

Nordic Baltic Veterinary Contingency Group: A regional approach to simulation exercises

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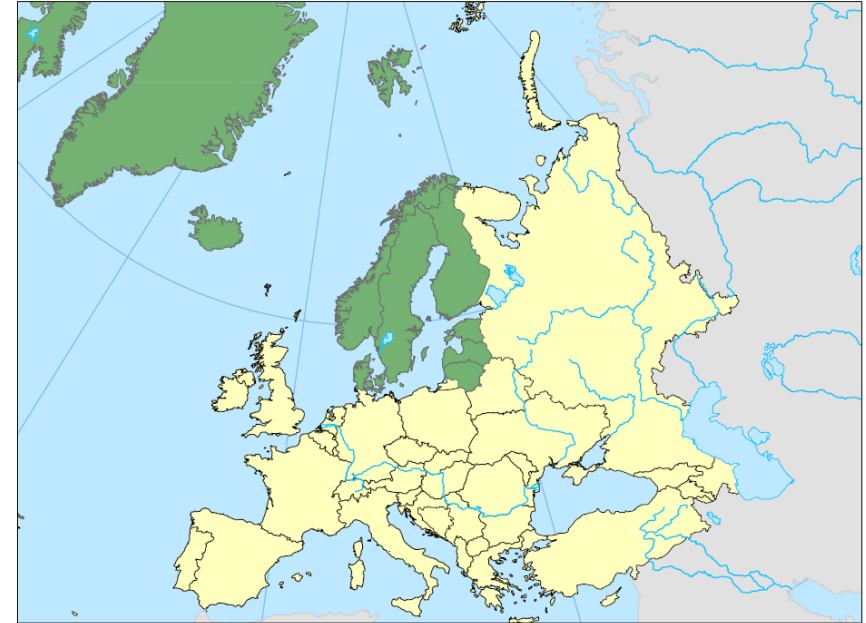
Nordic Baltic Veterinary Contingency Group

NBVCG

Nordic-Baltic veterinary contingency group (NB VCG)

Cooperation between competent veterinary authorities in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands



Nordic Baltic Veterinary Contingency Group



The Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Council

Nordic Council of Ministers for Fisheries, Aquaculture, Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MR-FJLS)

Nordic Working Group for Microbiology & Animal Health and Welfare (NMDD)

The remit of the working group covers activities in the fields of microbiology, animal health and welfare, and to ensure that Nordic agencies work together effectively.



The Nordic-Baltic Veterinary Contingency Group (N-B VCG) is an ongoing NMDD project since 2006



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Memorandum of Understanding



The Nordic-Baltic Animal Health Emergency Reserve and Nordic-Baltic Veterinary Contingency Planning Studies

- a Nordic Animal Health Emergency Reserve, to provide support and assistance to a participant in response to an animal disease outbreak emergency; where the resources of the country affected by the outbreak are not sufficient to meet the needs of the country affected by the outbreak emergency.
- a platform for Nordic-Baltic Veterinary Contingency Planning Studies, to support study visits and training sessions facilitating enhanced animal disease preparedness in the Nordic-Baltic Region.



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The objectives

- to improve cooperation, communication and exchange of information and experiences between the veterinary authorities within the Nordic-Baltic region, in the context of contingency planning and during animal diseases crises;
- to increase awareness among professionals and stakeholders within the region regarding animal health threats and emerging disease.



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To comply with the objectives the NBVCG has in particular carried out work resulting in:

- *International seminars*: the topics have included risk analysis, vector borne diseases, risk-based surveillance and contingency planning, infectious diseases of wildlife, and biosecurity
- *International simulation exercises covering the following diseases*: foot and mouth disease, bluetongue, West Nile fever, African swine fever and viral haemorrhagic septicaemia
- *Workshops covering*: Preparation of simulation exercises, animal expert groups, rapid qualitative risk assessments for use in National veterinary administrations and communication.



The exercises have covered economical important exotic diseases such as

- Bluetongue (2008)
- African swine fever (2011)
- West Nile fever (2012)
- Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (2013)
- African Horse Sickness (2017)
- Foot and mouth disease (2019)



Nordic-Baltic Bluetongue Simulation Exercise “HOT-AIR”, 14–16 May 2008

Aim

The main aim of the simulation exercise was to test the contingency plans established by the Baltic and Nordic countries for the control of Bluetongue.

Objectives

Within the aim of testing contingency plans the exercise included

- (a) inter-Baltic-Nordic activities and
- (b) activities in individual countries with focus on national conditions and demands.



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Nordic-Baltic African horse sickness simulation exercise, Pegasus 2017, 6th September 2017



Aim

- To test the African Horse sickness contingency plans in the Nordic Baltic countries.
- To further develop the communication system established between the veterinary administrations of the Nordic Baltic Countries.
- To improve the knowledge about African Horse Sickness and disease control measures
- To improve the crisis communication between the Nordic-Baltic Countries and when to communicate with the public then to do it correctly, clear, relevant and consistently.

Objectives

- The veterinary administrations in the Nordic Baltic countries share information with each other and all relevant stakeholders.
- The veterinary administrations coordinate information in order to make it correct, clear and relevant when communicating with horse owners, the public and media.



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Nordic-Baltic FMD simulation Exercise on emergency vaccination and stamping out of large infected herds”Ruta”

13-14 November 2019



Aim

To test selected parts of national contingency plans and enhance joint emergency preparedness among veterinary administrations in the Nordic and Baltic Countries and to assist in the understanding of roles and responsibilities in the event of foot and mouth disease outbreaks.

Objectives

- (a) Prepare and conduct an FMD emergency vaccination plan and exit strategy
- (b) Prepare and conduct stamping-out of large infected herds



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Benefits and challenges

Benefits:

- Joint activities – sharing of costs
- Creation of network
- Sharing of experiences and expertise
- Sharing of resources during crises
- All partner countries very motivated

Challenges:

- Participation during joint activities not funded by the Group
- Lack of funding work as an incentive for digital meetings
- Language barriers
- Not all partners in the EU



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