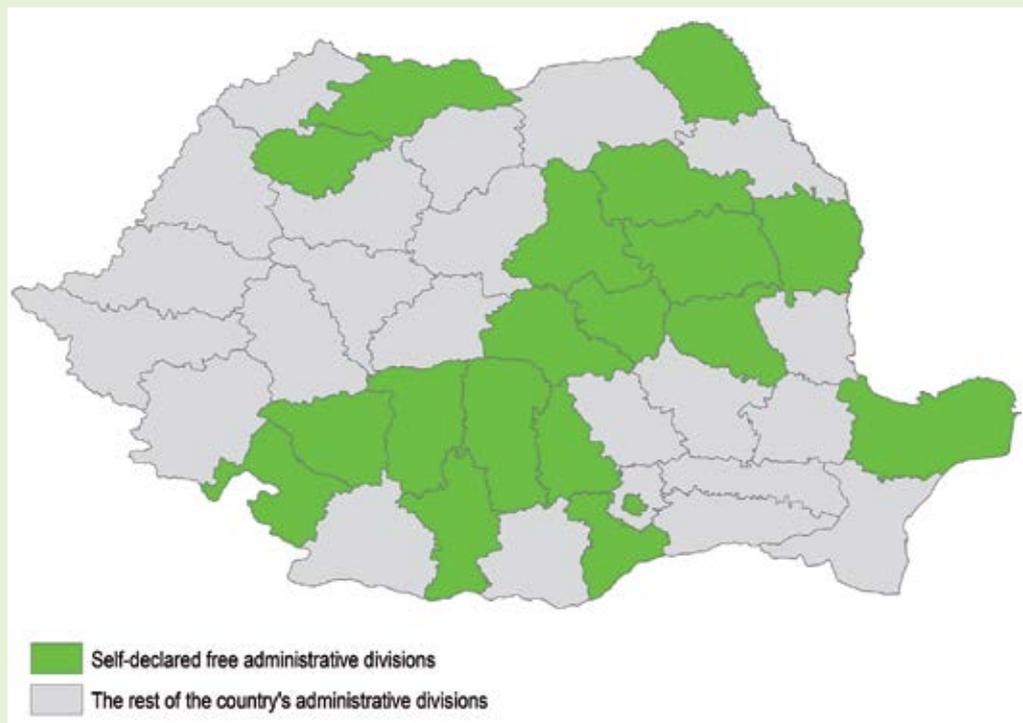
Surveillance programmes and epidemiological data

Since 1993, Romania has implemented an information/awareness programme for all those involved in the prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), including scrapie. On the NSVFSA website, a practical guide is posted on scrapie and other TSEs in small ruminants (sheep and goats). This guide is addressed mainly to farmers (sheep and goat farms), official and private veterinarians and para-veterinarians (www.ansvsa.ro/?pag=855).

Since 2002, within the framework of EU accession and while incorporating EU legislation into its own laws, Romania has adopted measures for the prevention, control and eradication of TSEs, in full compliance with EU legislation (Regulation EC No. 999/2001).

Since 2007, Romania has implemented annual programmes, approved and co-funded by the EC, for the surveillance, control and eradication of scrapie.

Within these programmes active surveillance is performed. This is carried out by testing healthy animals not suspected of being infected with any form of TSE. Passive surveillance is also



carried out by testing animals with clinical symptoms, notified by the owners.

Romania's national regulations are in full compliance with OIE international standards, and epidemiological data are regularly communicated to the OIE.

If positive cases of scrapie are found, movement restrictions and control and eradication measures are applied on the affected farms. These measures are in full compliance with Regulation (EC) No. 999/2001. Envisaged measures include the killing and complete destruction or slaughter of animals, followed by testing of animals over 18 months, until the official outbreak has ended, thus preventing the dissemination of disease into scrapie-free zones or farms.

Imported sheep and goats must be accompanied by health certificates attesting that they were born or reared on holdings that have never been diagnosed with scrapie. Sheep and goats for breeding must meet the requirements of subparagraph (i), paragraph (a) of Chapter A (I) of Annex VIII to Regulation (EC) No. 999/2001.

Imported semen and embryos from sheep and goats must meet the conditions set out in Annex VIII, Chapter A, Part (d) of Regulation (EC) No. 999/2001.

The scrapie surveillance programme is implemented according to the National Strategic Programme for the Monitoring, Control and Eradication of Scrapie, issued by the NSVFSA and approved by the Romanian government. The national programme is implemented in all 42 DSVSA zones.

The routine tests for scrapie are carried out by the National Reference Laboratory (NRL) and at 32 other zonal state veterinary laboratories. The confirmatory tests for scrapie diagnosis are carried out exclusively within the NRL. The methods used for TSE surveillance and confirmation are those specified in the OIE *Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines* and Regulation EC No. 999/2001.

All the records of TSE diagnostic tests and epidemiological data are kept by the SVFSCD zones (*judete*). The NSVFSA keeps all records for the whole Romanian territory. The data are kept for at least seven years, particularly the laboratory working notebooks and, where appropriate, paraffin blocks and immunoprecipitation of confirmation tests (Western blots).

The national database is a very important tool for disease surveillance and for monitoring animals and product traceability. All Romanian sheep and goats are individually identified and registered and each holding or herd has an identification code

recorded in the national database (holdings and animals). All sheep and goat movements are recorded on the national database. At the end of 2012, the combined population of sheep and goats was 14,632,960 animals (12,785,235 sheep and 1,847,725 goats), according to the national database.

The total number, by zone, of sheep, goats and holdings is set out in Annex 1.

Feeding ruminants with processed animal proteins (meat, bonemeal and blood, fish, milk, milk products and any animal fat protein flours) has been banned since 1997.

The feeding of all farm animals bred for human consumption with processed animal proteins has been banned since 2005.

National sampling and laboratory tests of feedstuffs have been applied since 2003, in order to control and prevent the feeding of farm animals with animal-origin proteins. This programme is based on microscopic checks for proteins of animal origin.

Conclusions

- risk assessment has demonstrated that the measures for risk management are properly applied and in force
- the evolution of scrapie is sporadic and limited to some zones, in relation to the total number of Romanian sheep and goats
- scrapie has never been diagnosed in the following zones: Arges, Bacau, Botosani, Brasov, Covasna, Dimbovita, Giurgiu, Gorj, Harghita, Maramures, Mehedinti, Neamt, Olt, Salaj, Tulcea, Vaslui, Vilcea, Vrancea and M. Bucuresti
- scrapie has been a compulsorily notifiable disease since 1974
- the scrapie surveillance, control and eradication programme applied in Romania is in full compliance with OIE standards and EU regulations
- since 2002, 169,528 sheep samples and 6,927 goat samples have been tested under the scrapie surveillance programme
- the results of these tests show the sporadic evolution of scrapie in Romania
- the incidence of scrapie is negligible compared with the sheep and goat population – 0.002% (314 cases/14,632,960 sheep and goats)
- scrapie was diagnosed on 77 farms (0.02%) from a total number of 299,994 farms registered on the national database
- laboratory results for the tests performed in the scrapie-free zones are laid out in Annex 2
- Romania reports all scrapie cases to the OIE, according to World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) procedures.

