Update on Dourine (*Trypanosoma equiperdum*) in horses in Italy
Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

**Note:** Defra’s International Disease Monitoring (IDM) team monitors outbreaks of high impact diseases around the world. Dourine is among those diseases of major concern.

1 **Disease Report**

Italy has reported a further outbreak of Dourine in horses in Napoli (OIE 2011; see map). Two of eight horses were reported as being subclinically affected. According to the report, the horses have not been destroyed. The source of infection is not known nor the reason for testing these particular horses. In contact horses remain under restriction. Diagnosis was made by complement fixation test (CFT) and direct immunofluorescence test (DIF). Epidemiological investigations into the source of the outbreaks are underway.

2 **Situation Assessment**

See our previous outbreak assessment for information about the disease and import conditions for dourine

(http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/diseases/monitoring/documents/dou)
The disease is considered to be slow moving as it is only transmitted by sexual contact, not vector borne unlike other Trypanosome infections.

The EU electronic trade notification system (TRACES) holds certificates for horses consigned for breeding purposes, or registered horses moving to the UK for longer than a temporary movement. The system reports that 8 such horses (including a foal) have been consigned to the UK since May 1st (see map below). Due to the EIA situation, the UK currently has in place extra checks on horses originating in Italy. All horses which have spent time in Italy and are entering the UK for reasons other than temporary movements are restricted and sampled for EIA. This will be expanded to include testing for Dourine for the foreseeable future, and back tracing to cover the last few weeks in Italy.

3 Conclusions
At present, this continues to be an emerging situation until more information about the source of infection is known. There are no legislative requirements for horses destined for EU trade to be pre-export tested for Dourine, but EU legislation (90/425/EEC) allows post import checks for compliance purposes, which may include testing samples.

On this basis and taking into account the current low level of trade from Italy, we consider the risk of introduction of Dourine into the UK in horses originating in Italy is now higher than negligible and may be considered “very low” (very rare but cannot be excluded occur) or “low” (rare but does occur). More details of the cases in Italy may allow us to downgrade the risk level. The level of checks on consignments of
horses for breeding and reproduction originating in Italy will remain in place to ensure compliance with EU trade, and additional tests will be carried out due to the presence of clinical and subclinical disease in Italy.

We recommend that horse owners and keepers of horses consigned for breeding purposes are advised of the current situation in Italy, are familiar with the clinical signs for dourine, as well other diseases of equidae and of the requirement to notify authorities about suspect disease.

We will continue to monitor the situation.

4 Authors
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5 References
OIE (2011) Dourine in Italy. Immediate Notification report. Ref OIE 10696 Report Date 14/06/2011
Accessed 14/06/2011.