

CULICOIDES.NET: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR ONLINE INFORMATION

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As is typical for a reference laboratory, the Institute for Animal Health (IAH) struggles with the problem of managing masses of epidemiological data. To solve this problem, it launched the Relais project (Relais Epi-informatic Laboratory Infrastructure) to combine and inter-relate its various information resources. This was done with success for foot-and-mouth disease and it is now being extended to bluetongue. Sample, analysis and sequence data are being combined in real time within a single database for visualization, reporting and analysis. This database contains all sample data collected by IAH, and all publicly available molecular sequences (over 400). In time, another 2000

laboratory sequences and 100 full genomes will follow. The website Bluetonguevirus.org has been launched to make available this information to the other laboratories and the world. We are currently engaged in extending our database and website to encompass taxonomic data, including online species characteristics, distribution and seasonality databases for *Culicoides*. Facilities for uploading and sharing data are available, and the software may be freely distributed.

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