GF-TADs
GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROGRESSIVE CONTROL OF TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL DISEASES

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Organisation for Animal Health
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Webinar on PPR and LSD in Europe

under the GF-TADs umbrella
Online Meeting, 3rd July 2025, from 09:00 to 11:30 am (CET)
Chair: President of the GF-TADs for Europe Steering Committee – Dr B. Van Goethem

Report

At the opening of the webinar, Dr. Mereke Taitubayev noted that this is the second webinar on PPR and LSD held this year, emphasizing that the presence of those TADs in Europe is not only a veterinary concern but also has significant economic implications. He highlighted the importance of the event as a valuable opportunity for information exchange and then gave the floor to the President of GF-TADs for Europe, Dr. Bernard Van Goethem.

Bernard Van Goethem welcomed delegates, representatives of member countries, the PPR Secretariat, EU Reference Laboratories for PPR and LSD, EFSA, and the GF-TADs Secretariat, and acknowledged the high number of participants. He noted that although the previous webinar took place recently (March 2025), the epidemiological situation in Europe has changed significantly since then. He highlighted the major incursion of PPR in Southeast Europe during the summer, which was largely controlled thanks to substantial efforts by the main affected countries — Greece and Romania — with additional outbreaks in Bulgaria, Hungary, and a limited recurrence in Romania. Notably, Albania confirmed the disease for the first time.

Turning to LSD, he recalled the 2015-2016 Balkan outbreak, which was effectively controlled through regional coordination and mass vaccination. However, he emphasized that the situation has now evolved, with new reports of LSD in Sardinia, mainland Italy, and southeastern France (French Alps). Given this, he stressed the need to review the recent developments, share country experiences, and discuss coordinated next steps, involving EU reference laboratories, FAO, the European Commission, and country representatives. He reiterated that, as seen in 2015, effective coordination is essential for successful disease control.

Dr Arnaud Bataille, Head of the European Union Reference Laboratory for Peste des petits ruminants (WOAH/EURL-PPR) informed that PPR has recently emerged in Albania, representing the fifth country infected in Europe since the first outbreak notified in Greece in July 2024. Genetic analyses performed by the EURL-PPR with the collaboration of NRLs of the infected countries show that all these emergences have a common origin. This new

outbreak in Albania after few months without any notification in the region suggest that there may be other, unidentified areas in the region where PPR is circulating. Surveillance and awareness of field vets should be increased across the region to identify any PPR cases and to avoid further spread of the disease.

Albanian Delegate Dr Keti Margariti informed that the first confirmed case occurred in Domen village, Shkodër, on June 4. Eighteen goats were affected, with two dying and sixteen culled. Clinical signs included stomatitis and anorexia. Rapid response actions were immediately triggered, including protection and surveillance zoning, disinfection, sampling, and public awareness. Up to date ten primary and two secondary outbreaks of PPR were confirmed across various districts in Albania. Each outbreak is geographically distinct, showing no direct link, indicating multiple primary introductions rather than a single spread. For each of the outbreaks the protection zone and surveillance zone have been established, the measures taken are in line with the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687.

To prevent and control PPR nationally:
- Movement and trade of small ruminants are restricted.
- Surveillance is intensified, particularly in outbreak zones.
- Every outbreak triggers testing in farms within 3 and 10 km, repeated three times over 10 days.
- Awareness campaigns are launched for farmers, transporters, and veterinarians.
- Veterinary inspections and market controls have been significantly ramped up.

Public awareness has been key. They have distributed information through posters, websites, and social media to ensure farmers and stakeholders understand the disease's seriousness and the measures to follow.

Dr. Ir. Nick De Regge, from WOAH/EURL on Capripox viruses informed that the whole genome sequence of the current lumpy skin disease virus (LSDV) strain responsible for the outbreak in Sardinia, Italy and France is not yet known. LSDV belongs to the family of the Poxviridae and has a double stranded DNA genome of about 150.000 bp. These poxviruses are known for their very low mutation rate, and it is therefore not possible to use genome sequencing for molecular outbreak tracing, meaning spread from farm-to-farm as it is sometimes done for highly variable RNA viruses like foot-and-mouth disease and avian influenza.

Determining the whole genome sequence (WGS) of outbreak LSDV strains could in theory be interesting to help to pinpoint the origin of introduction, but that necessitates the availability of many WGS of LSDV with a good geographical coverage. Currently, there are only about 170 WGS of LSDV available, with the additional bias that most sequences come from outbreaks in Europe, India and South-East Asia. Only very few sequences are available from LSDV strains in (Northern) Africa and the Middle-East. This makes that the outcome of a phylogenetic placement should be interpreted with care.

Representative from Italy Dr. Francesca Pacelli talked that the first LSD outbreak in Italy was confirmed in the Sardinia region, in the province of Nuoro on 21 June 2025 by the NRL (it had already been confirmed on 20 June in the first instance at the local laboratory in Sardinia) following a clinical suspicion. In the following days, other clinical suspicions were formulated in the same municipality and in other municipalities in the province of Nuoro and a further suspicion in the province of Sassari. Intense and immediate tracing activities of animal movements from the farm of the first outbreak was performed in continental Northern Italy. As of 3 July, in Sardinia there are 9 confirmed outbreaks, one in the province of Mantua (in a farm that had received animals from the first outbreak in Sardinia), confirmed on 25 June and extinguished on 28 June. Several suspicions were not confirmed, and some were awaiting diagnostic results. As required by current EU regulations, restricted zones have been established for all confirmed outbreaks and a further restricted zone was established for Sardinia that includes the entire island. Furthermore, all control measures required by current EU regulations have been adopted, including the blocking of movements (extended to the entire island of Sardinia due to intense intra-regional movements and taking into account that to date the origin of the infection and consequently the level of diffusion on the island is unclear).

Lesion dating suggests virus introduction occurred ~3 months before first detected cases.

So far, the infection's dynamics, entry date, and origin remain unknown (2 hypotheses: fire exercise in the first days of April, or wind storm from North Africa that brought vectors).

Entomological surveillance has also been implemented to identify the competent vector, and analysis of the viral genome is also underway.

Vaccination across the entire island is deemed the best approach to control the outbreak. For Mantua is under evaluation vaccination strategy for RZ.

In addition, an accurate tracking activity of movements has been started. Farms in mainland Italy that received animals from Sardinia in the timeframes considered and those in restricted areas are undergoing clinical examination. There are no shipments from Sardinia to other Member States.

The timeliness of the measures adopted and the use of vaccination were also recommended by the EUVET experts who carried out a mission in Sardinia on 26 and 27 June, who supported the Italian authorities in the assessment and management of the emergency.

Dr. Marie-Christine LE GAL, CVO of France:

An outbreak of LSD has been confirmed in France on June the 29th 2025, in the Savoie department (French Alps), in a dairy farm. Culling was done on the 30th of June, as well as disinsectisation and disinfection of the premises.
A protection and surveillance zone have been implemented, as well as measures limiting

the movement of animals and reinforcing veterinary surveillance, to limit the spread of the disease.
An active communication to vets and farmers is in place, to raise awareness and vigilance.

Dr Dimitrios Dilaveris from DG SANTE provided a detailed overview of the recent epidemiological developments concerning PPR and LSD in Europe. He began by recalling that PPR, while endemic in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, had previously only occurred once within the EU — in Bulgaria in 2018, where it was quickly contained. However, the situation changed dramatically in July 2024, when Greece and Romania experienced large-scale outbreaks. These outbreaks, which resulted in significant animal losses and control efforts, were brought under control by November 2024 in both countries, using a strict stamping-out policy, coupled with movements restrictions. There were also minor spillovers: Bulgaria recorded a single outbreak (still unresolved), Hungary saw three outbreaks in January 2025, and Romania experienced a recurrence in March 2025. Most recently, Albania reported its first-ever PPR cases, with 12 outbreaks occurring between early June and early July 2025. Although containment efforts have been largely successful, precautionary measures remain in place in affected areas, especially in Bulgaria and Romania, to ensure no further spread.

Turning to LSD, Dr Dilaveris reminded that the disease is endemic in Africa and present in parts of the Middle East. It first entered Turkey in 2013 and reached the EU via Greece in 2015. A large outbreak followed across the Balkans in 2015–2017, which was effectively controlled through coordinated mass vaccination campaigns. By 2019, countries had begun transitioning from vaccination to surveillance, and by 2023, vaccination had ceased in all countries but Turkiye. Until recently, Southeast Europe had remained LSD-free, but outbreaks continued to be reported in North Africa.

In June 2025, the epidemiological situation shifted again. On June 23, Italy reported its first-ever LSD outbreak in Sardinia, followed just two days later by a second outbreak in Lombardy, on the mainland. By early July, eight additional outbreaks had occurred in Sardinia. In response, the Italian authorities decided to implement mass vaccination across the island. Then, on June 30, France reported its first-ever outbreak in Savoy. EU emergency measures were immediately adopted, including the establishment of protection and surveillance zones, and further revisions are underway to support national vaccination efforts in both Italy and France.

Dr Dilaveris emphasized the European Commission's continued support through expert missions, coordination meetings, technical guidance, and financial assistance for surveillance and disease control measures. The EU Reference Laboratories for PPR and LSD, both established in 2017, remain active in providing scientific and technical support to Member States and neighboring countries. The EU Vaccine Bank is also available to provide vaccines to support early-stage vaccination campaigns, and both Italy and France have submitted requests for LSD vaccines.

In conclusion, Dr Dilaveris underlined that preparedness for emerging diseases like PPR and LSD must remain a priority across the region. He stressed that transparency and regional cooperation are essential for effective disease control. While the EU successfully managed the major PPR outbreaks of 2024, the disease continues to pose a threat in 2025, as seen in Albania. Regarding LSD, its incursion into Sardinia and mainland Europe suggests that new transmission pathways may be emerging and must be carefully evaluated. Coordinated vaccination using effective

vaccines, supported by timely procurement and sufficient stocks, remains the cornerstone of effective disease control.

Dr Mark Hovari on behalf of FAO's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Mark Hovari opened his remarks by outlining FAO's role in supporting countries across both Europe and Central Asia in their efforts to control and prevent Peste des Petits Ruminants and Lumpy Skin Disease. FAO's main areas of engagement include helping countries achieve official PPR-free status, strengthening disease preparedness and control through vaccination and emergency measures, organizing simulation exercises and regional workshops, producing technical guidance materials, and expanding access to virtual learning.

He highlighted FAO's support to Azerbaijan in preparing its PPR freedom dossier, which successfully led to its recognition as the first non-EU, former Soviet country to obtain official PPR-free status. FAO is also assisting Armenia and Uzbekistan with surveillance and dossier preparation. Following the 2024 PPR outbreak in Georgia, FAO launched a Technical Cooperation Programme, providing vaccines and other resources. Ongoing projects in Kazakhstan are aimed at strengthening early detection and developing a national control plan. In Albania, FAO previously provided equipment for stamping out operations, including PPE and humane slaughter tools, and stands ready to offer further emergency response support following the recent outbreaks.

Beyond direct control efforts, FAO has supported countries in organizing simulation exercises, such as a recent one in North Macedonia, and regularly facilitates regional workshops that promote the exchange of experiences between affected and unaffected countries. Mark also pointed to FAO's contribution to the scientific community through technical publications, including a manual for veterinarians on LSD (available in multiple languages), and a risk-mapping study of PPR in the Black Sea region published with the University of Barcelona. This study identified high-risk zones based on environmental suitability for virus spread.

Finally, he emphasized the importance of FAO's Virtual Learning Centre for Europe and Central Asia, which has provided animal health training since 2021. Upcoming e-learning opportunities include a new virtual course on PPR in September 2025 and a self-directed course on LSD. Other planned resources focus on goatpox and improving ruminant biosecurity, all designed to enhance disease prevention capacities across the region. Hovari concluded by thanking the organizers and expressing appreciation for the rich and timely exchange of information during the webinar.

Dr Dmitry Morozov from WOAH SRR for Central Asia opened his remarks by highlighting the key responsibilities of the WOAH Sub-Regional Representation for Central Asia, particularly in organizing events and expert meetings related to LSD, PPR, and FMD. He noted that the office has been responsible for convening the Standing Group of Experts (SGE on LSD), with the last four meetings held online — the most recent taking place on March 5, 2025, in combination with a PPR webinar. At that time, it was decided to suspend regular SGE meetings due to the absence of new LSD cases in the region; however, considering recent outbreaks, it was assumed this decision may need to be revisited.

He also referenced a successful laboratory diagnostics webinar organized jointly with the WOAH/EURL, which received very positive feedback from participants. In terms of PPR-related activities, he mentioned that in 2023, WOAH organized a regional training for PPR and FMD

Advisory Groups in Azerbaijan, coinciding with a national simulation exercise on both diseases. Another webinar focused on the PPR situation in Europe was held under the GF-TADs regional coordination framework.

Morozov emphasized the office's active role in organizing PVS missions linked to PPR preparedness under the Pandemic Fund. For example, missions were conducted in Uzbekistan (January 2025), Tajikistan (June 2025), and one is planned for Kyrgyzstan in August. The WOAH office also participated in a regional workshop on PPR eradication in Mongolia, involving China and other Central Asian countries, and contributes to EuFMD-led coordination meetings, the most recent of which was held in January 2025.

Additionally, the office supports the evaluation of country dossiers during the annual reconfirmation campaign of statuses and promotes the use of WOAH's Terrestrial Animal Health Code and diagnostic manuals, especially the chapters on PPR and LSD. Morozov pointed out that curriculum assessments in regional veterinary faculties revealed the absence of PPR and LSD topics, prompting the office to encourage updates in veterinary education.

Finally, he noted that all event materials — including presentations, summaries, and reports — are published on the WOAH website. While WOAH's training platform does not yet offer dedicated modules on PPR and LSD, it does include related content within a wider surveillance course. Morozov concluded by expressing his sincere appreciation for the excellent cooperation with colleagues from DG SANTE and FAO, which he described as instrumental in the successful organization of regional events.

Dr Alexandre Fediaevski from WOAH HQ emphasized the importance of the GF-TADs regional platform as a vital mechanism for promoting transparency and information-sharing among countries. He highlighted WOAH's continued commitment to supporting the global PPR eradication strategy, stressing the role of vaccination as a key tool for both PPR and LSD control. He also underlined the critical need for countries to maintain the capacity to vaccinate rapidly and pointed out that access to quality vaccines remains a significant challenge, particularly in regions where these diseases are endemic.

Dr Fediaevski also drew attention to the importance of movement control measures to prevent the spread of transboundary animal diseases. Importantly, he addressed the growing risk of misinformation and disinformation during outbreaks, calling on veterinary services to rely on factual, science-based information available through WOAH and partner platforms. He urged them to be proactive in their public communication efforts to ensure accuracy and maintain public trust. He concluded by thanking the organizers for the opportunity to speak.

The Closing of the webinar began with remarks from the representative of DG SANTE Dr Moritz Klemm, who emphasized the value of the event, noting that the participation of over 200 attendees clearly demonstrated the widespread need for information exchange. He was joined by Dr Van Goethem who thanked all speakers, especially representatives from France, Italy, and Albania, who are currently facing active Lumpy Skin Disease outbreaks.

Dr Van Goethem reiterated that vaccination is the essential tool for controlling LSD and stressed that efforts must be intensified to prevent the disease from becoming endemic in Europe. Reflecting on the successful eradication of LSD in the Balkans, he expressed confidence that similar success can be achieved in Western Europe. However, this requires strong awareness, preparedness, and logistical readiness to ensure mass vaccination with high coverage using

effective vaccines**.** He offered specific recommendations to Italy, France, and Albania, wishing them good luck in tackling the disease over the summer.

Dr. Van Goethem concluded by stating that the potential need to establish a new expert group will be reviewed during the GF-TADs Europe conference, scheduled for 22–25 September in Belgrade. He thanked all contributors, including laboratories and field experts, for their hard work and dedication.

Following this, Dr. Mereke Taitubayev, on behalf of the WOAH Secretariat**,** expressed his deep appreciation to all speakers, participants, and especially the organizing team from DG SANTE for their efforts in coordinating such a well-attended and impactful event on short notice. He highlighted the strong interest in the region, reflected by the large number of participants, and underlined the importance of continued collaboration and shared commitment to disease control under the GF-TADs umbrella.

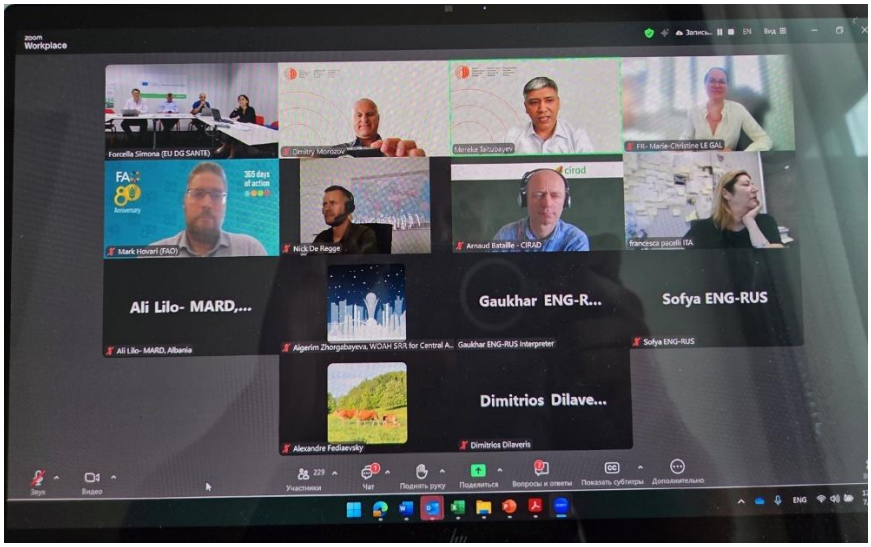
Dr. Taitubayev expressed hope that affected countries will soon overcome their outbreaks and reaffirmed WOAH's readiness to support coordinated regional efforts. He closed by thanking all partners and reiterating that he looks forward to seeing everyone again in September, wishing all countries success in their ongoing response.

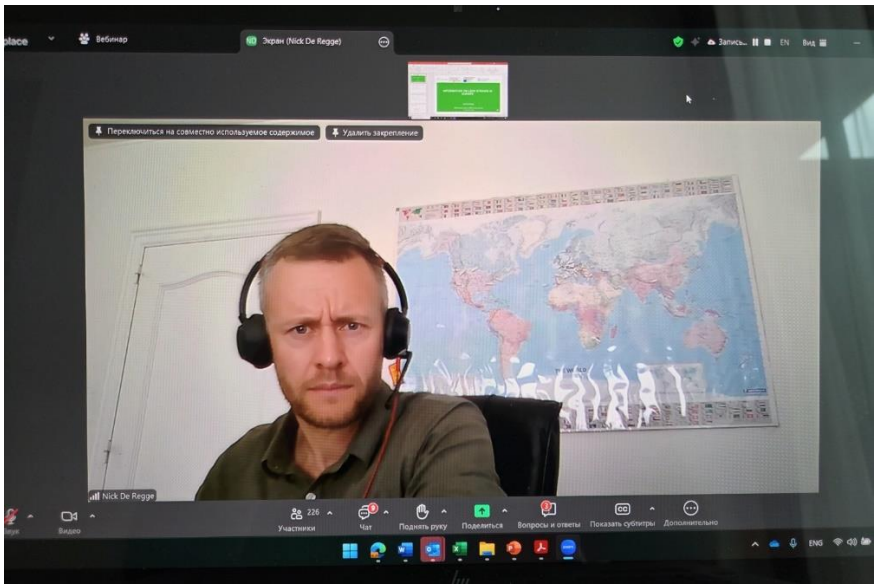
Annex

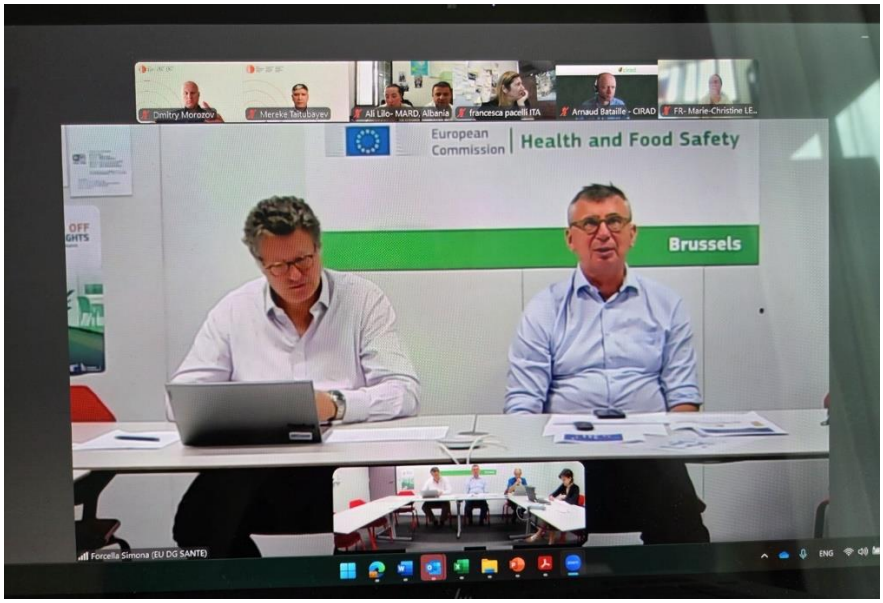
Agenda

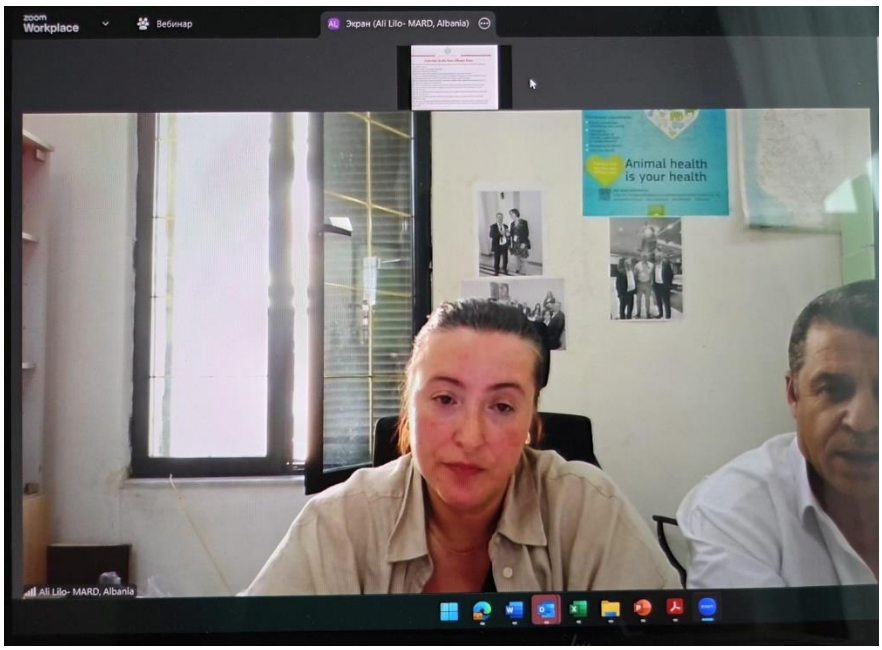
Timing	Topic	
09:00-09:05	Opening remarks	M. Taitubayev, SRR for Central Asia
09:05-09:15	Opening, adoption of the agenda and presentation of the objectives of the meeting	B. Van Goethem, GF-TADs EuropePresident
Technical and scientific presentations		
09:15-09:30	Overview of the PPR epidemiological situation in Albania	Keti Margariti - CVO of Albania and WOAH Delegate
09:30-09:45	Information on genotyping of circulating PPR strains in Europe	Arnaud BATAILLE – Head of the EURL for PPR
09:45-09:55	Overview of the LSD epidemiological situation in Italy	Giovanni Filippini – Director for Animal Health at the Italian Minister of Health
09:55-10:05	Overview of the LSD epidemiological situation in France	Marie-Christine le Gal, CVO
10:05-10:20	Information on LSD virus strains in Europe	Nick DeRegge – Head of the EURL for capripox viruses
10:20-10:35	Overview of PPR and LSD in the EU and the EU support to EU MS and neighbouring countries'	Dimitrios Dilaveris, DG SANTE – Animal Health Unit
10:35-10:50	Activities under the ADEWB II (EU) project	Toni Kirandjiski – Team Leader ADEWB II (EU) Project
10:50-10.55	FAO activities on PPR and LSD in the region	Mark Hovari, FAO Europe
10:55-11:00	WOAH activities on LSD and PPR in the region	Dmitry Morozov, SRR WOAH
11:00 – 11:15	Questions and Answers (on all presentations)	
11:15 – 11:25	Discussion, exchange of views on necessary actions and possible future steps	B. Van Goethem; M. Taitubayev
11:25 – 11:30	Closing of the meeting	B. Van Goethem; M. Taitubayev

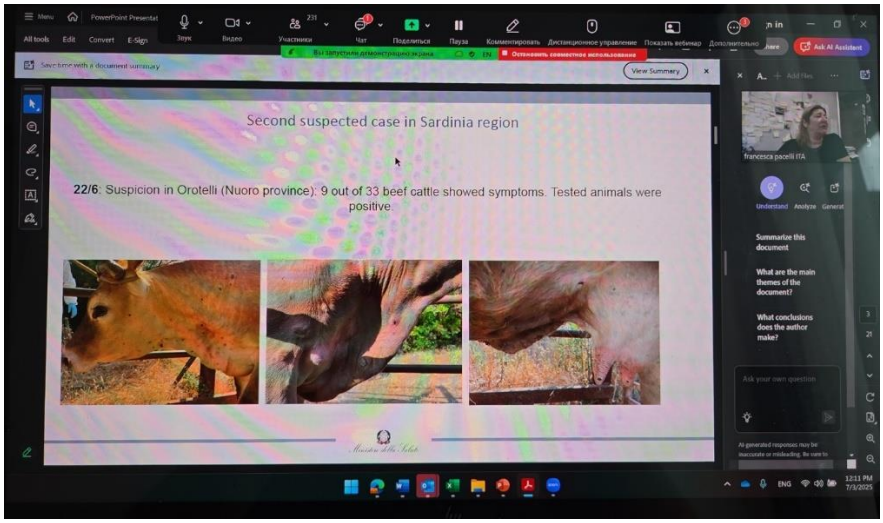
Photos:


Ali Lilo- MARD,...
Gaukhar ENG-R...
Sofya ENG-RUS
Dimitrios Dilave...




European Commission
Health and Food Safety
Brussels


Workplace
Вебинар
Экран (Ali Lilo- MARD, Albania)
Animal health is your health
Ali Lilo- MARD, Albania


Second suspected case in Sardinia region
22/6: Suspicion in Orotelli (Nuoro province): 9 out of 33 beef cattle showed symptoms. Tested animals were positive
View Summary
Ask AI Assistant
francesca pacelli ITA
Summarize this document
What are the main themes of the document?
What conclusions does the author make?