from dairy cattle in Israel. However, it is important to bear in mind that bluetongue is highly endemic in Israel. Serological studies performed during the past three decades have shown that the seroprevalence of BTV in adult cows in most areas of Israel exceeds 75 per cent. A seroprevalence exceeding 50 per cent was documented in calves less than one year old (Purse and others 2004, Kedmi and others 2010), indicating an annual incidence of BTV infection of over 50 per cent. No less important is the fact that cattle infected with BTV-8 are positive for up to 39 and 157 days after infection by virus isolation and PCR, respectively (Di Gialleonardo and others 2011).

Taken together, it can be concluded that, in Israel, during the hot BTV season (September to November) and for the few following months, 25 to 50 per cent of cattle can be BTV-positive by PCR. Unfortunately, the paper by Brenner and colleagues does not report the proportion of sick animals that were diagnosed as positive for BTV, nor does it report how many of them were diagnosed by PCR and how many by virus isolation. Also, the results of the tests performed on sick animals are not compared with the results for any healthy controls. Against this background, negative results for other potential pathogens do not provide significant support to the authors’ claim, since there are numerous cases in which clinical signs are presented without the finding of any potential cause. It is not reported how many animals were tested for these other pathogens and what was the percentage of positive results among them.

In view of the above, we feel that association of the described syndromes with BTV infection cannot be supported by the data presented. It is as likely that the identification of BTV in sick animals was the result of a mere coincidence or a selection bias, caused by presenting only those animals that were diagnosed as positive for BTV and disregarding those sick animals that were negative.

**E. Klement**, Koret School of Veterinary Medicine, Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences, The Hebrew University, POB 12, Rehovot 76100, Israel

**M. Kedmi**, Hachaklait, Mutual Society for Veterinary Services, Caesarea Industrial, Israel

**References**


**doi**: 10.1136/vr.d7272
Bluetongue-associated clinical signs in Israel

E. Klement and M. Kedmi

Veterinary Record 2011 169: 536
doi: 10.1136/vr.d7272