

BLUETONGUE

*Proceedings of the Third International
Symposium*

Taormina, 26-29 October 2003

Contents

Part I

Volume 40 (3), July-September 2004

Global situation

Epidemiology and vectors

Part II

Volume 40 (4), October-December 2004

Bluetongue virus and disease

Diagnostics

Vaccines

Control and trade

Conclusions of Working Groups

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**Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale
dell'Abruzzo e del Molise 'Giuseppe Caporale'**

Campo Boario - 64100 Teramo, Italy
Tel. +39 0861 332267 Fax +39 0861 332251
veterinariaitaliana@izs.it



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N. James MacLachlan & James E. Pearson,
Editors

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These two volumes comprise the 730-page proceedings of the Third international symposium on bluetongue, attended by 366 participants from 47 countries, held from 26 to 29 October 2003 in Taormina, Sicily. There has been significant progress in bluetongue molecular virology and genetics, diagnosis, epidemiology and studies of the vector since the previous international symposium was held in 1991 in Paris. The driving force for holding the conference at this time and in Italy was the recent introduction and spread of bluetongue into southern Europe. The resulting outbreaks have had a devastating impact on the animal industry in the affected regions. As a result of these disease incursions, intensive studies have been conducted in an attempt to minimise the losses from the disease and to find ways to resolve the trade restrictions that have resulted. Many of these studies were presented at the symposium and are included in the proceedings.

The OIE (Office International des Epizooties), the World Organisation for Animal Health, played a key role in the organisation of this symposium which provided a forum to address bluetongue control and trade issues. The organisation of the symposium was co-ordinated by the OIE, the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise 'Giuseppe Caporale' in Teramo, Italy, and the Italian Ministry of Health. The encouragement of the European Union also was instrumental in the decision to hold the symposium and in its success.

The scientific direction and development of the programme for the symposium were under the capable leadership of the Executive and Steering Committees which were co-ordinated by Vincenzo Caporale, N. James MacLachlan, James E. Pearson and Alejandro Schudel. In order to focus on recent scientific advances and the epidemiology of the ongoing European incursion, the symposium was limited to only bluetongue; previous symposia in 1991 and 1984 addressed not only bluetongue but also African horse sickness and related orbiviruses. The objective of the symposium was to 'provide a forum for the exchange of the latest information on bluetongue disease and virus including advances in research, diagnosis and control'. To accomplish these goals, the format of the conference and the resulting proceedings were modified significantly from the previous symposia. Platform presentations by selected experts provided a summary overview of the most significant topics. The main topics addressed were: global situation; epidemiology and vectors; bluetongue virus and bluetongue disease; diagnostics; bluetongue control using vaccines; and control and trade issues. Oral presentations on these topics were supplemented by a large number of excellent posters that provided the majority of specific information on each item. The proceedings contain a total of 123 papers: 44 contributions from invited speakers and 79 manuscripts from the poster presenters. Working groups were identified to address significant questions and to provide specific recommendations that also are included in these two volumes.

Bennie Osburn was the Symposium Moderator. He opened the conference by summarising the outcome of the previous symposia, co-ordinated the activities of the Working groups, and provided a conference overview, which is published in the proceedings.

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