

SURVEILLANCE OF WILDLIFE DISEASES IN FRANCE : THE SAGIR NETWORK

Lamarque F.¹, Artois M.²

Créé en 1986 par l'Office national de la chasse (ONC), établissement public sous tutelle du Ministère de l'Environnement, le réseau SAGIR est un système national de surveillance sanitaire des maladies de la faune sauvage unique en Europe. Son organisation est basée sur un partenariat entre l'ONC, le CNEVA-Nancy, le laboratoire de toxicologie de l'Ecole nationale vétérinaire de Lyon, les Laboratoires vétérinaires départementaux et les Fédérations départementales des chasseurs. En tant que système d'alerte, SAGIR a parfaitement fonctionné au cours des dix dernières années. Le réseau peut être crédité de résultats significatifs en matière de connaissance de la pathologie de la faune sauvage. Cependant, quelques facteurs limitants empêchent encore SAGIR de devenir un véritable réseau d'épidémiosurveillance. Un plan de réactivation est actuellement mis en oeuvre pour améliorer le fonctionnement de ce réseau.

GENERAL ORGANIZATION

Created in 1986 by the "Office National de la Chasse" (ONC), a government agency in charge of wildlife, SAGIR is a national surveillance system of wildlife diseases, the main goal of which is to detect the principal causes of wildlife mortality.

SAGIR is organized as a cooperative venture among ONC, the National Center for Veterinary and Alimentary Studies (CNEVA) in Nancy, the toxicology laboratory of the National Veterinary School in Lyon (ENVL), the "Departemental" Veterinary Laboratories (LVD) and the "Departemental" Federations of Hunters (FDC), the latter two forming the basic unit of the whole system. ONC grants a special financial aid to CNEVA Nancy and ENVL for their participation in SAGIR. The gross running cost of the network is estimated to be around 1,000,000 F. per year.

Hunters, members of FDC, are usually the ones who detect the abnormal mortalities of game in the field. In every Federation, a SAGIR representative is in charge of transmitting samples of dead animals to the LVD of his "département". The "departemental" laboratory performs the adequate tests and communicates the first results to the FDC. If an intoxication is suspected, the LVD sends the appropriate samples to the toxicology laboratory at ENVL for further investigation. CNEVA Nancy, the national laboratory collecting all data on wildlife diseases, gathers and handles the results from all the LVD's and synthesizes the information. The information then is communicated on a regular basis to Service of Wildlife Preservation (DPF) at ONC, which sends it to the "Departemental" Hunter Federations. CNEVA is responsible for informing other partners. In case of high mortality occurrence, an emergency procedure is implemented by calling directly the DPF at ONC.

SOME SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

As a warning system, SAGIR has worked perfectly for the last ten years.

It showed for instance the existence in France of Classical Swine Fever in wild boar, VHD and EBHS in lagomorphs or the effect of some agricultural practices on wildlife.

It is involved in the surveillance of diseases of domestic livestock like brucellosis, Aujeszky disease, hog cholera and the detection and the monitoring of important die-off like those caused by avian botulism or poisoning.

It collects reliable data on wildlife diseases through some 2,000 laboratory tests performed per year, i.e. 21,402 since 1986, a data collection scheme covering almost the whole territory and in depth studies of two important game species : the hare (54 % of the collected samples) and the roe deer (14.9 %)

LIMITING FACTORS

In spite of the satisfactory results it has obtained so far, some limiting factors are still preventing the SAGIR network from becoming a real epidemiological surveillance system. Among these ones, one may cite : the loss of a few data like these concerning the serological surveys or some zoological taxons, the heterogeneity of data collected (caused by the great diversity of tests performed by the LVD's), the poor circulation of information (too slow, not wide enough)...

PROSPECTS

To improve the precious tool that SAGIR is, a plan has been implemented since the beginning of 1995. The particular aims of this plan are : the precision of the network's objectives, the information/sensitization of all partners of SAGIR, the standardization of laboratory tests and procedures and the improvement of the data collection and the circulation of information.

¹ Office National de la Chasse, Saint Benoist - F 78610 Auffargis - France

² CNEVA-Nancy, Domaine de Pixécourt, B.P. 9 - F 54220 Malzéville - France