USDA Foreign Agricultural Service
GAIN Report
Global Agricultural Information Network

Voluntary _ Public

Date: 6/29/2015
GAIN Report Number: RS1541

Russian Federation

Post: Moscow

International Veterinary Congress Held in Moscow

Report Categories:
Agricultural Situation
Livestock and Products
Poultry and Products
Pest/Disease Occurrences

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Report Highlights:
The Fifth International Veterinary Congress was held in Moscow on April 20-22, 2015. The participants discussed many topics of interest such as growing consolidation of the Russian pork and poultry industries, low survival rates of imported breeding cattle, and the worsening epizootic situation in Russia especially for African Swine Fever, Brucellosis, and Foot and Mouth Disease

General Information:
The Fifth International Veterinary Congress was held in Moscow on April 20-22, 2015. The event began with an announcement that Alexander Tkachev had been appointed as the new minister of agriculture. Several topics of interest were discussed such as the development of a Unified Register of veterinary pharmaceuticals, vaccines, feed additives and diagnostic tools for the Eurasian Economic Union; growing consolidation of the Russian pork and poultry industries; and imported breeding cattle demonstrating insufficient adaptation with low survival rates during the last few years. During the presentations, a worsening epizootic situation was stressed especially for several infectious diseases such as African Swine Fever (ASF), Brucellosis, and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

New Minister of Agriculture and the Issues Around Import Substitution
At the opening ceremony, Deputy Minister of Agriculture Valeriy Gaevsky, acting on behalf of the Government of the Russian Federation, announced the appointment of Alexander Tkachev as the new minister of agriculture. The Russian Government expects that the newly appointed minister will reinforce the economic progress of Russia's domestic agriculture in order to facilitate the Government's strategy of import substitution that began lat year.

In the opening presentation, the General Director of the National Union of Pork Producers Yu. Kovalev outlined the development of the Russian pork industry in 2014 under the conditions of import substitution. Kovalev stressed that, in spite of favorable market conditions, seventy outdated pork industrial farms were closed in 2014 resulting in a reduction of 55,000 MT of pork in a Live Weight Basis. Pork production by owners of private backyards and small farmers also decreased by 10.7 percent (108,000 MT) and 13.2 percent (9,000 MT) respectively. However, the production of pork in large modern industrial farms increased by 12.8 percent (380,000 MT), resulting in a net increase in Russian pork production of 5.8 percent (208,000 MT) in 2014.

According to Chairman of the Executive Board of the National Dairy Farmers Association Andrey Danilenko, the domestic milk & dairy industry requires substantial development. Domestic dairy can currently supply only 60 percent of domestic demand for milk and only about 50 percent of locally produced milk in 2013 was of high enough quality to be consumed.

Unified Register of Veterinary pharmaceuticals in Euro-Asian Economic Union
A manager from the Eurasian Economic Committee gave an update regarding the development of a Unified Register of veterinary pharmaceuticals, vaccines, feed additives and diagnostic tools for the Eurasian Economic Union. The Unified legislation for registration of veterinary drugs has been completed was published in May 2015 for public discussion. The procedure for registering veterinary pharmaceuticals should be harmonized with WTO requirements before 2025.

Critical Consolidation of the Russian Poultry and Pork Industries
Participants of the Congress mentioned the heavy consolidation of the Russian pork industry during their discussions. It was noted that roughly half of total pork production in Russia takes place in ten large establishments. According to foreign veterinary specialists, this causes a problem for the national veterinary service because deficiencies in sanitary procedures at the biggest plants may lead to catastrophic consequences. Furthermore, the same scenario has also arisen in the domestic poultry

industry where 57 percent of total poultry production comes from the 10 biggest establishments. At just one poultry establishment (Prioskolye) 64 million broilers are slaughtered per year. The consolidation of poultry production can be seen in the materials presented by Director of All-Russian Research Poultry Breeding Technology Institute and President of the Russian Poultry Breeding Union Vladimir Fisinin.

Chart 1. Russia: Top Russian Poultry Producers in 2014, Annual Slaughter Weight, in Thousand MT)

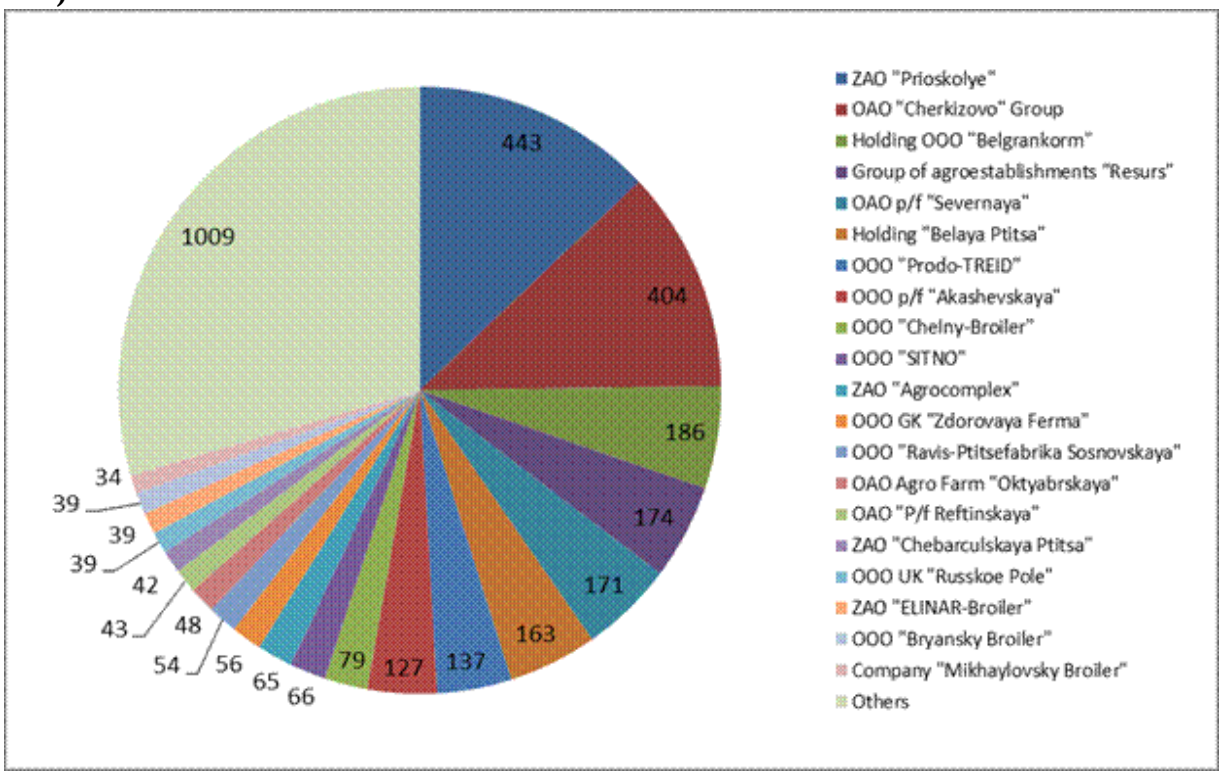
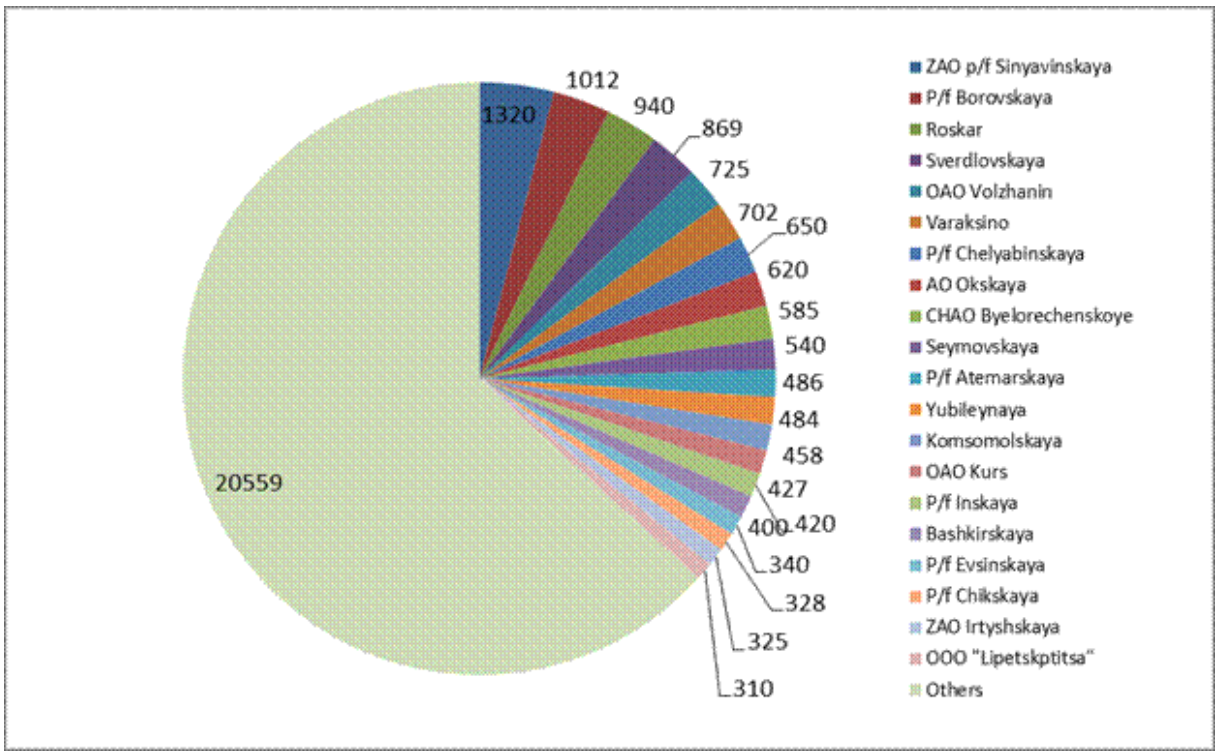


Chart 2. Russia: Top Russian Table Egg Producers in 2014, Annual in Million Pieces



According to Fisinin, the main priorities in development of the Russian poultry industry are as follows:

- Establishment of national poultry breeding genetic centers;
- Enlargement of national poultry primary resources;
- Build more national factories to produce biological active substances as vitamins, microelements, amino acids, probiotics, vaccines, diagnostic tools etc.;
- Development of a federal reserve of feed grain;
- Enhancement of biosecurity level in the face of coming global bird epizooties;
- Improvement of export management mechanisms.

Problems with the Adaptation of Imported Breeding Cattle

According to Director of the Russian Veterinary Research Institute of Pathology Dr. Sergei Shabounin, breeding cattle imported from the European Union, United States, and Australia have demonstrated insufficient adaptation and low survival rates in recent years. For example, only 31,000 head survived in 2012 out of the 137,000 animals imported that year. This loss resulted from a lack of proper facilities, inadequate feed, and an overall lack of knowledge and training by Russian cattlemen on how to care for them.

Emerging Viruses

Head of Veterinary Virology at the National Animal Disease Center Dr. Kelly Lager presented on the discovery of a new virus Porcine Delta Coronavirus (PDCoV) in China, Hong Kong, South Korea, and the United States. In light of the circulation of Avian Influenza viruses over the world, Dr. David Suarez, an expert in exotic and emerging avian viral diseases from the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on the spread of High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N8 across the United States and

the current situation regarding H5N2. He concluded that wild migrating birds were principal vectors of HPAI viruses between continents and in the territory of the United States. Therefore, improving the biosecurity plans on all poultry facilities is the most effective measure to contain the infection.

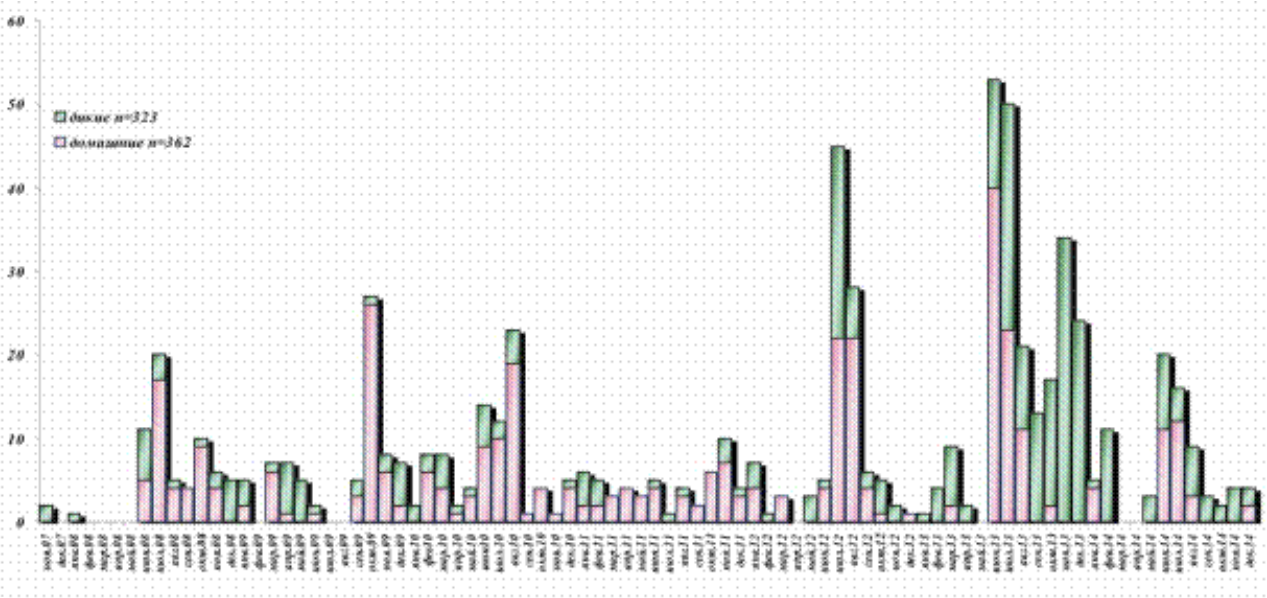
Director of the National Animal Disease Center in Ames, Iowa Dr. Marcus Kehrly Jr. presented on fluctuations in immunological status in periparturient dairy cows and the efficacy of recombinant granulocyte-colony stimulatory factor (G-CSF) as an immunity modulator in the prevention of mastitis in lactating dairy cows. He informed that the application of G-CSF during the critical moments of function of a cow's immune system reduced the occurrence of mastitis in lactating dairy cattle by 47 percent.

Rabies was repeatedly discussed during the event. According to V. Borovoy of the Russian ministry of agriculture, rabies is widely spread in the territory of the Russian Federation but follows a trend of slow decline. Head of OIE/WHO/EU Laboratory for Rabies and Wildlife Professor Florence Cliquet shared her experience in the implementation of a program of rabies eradication in Italy and Estonia using a method of vaccination of wild foxes in nature. This allows the EU to create a barrier zone of permanent vaccination against rabies nearby the border with Russia in order to prevent transmission of the disease on EU territory from wild animals migrating from Russia.

The Threat of African Swine Fever (ASF)

African Swine Fever continues to be a major threat for the Russian livestock industry. ASF worsened in 2014 (See Chart 3). About 250,000 pigs were killed in 2014 resulting from 7 outbreaks in big commercial farms in Pskov, Tula, Voronezh, and Orel oblasts. General Director of the National Union of Pork Producers Yu. Kovalev forecasts that this will result in the loss of 50,000 MT of pork in 2015 and will reduce the expected annual growth by 25 percent. The National Union of Pork Producers proposed modifications to the national legislation concerning biosecurity conditions of rearing pigs at all types of pig farms including small farms and private backyards. These new regulations would eliminate a number of pigs maintained in small farms with low biosecurity levels. Mr. Kovalev believes that this set of measures will help to eradicate ASF in Russia.

Chart. 3. Russia: Number of outbreaks of African Swine Fever in Russia in 2007-2014, by Month (pink – domestic pigs, green – wild boars)

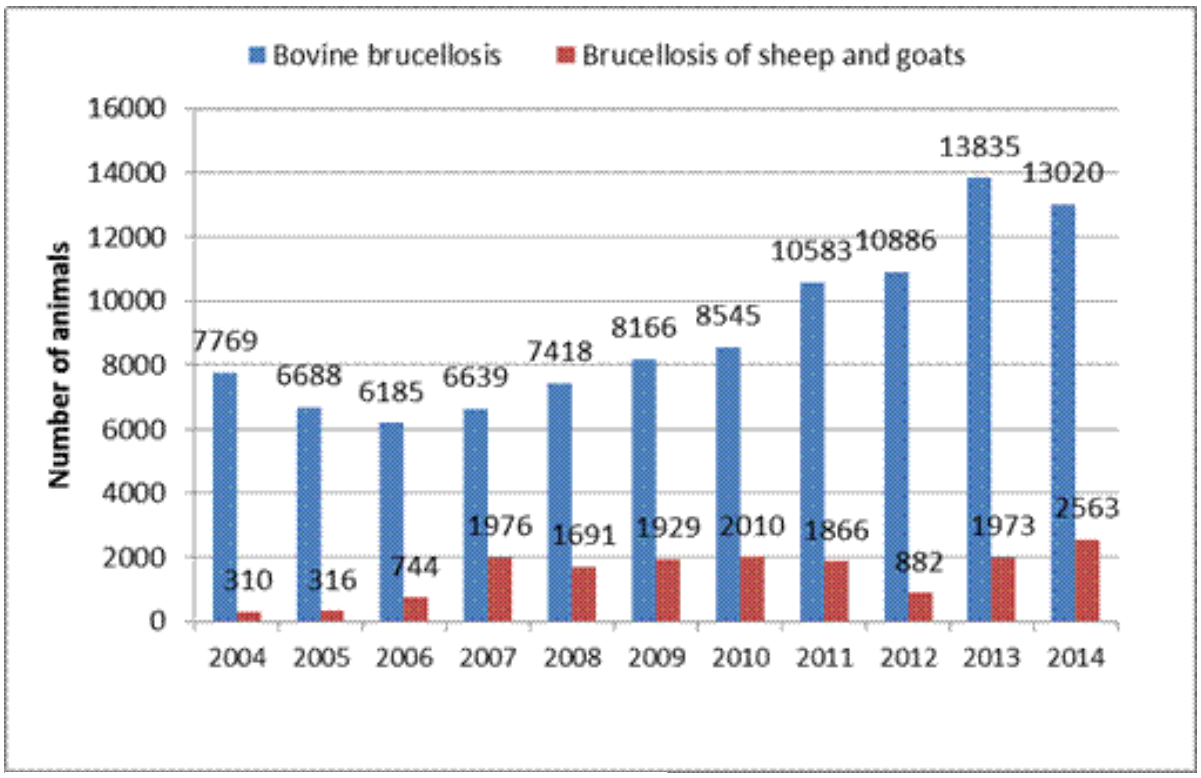


Epizootic Situation from the View of the Russian Ministry of Agriculture

Director of the Veterinary Department of the Russian Ministry of Agriculture Vladimir Borovoy defined his department's goal of reducing the zone of vaccination. The veterinary practice shows that all sick animals are unregistered and unvaccinated. The strategic approach of the ministry of agriculture is to involve the animals in private backyards in the process of registration and monitoring of veterinary diseases. In his presentation, Borovoy also noted that bluetongue positive cattle were imported from abroad in 2014 although he kept out of discussion the questionable capacity of local bloodsucking insects to serve as the potential specific vectors in transmission of North American endemic serotypes of bluetongue virus. Concerning Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Borovoy stressed that the Russian veterinary service is in charge of creating a buffer zone against FMD with vaccinated cattle in the territories connected to the south border of the Russian Federation.

Borovoy also underlined the worsening situation of brucellosis in the territory of Russia as brucellosis significantly exceeded epidemiological thresholds in 2014. The negative trend in the epizootic situation for brucellosis goes back to 2004 (See Chart 4). Veterinarians registered 682 outbreaks of bovine brucellosis and 10 outbreaks of brucellosis in sheep and goat in 2014. The disease seems to be widely spread between reindeers as test results revealed 646 infected reindeer in 2014 alone.

Chart 4. Russia: Cases of Bovine Brucellosis and Sheep/Goat Brucellosis from 2004 - 2014



(Source: Annual Report from Russian Government

In his speech devoted to the epizootic situation in Russia, Vladimir Borovoy presented data on diseases of cattle and pigs from the annual epizootic report of the All-Russian Center for Animal Health Protection (ARRIAH), which belongs to the Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS).

According to the ARRIAH report, the most common cattle diseases, which comprised 80 percent of all outbreaks, were Hypodermathosis (lesion by gad-flies larvae), Brucellosis, Leucosis, Colibacteriosis, and Rabies. The main diseases in terms of incidence (cases, or number of sick animals) were Leucosis, Brucellosis, and Hypodermathosis. See Charts 6 and 7 below.

Chart 6. Russia: Cattle Disease Outbreaks in Russia in 2014

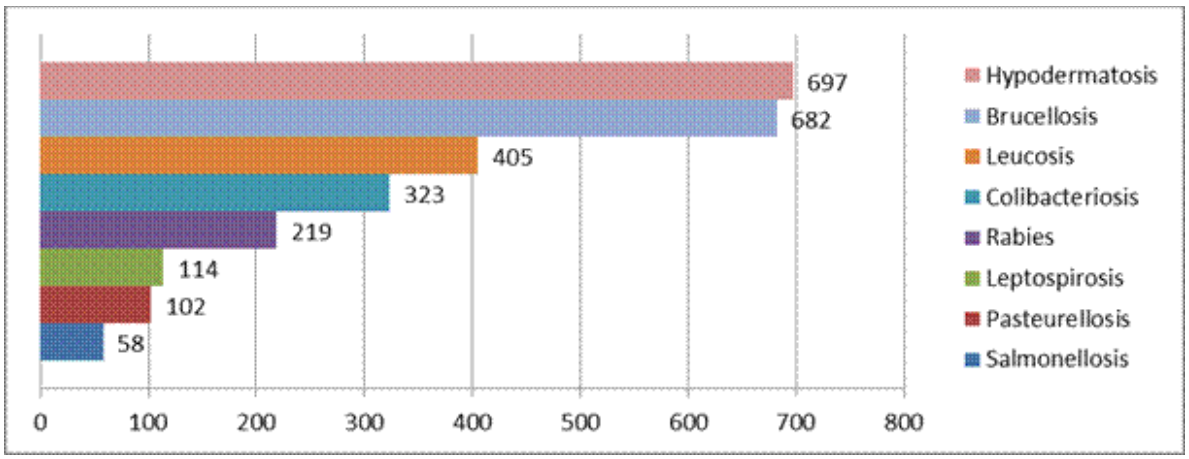
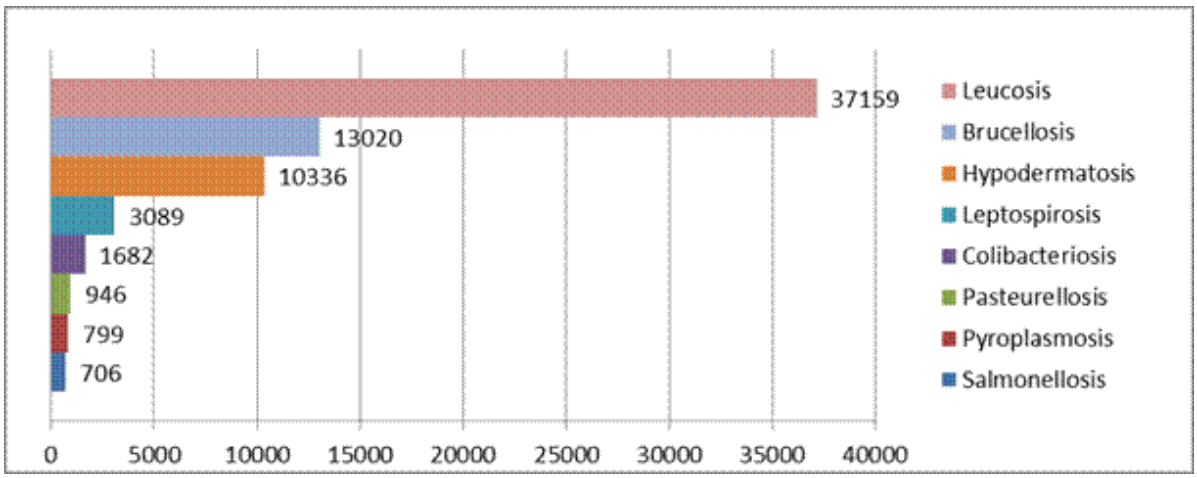


Chart 7. Russia: Cattle Disease Cases in Russia in 2014



The most common diseases for pigs, which comprised 80 percent of outbreaks were Colibacteriosis, African Swine Fever (ASF), Pasteurellosis, and Enterotoxemia. The main diseases in terms of incidence (cases, or number of sick animals) were FMD, Colibacteriosis, and Salmonellosis (See Charts 8 and 9 below).

Chart 8. Russia: Pig Disease Outbreaks in Russia in 2014

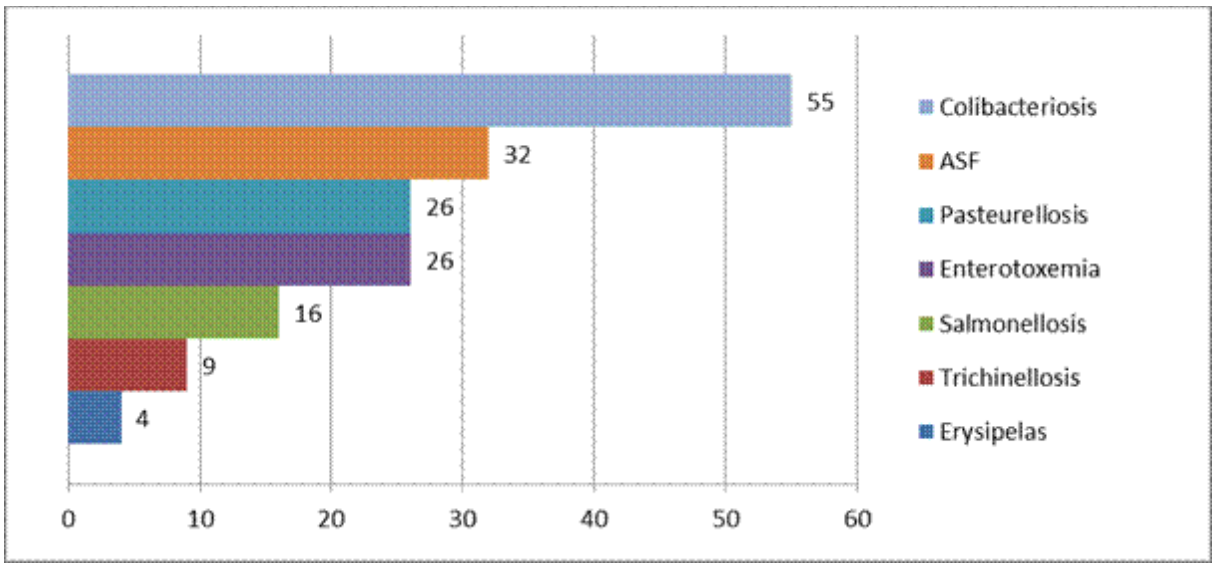


Chart 9. Russia: Pig Disease Cases in Russia in 2014