

## Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

# Peste de Petits Ruminants in Bulgaria

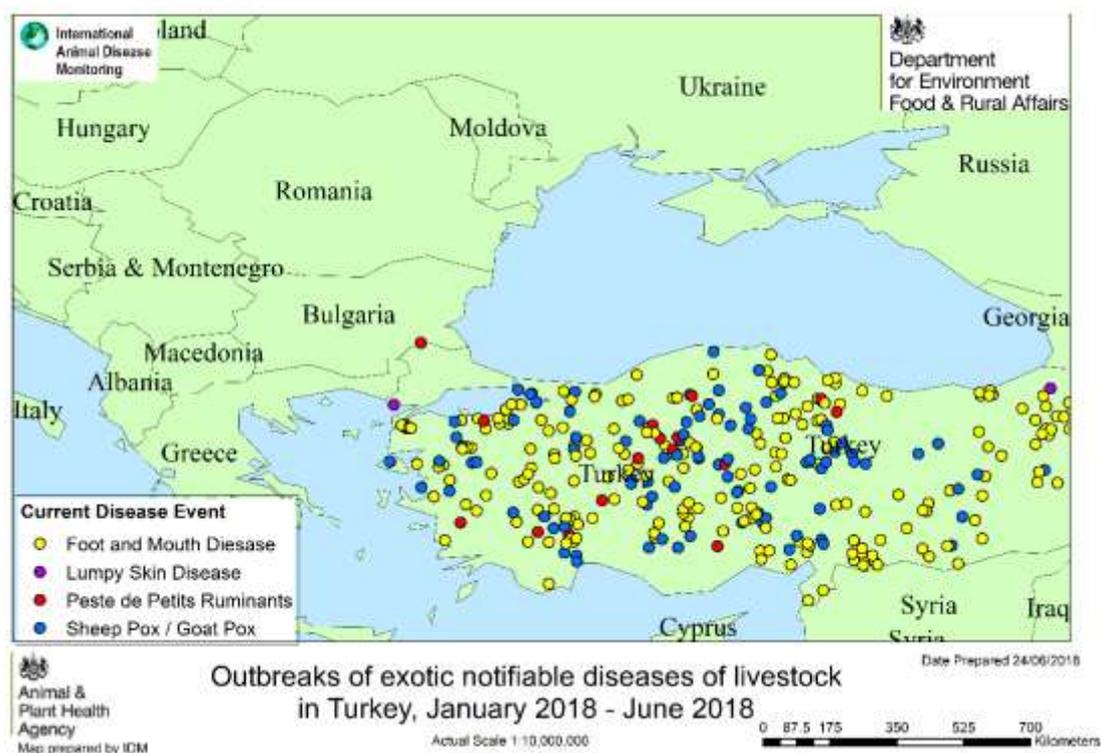
25<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Ref: VITT/1200 PPR in Bulgaria

## Disease Report

The Bulgarian Authorities have reported a case of Peste de Petits Ruminants (PPR) in sheep in Yambol region on the border with the Thrace region of Turkey. In a flock of 540 sheep and goats, two animals tested positive and one died, with disease confirmed by the EU Reference Laboratory. *This is the first occurrence of PPR in Bulgaria and in the EU.*

According to the disease report, the sheep / goats were co-grazing with three other flocks in an area where there are many small holdings. Disease control measures are in place, including protection and surveillance zones and culling all in-contact small ruminants.



## Situation Assessment

Peste de Petits Ruminants (PPR) is a serious (non-zoonotic) viral disease of sheep and goats causing production loss, and mortality of more than 50% in affected flocks in non-endemic regions (OIE, 2018a). PPR is the current focus for global disease eradication,

following the success with the related morbillivirus, Rinderpest. Vaccination with live attenuated vaccines is available for prevention and control of disease, although there is no approved DIVA vaccine available in the EU. Instead, as an exotic notifiable disease, control in the EU is based on eradication, according to European legislation Directive, 92/119/EEC. There are four lineages of PPR virus strains, lineages I and II are found in West Africa; lineage III in East Africa, the Middle East and South India and; lineage IV in Asia. However, lineage IV viruses have been detected in Morocco in 2008 and even in sub-Saharan Africa (EFSA, 2015).

PPR is transmitted most commonly via direct or aerosol contact with infected animals, although fomites and contaminated products cannot be ruled out. Virus is secreted in all secretions or excretions of infected animals. The disease has been reported in Turkey on a regular basis, but no recent cases have been officially reported from the Thrace region which borders Bulgaria and Greece. The source of disease therefore remains unknown. The role of wildlife is not fully understood but feral sheep and goats may be important in terms of the epidemiology in the region. Generally sheep show fewer clinical signs than goats and in regions of higher sheep density, disease can spread undetected therefore prompt detection, culling, movement restrictions and disinfection should be applied to prevent spread (EFSA, 2015).

If wildlife or illegal animal movements are the source of infection, it would be of interest to know which lineage is involved and whether PPR is present in the Thrace region or if there has been movement from the Anatolian region of Turkey which would be of concern, given the presence of sheep pox, lumpy skin disease and importantly, foot and mouth disease in that region (see map).

According to the EU trade notification system, there have been no consignments of live sheep or goats or the semen or embryos of such species from Bulgaria to the UK. OIE recommendations for safe trade are that skins and hides from animals regardless of the PPR status of the premises should be treated or semi-processed, while meat should originate from animals showing no clinical signs of PPR within 24 hours of slaughter and milk should come from flocks not under disease restriction or should be processed (OIE, 2018b).

## **Conclusion**

The risk of PPR introduction to the UK as a result of this outbreak is considered negligible, as there are no data to suggest any pathways for transmission are fulfilled.

We will continue to monitor the situation, as this is an important exotic disease which will be a concern for the EU in terms of its ability to spread and the impact on livestock.

## Authors

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## References

All disease reports are available from the OIE WAHIS database.

EFSA (2015) Scientific Opinion on Peste de Petits Ruminants  
<https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.2903/j.efsa.2015.3985>

OIE (2018a) PPR Disease Technical Cards  
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OIE (2018b) Terrestrial Animal Code, Chapter 14.7 Infection with Peste de Petits Ruminants Virus.  
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