Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Animal & Plant Health Agency
Advice Services Team - International Disease Monitoring

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

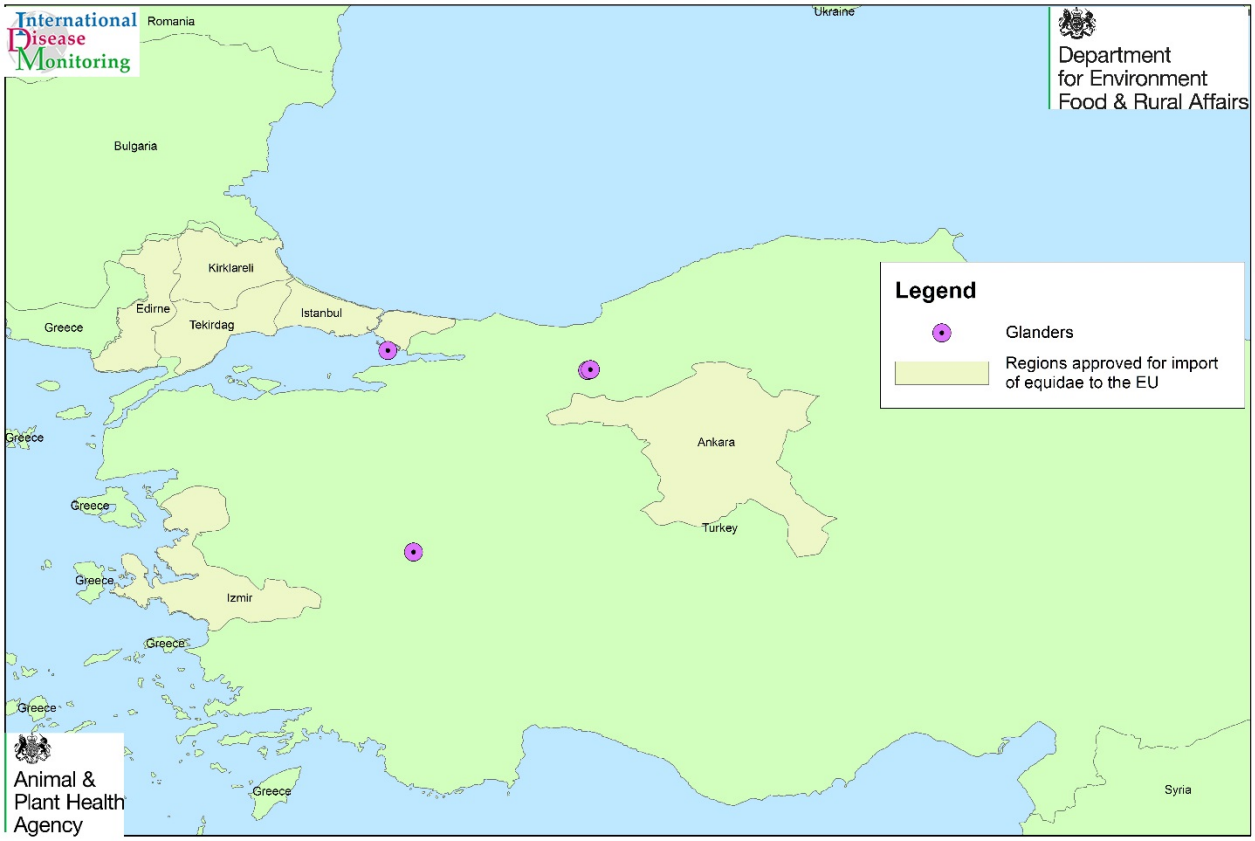
Glanders in Turkey

10 January 2020 Ref: VITT/1200 Glanders in Turkey

Disease report

Four outbreaks of Glanders in horses have been reported in Turkey for the first time since 2017 (see map). The first three of the outbreaks were reported on 23 December 2019 (OIE, 2019) following detection via Complement Fixation Test (CFT) during routine screening which is carried out twice a year. Two of these outbreaks were in the Mudurnu district in the north west of the country, where 7 out of 37 and 3 out of 48 susceptible horses tested positive and were culled. The third was reported in Istanbul in the Adalar region, where permissions and conditions have to be met to move horses in line with 2018/1301 EC Directive following the 2017 outbreak. According to the disease report, the affected animals were illegally brought in to the district without microchips, identification documents and veterinary health certificates. During routine screening with CFT, 63 blood samples were positive, and 18 samples were suspicious for Glanders (out of 1,375). All 81 horses were destroyed. All horses within the district were subsequently subject to serological and mallein tests for Glanders. Quarantine, cleansing and disinfection measures have been applied, and equine movement in and out of the districts have been prohibited. All horses in the district will be subject to a follow-up test 20 days after initial testing

The fourth outbreak was reported in a solitary horse on 30 December 2019, in the Merkez district 260km south-west of the initial outbreaks, after a private veterinarian suspected the disease due to clinical signs and this was confirmed with mallein test. This region is not approved for export of equidae to the EU.



Glanders in Equines in Turkey December 2019

Situation assessment

Glanders (also known as Farcy) is a serious bacterial disease of primarily equidae (horses, donkeys and mules) but also other species may be incidentally infected including carnivores, such as cats and dogs, but do not feature in the epidemiology (OIE, 2018). It is caused by *Burkholderia mallei* affecting the lungs, respiratory tract and skin and can be chronic or acute. Glanders has a considerable health impact on the affected animals, where case fatality rates can reach 85% without treatment, although the disease often takes a chronic course. Glanders also has zoonotic potential. Transmission is through close contact with an infected animal or via food or water contaminated with the discharges from the respiratory tract or ulcerated skin lesions of infected animals or through aerosol transmission and is more likely in densely populated herds (OIE, 2015b). The incubation period varies from a few days to many months but two to six weeks is typical (Centre for Food Security and Public Health, 2007).

Turkey is approved for the import of equidae to the EU from certain regions only (Provinces of Ankara, Edirne, Istanbul, Izmir, Kirklareli and Tekirdag; see map)

In 2019 there were three registered equines imported from Turkey on a temporary basis to the UK from approved regions under Commission Decision 92/260/EEC and

90/426/EEC and 2004/211/EC (repealed by Implementing Regulation 2018/659/EU) (related to the regionalisation of Turkey). All three were traced, given a clinical examination and retested for *B.mallei* and all were tested negative and showed no clinical signs. The horses had been imported with negative pre-movement tests (CFT) taken at 10 days prior to export and been kept in isolation for 40 days prior to export.

When outbreaks occur, an approved region will be suspended for the period of at least six months (subject to an assurance inspection) for the export of equidae to the EU.

Conclusion

We will continue to monitor the situation. We would like to remind all keepers of equidae to maintain high standards of biosecurity and report any suspect clinical signs promptly.

Authors

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