

An outbreak of myxomatosis in Greek rabbit farms during year 2007

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ABSTRACT: Myxomatosis is considered as one of the most frequent endemic fatal viral diseases of rabbits in all over Europe except for Greece. Latest outbreak in our country was reported in 1973 by E. Stoforos. Even though Greek rabbit farms are totally dependent on purchasing parent stock from other European countries where myxomatosis is occurent, the disease was not clinically presented in Greek farms, until February 2007. No vaccination against myxoma virus was applied in Greek rabbit farms and epizootiologically the importation of the disease was inevitable, as no special preventive measurements were taken for the imported carrier animals. So, early in spring 2007, a myxomatosis outbreak was reported in two rabbit farms, situated in between a 150 Km distance that were sharing the same parent stock supplier, importing rabbits from a neighboring country. Mortality rate reached 80-90% and myxomatosis diagnosis was based on clinical signs and laboratory confirmation performed by PCR, virus isolation and histology. Eradication of the disease was applied in the affected farms by euthanizing the total rabbit population together with thoroughly applied hygienic measures. Prevention policy by vaccination was not encouraged by the local authorities in order to keep Greece Myxomatosis free status. On the other hand, veterinary services were alerted and quarantine measures were strongly recommended to rabbit farmers every time that rabbit parent stock is imported.

Key words: Rabbit, Myxomatosis, Greece.