

## Bluetongue virus serotype 16 in a three-month-old lamb

Bluetongue is an endemic disease in Israel<sup>7</sup>; it was first diagnosed in this country in 1950<sup>6</sup>. The peak season for bluetongue and incidence of *Culicoides* midges is in autumn (September–November)<sup>3</sup>. High prevalence of BTV serotype 16 in sheep has been reported from Pakistan<sup>1</sup> and Australia<sup>4</sup> and recently also from Israel.

This report concerns unusual bluetongue morbidity in a single animal, a 3-month-old cross-bred lamb from an unvaccinated sheep flock comprising 120 ewes, that occurred at the end of October 1996. The clinical manifestations in the affected lamb were a rise in body temperature to a peak of 41.6 °C, hyperaemia of the buccal and nasal mucosae, increased salivation and lachrymation. The hooves were warm and painful; the animal was reluctant to move them, and was recumbent.

A blood sample was submitted to the

laboratory for virus isolation. The suspected blood was inoculated into 12 embryonating chicken eggs via the intravenous route<sup>5</sup>. Six embryos died within 2–7 days following inoculation. The group-specific RT-PCR method for detection of bluetongue virus (BTV)<sup>2</sup> was applied to RNA extracted from supernatant of homogenate of embryos. The RT-PCR results demonstrated the presence of BTV nucleic acid in the embryo homogenate. The BTV was isolated on a hamster lung cell line and a cytopathic effect was observed after 3 days. BTV serotype 16 was identified by means of the virus neutralisation test.

The lamb was treated with phenylbutazone once daily for 3 consecutive days and recovery was noted a week later.

### REFERENCES

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