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Press release

ANSES and GDS France renew their cooperation for another three years

Roger Genet, Director General of ANSES, and Michel Combes, President of the French Federation of Health Protection Groups (GDS France), today signed a framework partnership agreement designed to strengthen the analytical reference scheme for Category 2 and 3 animal health hazards. This three-year agreement reflects the desire of both organisations to continue cooperating on this scheme, while ensuring that it can be adapted to address emerging health issues.

The initial agreement between GDS France and ANSES, signed on 27 November 2013 for a duration of three years and then extended in 2017, concerned the establishment of an operational analytical reference system for mucosal disease/bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD), infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR) and paratuberculosis. GDS France and ANSES decided to maintain this agreement over the longer term by renewing it for another three-year period, in order to consolidate the scheme while ensuring that it can be adapted to address emerging health issues.

A number of Category 2 and 3 health hazards, some of which are regulated, represent major economic challenges for French livestock farming and are subject to voluntary or mandatory collective preventive measures, or herd certifications managed by the professionals. A national reference framework is therefore needed for the testing that forms the basis of the measures taken by managers.

The objective of the agreement signed today is to continue, within the ANSES Niort Laboratory, the reference work identified as necessary in the framework of the collective health policy applied by professional health bodies in the area of Category 2 and 3 health hazards, particularly IBR, BVD and paratuberculosis. This agreement will also facilitate the development of joint research to support reference activities.

Furthermore, the collaboration with GDS France is a major asset enabling ANSES to fulfil its task regarding epidemiological surveillance in animal health, which requires a strong partnership with the players in the field, particularly *via* the epidemiological surveillance platform for animal health (ESA Platform).

This agreement will also provide the two organisations with opportunities to combine their efforts to respond to regional, national and international calls for projects on improving diagnostic tools and using them for control and/or certification programmes.

The renewal of this agreement with GDS-France and the active involvement of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region both reinforce the ANSES Niort Laboratory's position as a centre of innovation in animal health.

The French Federation of Health Protection Groups (GDS France) is the national agricultural organisation responsible for issues of animal health and hygiene, as well as quality as regards health. It brings together the French regional and departmental groupings (GDS and FRGDS) and encompasses cattle, pig, sheep and goat farmers, beekeepers, and in some *départements* poultry farmers, horse breeders and even farmed game breeders. It works to improve public health by strengthening animal health, to increase farmers' incomes by reducing the cost of health measures, and to promote the livestock economy by guaranteeing the quality of animal health and hygiene as well as that of their products.

The ANSES Niort Laboratory is located in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region, in the heart of a major cattle, sheep and goat farming area. For almost 30 years it has provided scientific and technical support to the goat sector, developing expertise in the predominant goat health issues (retroviruses, mycoplasmoses, scrapie, cryptosporidiosis, paratuberculosis in goats, etc.). As part of the new health governance put in place in 2011 and the partnership agreement signed with GDS France in 2013, the Laboratory has extended its area of competence to infectious diseases of cattle. It is now responsible for analytical reference activities regarding the main Category 2 and 3 health hazards for ruminants that are subject to collective preventive measures or other procedures (IBR, BVD, enzootic bovine leucosis, hypodermosis and paratuberculosis).

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