

Bluetongue virus serotype 3 (BTV-3)

About bluetongue

Bluetongue virus (BTV) is a notifiable disease affecting ruminants (such as sheep, cattle, goats, deer) and camelids (such as alpacas, llamas). Midge bites are the most common way for the virus to spread to livestock, but BTV can also spread through the import or movement of infected animals, their germplasm (semen and ova), embryos and foetuses.

BTV does not affect people or food safety. Meat and milk from infected animals is safe to eat and drink. However, BTV can cause significant damage to livestock populations and is considered a risk to the agricultural sector. Remain vigilant for clinical signs of BTV: www.gov.scot/bluetongue

Cases of BTV in England

The most likely cause of the current 2023/24 cases in England, is midges infected with BTV-3 blown across from continental Europe. There is no evidence that virus is currently circulating in the UK midge population. For more information on the situation in England, visit www.gov.uk/bluetongue

Due to BTV-3 cases in England, Great Britain has lost its disease-free status. Therefore, trade in live ruminant animals with the EU and Northern Ireland (NI) is currently suspended, likely for the next few years (dependent on a vaccine becoming available or regaining disease freedom).

Exercise caution before buying livestock. Source animals and germplasm responsibly and be aware of the disease risks.

If exporting germplasm out with GB, ensure you meet the Export Health Certificate (EHC) requirements and any additional safeguarding measures (such as testing of semen and the live animals this came from).

Can I vaccinate my animals?

Trade in livestock from GB to the EU (including NI) is dependent on a vaccine becoming available. There is currently no vaccine for BTV-3, which is the serotype detected in England. You can vaccinate against BTV-4 and BTV-8 serotypes, but these vaccines do not protect against BTV-3.

Bluetongue virus (BTV) is a notifiable disease. If you suspect signs of any notifiable diseases, you must immediately notify your Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) [Scotland field services local office](#). Failure to do so is an offence.

To keep up to date with the latest news, sign up to the APHA Alerts Service: www.gov.uk/guidance/apha-alert-subscription-service

To find out more about bluetongue and the latest situation visit: www.gov.scot/bluetongue

The Ruminant Health and Welfare Group's website is updated regularly with BTV information and resources: www.ruminanthw.org.uk/bluetongue-virus