

EPIZONE

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

EPIZONE Annual Meeting
2026 in Bern, Switzerland,
2-4 September 2026

Hosted by



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Institut für Virologie und Immunologie



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Welcome

Dear EPIZONE members, dear Young EPIZONE members, dear participants,

We are delighted to welcome you in Switzerland for three days of scientific exchange, discussion, and collaboration at a time when preparedness for emerging and re-emerging animal diseases has never been more important.

The ongoing spread and continuous threat of highly contagious animal and vector-borne diseases in Europe is unprecedented. Being prepared for animal health crises is more important than ever. Exchange among research experts through strong networks remains a pillar of preparedness.

The 2026 EPIZONE meeting focuses on exploring how research can better support the necessary preparations for emergencies involving highly contagious animal diseases and zoonoses within a One Health approach. In this context, preparation means understanding the mechanisms of infection transmission, developing solutions to control diseases before they impact the livestock sector, and ensuring the necessary diagnostic capacities and (novel) vaccines and vaccination strategies are developed and in place. The Young EPIZONE session looks at career pathways and provides important insights on communication research findings.

With a carefully selected range of keynote talks representing various stakeholders involved in infectious disease control, along with scientific sessions covering a wide range of topics and presentations from EPIZONE research partners on the latest advances in detection, prevention, and understanding of key pathogens, we aim to facilitate a stimulating, insightful, and collaborative meeting in the heart of Switzerland.

Thank you for being part of EPIZONE 2026.

We wish you an excellent meeting and an enjoyable stay in Bern.

Barbara and Matthijn



Barbara Wieland
Chair Local Organizing Committee, IVI



Matthijn de Boer
Coordinator of EPIZONE

Acknowledgements

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- Nedim Kozarac, IVI, Switzerland
- Killian de Geest, Sciensano, Belgium

Poster 3.09

West Nile virus integrated monitoring program in Vojvodina Province of Serbia – data obtained in 2021, 2023 and 2025

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2: Veterinary Specialized Institute "Subotica", Subotica, Serbia

3: Veterinary Specialized Institute "Pančevo", Pančevo, Serbia

4: Veterinary Specialized Institute "Sombor", Sombor, Serbia

5: Veterinary Specialized Institute "Zrenjanin", Zrenjanin, Serbia

6: Veterinary Specialized Institute "Kraljevo", Kraljevo, Serbia

7: Laboratory for Medical and Veterinary Entomology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Novi Sad, Serbia

8: Veterinary Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Belgrade, Serbia

The concept and results of the national integrated West Nile virus (WNV) monitoring program implemented in 2021, 2023 and 2025 in the territory of the Vojvodina Province of Serbia are presented. The WNV monitoring program, funded by the Veterinary Directorate was implemented by the veterinary service in cooperation with entomologists and ornithologists. The goal of the program was the early detection of WNV circulation in the environment and timely reporting to public health institutions and local governments in order to increase preparedness, initiate prevention of infection in humans and initiate targeted mosquito control actions. The program was based on the detection of the presence of WNV in wild birds as natural hosts and mosquitoes as virus vectors, and on serological testing of sentinel horses and young cattle calved after the previous vector season (from 2023) for the presence of WNV-specific IgM and IgG antibodies.

WNV circulation was detected in all districts of Vojvodina Province from beginning of August until end of October in 2021, then from end of June to September in 2023, and from July to September in 2025. The presence of WNV IgM antibodies in the blood serum of horses was detected in 1.08% (6/555), 1.81% (10/554) and 0.34% (2/567) of the tested animals in 2021, 2023 and 2025 consequently. The presence of WNV IgG antibodies in young cattle was detected in 14.20% (161/1134) and in 8.68% (98/1134) of tested animals in 2023 and 2025. The virus (WNV) presence was detected in 11.43% (12/105) of wild bird samples in 2021, then in 7.42% (2/27), 5.56% (2/36) and 0% (0/4), as well as in 6.94% (5/72), 0% (0/29) and 0% (0/10) samples of dead, live captured and shot wild birds in 2023 and in 2025 consequently. Also, WNV was detected in 10.74% (26/244), 5.71% (18/315) and 4.2% (12/285) of tested pooled samples of *Culex pipiens* mosquitoes.

The integrated WNV surveillance program in 2025 detected a very low intensity of WNV circulation, much lower comparing to 2021, and even lower of the level of virus circulation in 2023. Despite the low intensity of virus circulation, especially in 2025, the WNV monitoring program in all three years showed satisfactory results in terms of sensitivity and capacity to indicate the spatial distribution of the risk for humans.

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Keywords: WNV national surveillance program in 2021, 2023 and 2025, surveillance in horses, calves, wild birds and mosquitos, Vojvodina Province of Serbia