

DISCLAIMER

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Self-declaration of a zone (Thrace Region) free from sheep pox and goat pox (SGP) by Türkiye.

Declaration sent to WOAH on 1 July 2022 by Dr Durali KOÇAK, WOAH Delegate for Türkiye, Director General of Food and Control, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

1. Introduction

The objective of this self-declaration is to declare freedom from Sheep Pox and Goat Pox (SGP), in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 14.9 of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)*. This self-declaration covers the Thrace Region, a zone of Türkiye.

Sheep and Goat Pox has not been seen in the Thrace part of Türkiye since 2017. The last outbreak was seen on 17.04.2017 and ended on 09.05.2017.

The starting date of the self-declaration is 1 July 2022.

2. Boundaries of the Zone

Thrace is a region of Türkiye, which is geographically part of Europe and is divided from Anatolia by the Bosphorus, the Marmara Sea and the Dardanelles (Figure 1). The Marmara Sea, which is an inland sea, connects to the Black Sea with the Bosphorus and to the Aegean Sea with the Dardanelles. It shares land boundaries with Greece and Bulgaria. The area of Turkish Thrace is 23,764 km².

5 provinces administratively located in Thrace; Çanakkale, Edirne, İstanbul, Kırklareli and Tekirdağ. İstanbul and Çanakkale provinces are partly located in European and Anatolian territory, as seen on the map below, however only their European territories are included in the zone concerned by this self-declaration (Thrace). Animal transfers are not allowed from the Anatolian side to the European side of these provinces.

This self-declaration is for area within the Thrace only.

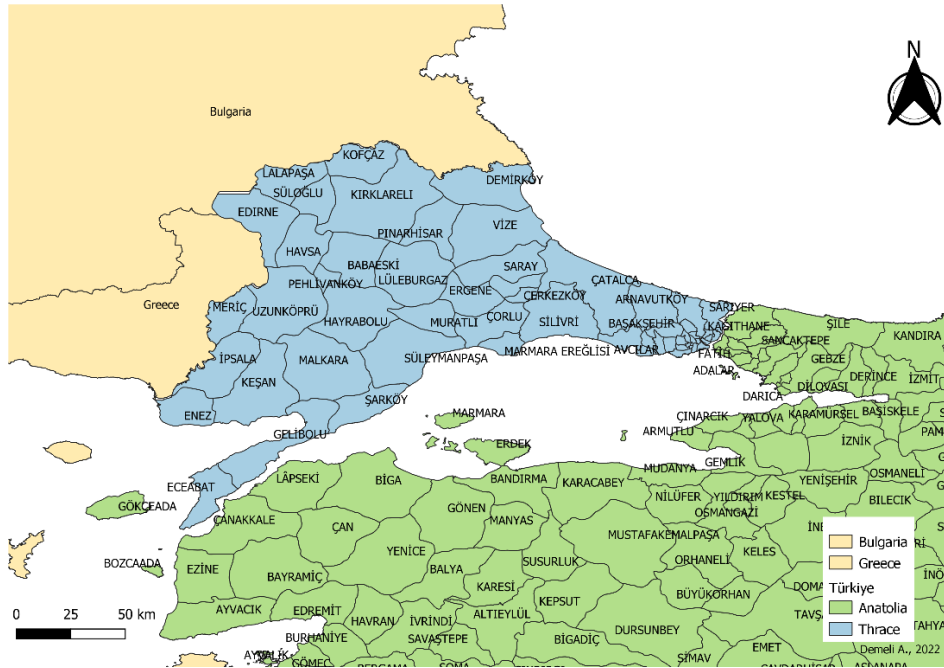


Figure 1: Administrative divisions of Thrace and Anatolia

There are small ruminant farms in 922 villages of 5 provinces in Thrace. Their population is given below (Table 1).

Table 1: Population of Small Ruminants in Thrace, 2021 (TÜRKVET: Türkiye's animal registration system)

Provinces	Species	
	Ovine	Caprine
İstanbul (Europe Side)	136 747	16 727
Çanakkale (Europe Side)	65 917	38 743
Tekirdağ	317 306	49 549
Kırklareli	351 975	61 980
Edirne	338 311	55 982
TOTAL	1 210 256	222 981

3. Sheep pox and goat pox history in the country and the zone

Sheep pox and goat pox is endemic in Anatolia (Asian part of the country). Disease outbreak numbers for the last three years are 112, 84, 224, respectively. Number of disease outbreaks confirmed to date in 2022 is 108.

Sheep and Goat Pox has not been seen in the Thrace part of Türkiye since 2017. The last outbreak occurred on 17 April 2017 and ended on 09 May 2017.

Although the disease is endemic in Anatolia, it has not been seen in Thrace since 2017 because, animal movements from Anatolia to Thrace are prohibited and all small ruminant population in Thrace is vaccinated against SGP.

4. Legal Framework

Sheep and Goat Pox is a notifiable disease, and the procedures related to the notification and control of the disease are carried out in accordance with the following legal regulations:

The main legislation determining the principles in the fight against animal diseases is the No. 5996 Veterinary services, Phytosanitary, Food and Feed Law (OG: 13.06.2010, 27610-<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.5996.pdf>).

Regulation on Notifiable Animal Diseases and Notification (OG: 22.01.2011, 27823-<https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2011/01/20110122-4.htm>).

Regulation on General Provisions to be Applied in Combating Infectious Animal Diseases (OG: 20.01.2012, 28179-<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=15818&MevzuatTur=7&MevzuatTertip=5>).

Regulation on Prevention and Combating against Rinderpest, PPR, Swine Vesicular Disease, Bluetongue, EHD of Deer, Sheep and Goat Pox, Vesicular Stomatitis, Nodular Exanthema of Bovine (LSD), African Swine Fever, Classical Swine Fever and Rift Valley Fever (OG: 04.01.2012, 28163-<https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2012/01/20120104-2.htm>).

Annual Programme on Combating Animal Diseases and Animal Movements Control – This program is updated annually and includes activities to be carried out during the year on topics such as general information about diseases, control methods, vaccination campaigns, control of animal movements, and is a roadmap for veterinarians working in the field and an activity tracking tool for the central veterinary service: (https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/Konu/2137/Hayvan_Hastaliklari_Mucadele_Hayvan_Hareket_Kontrol_Genelge_2022_4).

5. Control Measures

5.1. General Control Measures

Vaccination is applied to combat sheep and goat pox disease all over the country, including in Thrace (Table 2). Vaccines are produced from field strain, Bakirköy, under the name Penpox M by the Pendik/Istanbul Veterinary Control Institute, and according to recommendations in Chapter 3.8.12 of the *Terrestrial Manual*. Pendik VCI is the National Reference Laboratory (NRL) for the disease.

Outbreak vaccination is performed on all ovine and caprine animals in the surveillance zone (at least 10 km radius) established around an outbreak in Anatolia. Once the outbreak is finished, all small ruminants included in the surveillance zone are vaccinated yearly for the next 2 years, as reported in the above-mentioned annual programme.

On the other hand, in Thrace, all small ruminants are vaccinated yearly.

Since the virus can be maintained for 2 years in the barns and for 2 months in the pastures where the infected herds stay, animal owners are informed not to keep healthy animals in such places during these periods.

Table 2: Number of vaccinated animals (sheep and goats) against Sheep and Goat Pox (Türkvét)

Year	Vaccinated animals in Thrace	Vaccinated animals whole country
2019	1,721,145	4,626,710
2020	1,463,834	4,023,286
2021	1,344,160	4,026,999

In case of suspicion of disease, official veterinarians go to the outbreak area within 24 hours. Temporary quarantine is initiated, sick animals are isolated, movements of animal, humans and products are taken under control, and samples are taken and sent to the laboratory. If the disease is diagnosed clinically, permanent quarantine measures are initiated immediately; and samples are sent for laboratory confirmation. Blood, epithelial tissue/wound, mouth/nose swab samples, and lung, spleen and skin samples from dead animals are sent to the laboratory for diagnosis of the disease. 3 km protection zone and a 10 km surveillance zone are implemented around the outbreak (farm). Vaccinations are delivered to all sheep and goats present in these zones. The official field veterinarian visits the affected and neighbouring farm(s) at regular intervals and inspects all the animals each time. Quarantine is removed by final cleaning and disinfection 21 days after the last death/slaughter/recovery. Other farms in the 10 km surveillance zone are also visited for vaccination and farmers are encouraged to remain cautious and report any suspicion of the disease.

Since Thrace is free from the SGP, in the case of an outbreak, stamping out policy with compensation is implemented.

All information such as number of affected animals, number of animals in the farm and all visits from the first visit of suspected outbreak is recorded electronically in the national disease notification system.

5.2. Clinical Surveillance

According to the Article 5 of the [Regulation on notifiable animal diseases and notification](#), those concerned, such as animal owners and breeders, veterinarians and headmen of villages, village guards, dealers, shepherds, ship captains, station or customs officers or administrators, who are aware of contagious animal diseases or animal deaths of unknown cause, should notify the competent authority.

Two types of clinical surveillances are carried out in the Thrace Region:

1. During field visits (such as vaccination, ear-tagging), passive clinical surveillance is conducted by official veterinarians, as small ruminants are subjected to health controls.
2. Within the scope of Risk Based Surveillance activities, integrated with the activities carried out for the maintenance of freedom from foot and mouth disease (FMD) in Thrace, small ruminants are clinically monitored for SGP. Monitoring studies are carried out 4 times a year (Table 3).

Table 3: The period of the clinical surveillance

Cycle	Years	Months
1 st cycle	2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	Jan-Feb-Mar
2 nd cycle	2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	Apr-May-June
3 rd cycle	2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	Jul-Aug-Sep
4 th cycle	2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	Oct-Nov-Dec

Sheep and Goat Pox surveillance is designed to detect 25% herd prevalence and 10% within herd prevalence with a 95% Confidence Interval.

In this context, the year-based results of the studies conducted after 2017 (in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021) after last occurrence of the disease are shown in the tables Annex 2.

SGP positivity was not found in the samples taken in cases of suspicious deaths or illnesses in the region. The NRL searches for the presence of viral nucleic acid by PCR test in suspicious sheep-goat deaths in the Thrace region, in tissue, swab, blood or autopsy samples taken for the diagnosis of the disease by examining the area with its expert team.

The number of samples from suspicions of Sheep and Goat Pox Disease submitted to the Pendik Veterinary Control Institute since 2018 is provided in the table below.

Table 4. Number of suspect samples

Province	Year			
	2018	2019	2020	2021
İstanbul (Europe Side)	1	8	8	1
Çanakkale (Europe Side)	0	0	0	0
Tekirdağ	0	0	1	2
Kırklareli	0	0	4	3
Edirne	7	24	0	0
TOTAL	8	32	13	6

Laboratories in Türkiye apply the recommendations of Chapter 1.4 of the *Terrestrial Code* and Chapter 3.8.12 of the *Terrestrial Manual* in diagnostic tests, vaccine production and surveillance plans.

5.3. Control of Animal Movement

Since Thrace has a free status from FMD with vaccination and PPR vaccinations have been stopped and a protected area has been declared, the transfer of large and small ruminants, and their products, from Anatolia to Thrace is prohibited.

It is allowed to transfer animals from Anatolia to the European side of Istanbul, for slaughter only and only during the 15 days preceding the first day of the Kurban/Sacrifice Festival. In addition, animals can only move to the authorized animal markets which have an adjacent slaughterhouse for slaughtering during the festival.

Transportation of animals to the other Thrace provinces are not allowed under any circumstances. Movement from Anatolia is strictly checked at check points on the bridges and roads. Ruminants are predominantly transported on road by trucks. Trucks are only allowed to cross the Sea over one bridge (3rd bridge of Istanbul, Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge). Animal movements are checked at the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bosphorus Bridge 24/7 by police and a vet technician, and randomly by veterinarians. Therefore, to eliminate the risk caused by animal movement, a strict and dynamic movement control has been implemented between the regions.

For animals to be transferred from Anatolia to the European side of Istanbul, a series of measures are taken to prevent the transmission of FMD mainly, but they thus prevent the transmission of other infectious diseases to the region. Animals to be transferred are selected 3 months prior to transport and are individually identified with an ear tag number. They are isolated for at least 4 weeks before being transported the farms are visited every 10-15 days by the official veterinarian until the day of departure. On the day of departure, clinical examinations are performed again and a health certificate is given. The transport vehicle goes directly to the specified animal market without unloading the animals on the road.

According to current legislation, all ovine and caprine animals are ear tagged individually and recorded to the TURKVET database system and accompanied by a veterinary health certificate and a passport during transportation to a province, an animal market or a slaughterhouse. Veterinary health certificates are issued by Official Veterinarians. Physical examination of the animals is performed before transportation and health certificates are issued only if the animals are proven to be healthy.

Before and after transportation, the vehicles are cleaned and disinfected under official supervision and a certificate is issued. Process of the cleaning and disinfection of vehicles and transportation of animals are managed by circular issued officially and specific SOPs describing all procedures.

Following records / information are kept in TURKVET, National Registration System:

For each identified and registered animal; individual identification number, date of birth, gender, breed, identification number of the establishment where the animal is born, identification number of the holdings and the dates of the change of holdings, and if animals are imported; the name of the country where the animal is imported and the date of import, date and place of death or compulsory slaughter in the establishment; name, address, license number and slaughtering date of slaughterhouse.

In the import of animals and animal products, Türkiye considers Article 14.9.5. for sheep-goats, Article 14.9.7. for semen of sheep-goats and Article 14.9.9. for skins, fur, wool and hair from sheep and goats of *Terrestrial Code*.

For the import of live animals, the following sentence is found in the international veterinary certificate; "they come from the territory which, at the date of issuing this certificate (a) has been free for 24 months from foot-and-mouth disease, for 12 months from rinderpest, Rift Valley fever, peste des petits ruminants, sheep pox and goat pox, contagious caprine pleuropneumonia and for 6 months from vesicular stomatitis: and

For semen; Semen and donor animals originate from(exporting country), which has been free from foot and mouth disease, rinderpest, peste des petits ruminants, vesicular stomatitis, contagious caprine pleuropneumonia, Rift valley fever, sheep and goat pox, lumpy skin disease and Akabane virus infections for at least 12 months prior to the first collection of the semen destined to Türkiye, and no vaccination against these diseases has been practiced during this period. For skins, fur, wool and hair are asked to come from the area that has been free from the disease for 12 months, or it is requested to do these by listing the inactivation ways.

6. Measures implemented to maintain freedom in the zone

In summary from the above;

- Transportation of animal and animal products are not allowed to Thrace. When allowed for slaughtering, during the Kurban Festival, strict control measures are applied.
- Active and passive clinical surveillance is done.
- Suspicious cases in sheep or goats are also evaluated for SGP in the laboratory.
- If illegal animal movement is detected, animals are immediately sent to slaughter without compensation and the owner is punished.
- If the disease is detected in Thrace, all susceptible animals in the herd are culled.
- Trainings are given to increase public awareness.

7. Conclusions

Considering that:

1. Sheep pox and goat pox is a notifiable disease in Türkiye;
2. Sheep pox and goat Pox has not been seen in the Thrace part of Türkiye for at least three years. The last outbreak occurred on 17 April 2017 and ended on 09 May 2017;
3. Measures to maintain freedom in the zone exist as described in section 6;

The WOAHA Delegate of Türkiye declares that the zone of Thrace meets the requirements for zonal freedom from sheep pox and goat pox as of 01 July 2022, in accordance with Chapters 4.4. and 14.9. of the *Terrestrial Code* (2021 edition) and consistent with the information provided to WAHIS.

Statement to be included in the self-declaration document.

I, the undersigned, Dr. Durali KOÇAK

the Delegate of

..... TÜRKİYE

to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE), takes responsibility for

the self-declaration of freedom

..... Sheep and Goat Pox in Thrace

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Drawn up on 21.07.2022

Signature of the Delegate: P. Kocak

Annex 2

Clinical surveillance-2018						
	No. epi-units controlled	No. of sheep clinically examined	No. of goats clinically examined	Total number of animals examined	Target	Achieved target percentage
Istanbul	52	2786	178	2964	2964	100%
Çanakkale	20	1061	79	1140	1140	100%
Edirne	144	7723	485	8208	8208	100%
Kırklareli	136	7752	0	7752	7752	100%
Tekirdağ	151	8452	155	8607	8664	99,34%
Total	503	27774	897	28671	28728	99,80%

Clinical surveillance-2019						
	No. epi-units controlled	No. of sheep clinically examined	No. of goats clinically examined	Total number of animals examined	Target	Achieved target percentage
Istanbul	52	2916	48	2964	2964	100%
Çanakkale	20	1083	57	1140	1140	100%
Edirne	144	8034	174	8208	8208	100%
Kırklareli	136	7619	133	7752	7752	100%
Tekirdağ	152	8664	0	8664	8664	100%
Total	504	28316	412	28728	28728	100,00%

Clinical surveillance-2020						
	No. epi-units controlled	No. of sheep clinically examined	No. of goats clinically examined	Total number of animals examined	Target	Achieved target percentage
Istanbul	52	2737	227	2964	2964	100%
Çanakkale	20	832	308	1140	1140	100%
Edirne	144	7232	976	8208	8208	100%
Kırklareli	136	7097	655	7752	7752	100%
Tekirdağ	152	7813	851	8664	8664	100%
Total	504	25711	3017	28728	28728	100,00%

Clinical surveillance-2021						
	No. epi- units controlled	No. of sheep clinically examined	No. of goats clinically examined	Total number of animals examined	Target	Achieved target percentage
Istanbul	51	2535	372	2907	2964	98,08%
Çanakkale	20	771	369	1140	1140	100%
Edirne	143	6677	1474	8151	8208	99,31%
Kırklareli	135	6151	1544	7695	7752	99,26%
Tekirdağ	152	7173	1491	8664	8664	100%
Total	501	23307	5250	28557	28728	99,40%