

## **To the contact points of the blood quick alert list – Sent 9<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

Dear colleagues,

Please find below an update on the situation in Italy regarding West Nile Virus.  
**Please take note that Italy is maintaining the exceptional precautionary measure for blood collection.**

- Animal surveillance. As to 8<sup>th</sup> October at 5 p.m., the National reference centre for exotic animal diseases (c/o Zoo-prophylactic Institute of Teramo) report: - 20 horses which have been affected by neurological disorders referable to WND in 14 different farms; 10 of these farms are diffusely located in the province of Ferrara, 2 in the province of Bologna, 1 in the province of Mantova, and 1 in the province of Rovigo on the border with the province of Ferrara. Animal surveillance continues to be actively carried out.
- A second human case of WNV encephalitis has been confirmed today in a patient living in a small town in the province of Ferrara, about 80 Km far from the place in the province of Bologna where the first diagnosed patient lives. Specific surveillance on all cases of human encephalitis has been implemented all over the Emilia Romagna region.
- Precautionary measures for blood donations are the same as already communicated, i.e.:
  - 1) WNV NAT test implemented on all donations from donors resident in the interested areas (performed in the Blood Centre of Bologna in co-operation with the Regional centre for microbiological emergencies);
  - 2) deferral for 28 days of donors having been for one night in the interested areas (the 28 days period start the day after the donor has left the concerned areas).

We will keep you informed as soon as we receive other information from the Italian authorities.

Best regards

*Thomas Brégeon*

Policy Officer

European Commission

Health & Consumer Protection Directorate-General

Directorate C - Public Health & Risk Assessment

Unit C6 Health measures

☎ +32-2-29 54 729

📠 +32 (02) 29 59 580

✉ [thomas.bregeon@ec.europa.eu](mailto:thomas.bregeon@ec.europa.eu)

📍 F101 07/90 Rue Froissart 101, B-1040 Brussels

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***To the contact points of the blood quick alert list – Sent 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008***

Dear colleagues,

Please find below a message kindly sent by our colleague Giuliano Grazzini from the Italian Competent Authority for blood and blood components. Please consider it carefully.

On 30th September one case of human West Nile Virus (WNV) encephalitis has been confirmed in a patient living in a small town in the province of Bologna on the border with the province of Ferrara (diagnosis confirmed 30<sup>th</sup> sept, symptoms begun 16<sup>th</sup> sept, patient survived). Epidemiological surveillance on horses and birds has been in place in Emilia Romagna since long. At the moment WNV infection has been confirmed in horses mainly in the province of Ferrara, some of which are or have been affected by neurological disorders; furthermore, crows and magpies (intentionally captured) were found infected [Eurosurveillance vol. 13, issue 39, 25 sept 2008].

Following Italian legislation and international guidelines, NAT test has been introduced for the screening of blood donation on all donors resident in the provinces of Bologna and Ferrara.

**The Italian National Blood Centre has indicated on 3 October to all Blood Centres nationwide to defer for 28 days donors who have been for at least one night in the interested areas.**

We will keep you informed as soon as we receive further information from the Italian authorities.

Best regards

*Thomas Brégeon*

Policy Officer

European Commission

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+32-2-29 54 729



+32 (02) 29 59 580



thomas.bregeon@ec.europa.eu



F101 07/90 Rue Froissart 101, B-1040 Brussels

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