

Press briefing

„Parasites are spreading - High time for repelling“

Circolo della Stampa di Milano, Milano, Italy

Friday, March 16, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Key points Prof. Dr. Patrick Bourdeau

Leishmaniosis and babesiosis - the parasitic burden of South France

- Canine leishmaniosis (CL) is a very severe disease in dogs. The related pathogen, *Leishmania infantum*, can be transmitted also to humans via its vector, the sand fly. Nationwide frequency of the infectious agent in medicalized dogs is estimated to 0.4%.
- CL is traditionally described in South-eastern France like Provence, Languedoc and Roussillon; however, the distribution borders are not well defined and could change due to a wider distribution of the sand fly carrier.
- Comparing two epidemiological studies of CL in 1988 and 2004 we assume an increase in annual cases in the Northern area of this region and an extension towards South-west France.
- Canine babesiosis is by far the most frequent parasite-transmitted disease in France with an estimated nationwide frequency of 1.5% in medicalized dogs. Its wide distribution in France is associated with its tick vector *Dermacentor reticulatus*, the Ornate Cow tick.
- A national survey in 2005 revealed that there is no further increase of cases, although atypical presentations may be more frequent. While an outspread into northern and eastern parts of the country is possible, the absence of canine babesiosis in the South-east is probably due to the absence of the Ornate Cow tick.
- For effective prevention of the diseases, an accurate risk evaluation (like e.g., location, period of the year and activity of the vector, potential exposure, travels) should be considered by both dog owners and veterinarians. The objective of anti-parasite-treatment is mainly to prevent the transmission by selecting products that may have contact repellency, knock down or antifeeding effects.

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