

# NDCC Disease Update 3 of 2025 - Bluetongue Virus Update

## 1. Vigilance critical for Ireland

Bluetongue virus is spread by infected **biting midges** (*Culicoides species*) which are present in Ireland and are generally most active between **April and November**. Bluetongue replication can only occur in the midge in temperatures above 12-15°C.

The higher risk period for bluetongue **incursion in Ireland via windblown infected midges** from Great Britain and mainland Europe is coming to an end as temperatures steadily decrease. **Vigilance is critical** to detect any cases promptly before the virus can replicate and become established in local livestock and midge populations. Early detection of an incursion of the disease followed by timely action over the coming weeks would help to protect Ireland's bluetongue disease free status over the winter months and into the spring until temperatures begin to rise again.


**\*BE VIGILANT FOR THE CLINICAL SIGNS OF BLUETONGUE VIRUS, EARLY DETECTION IS CRITICAL\***

## 2. Clinical signs of bluetongue

A wide range of clinical signs are associated with bluetongue virus including:

- Fever
- Inappetence (loss or lack of appetite)
- Drop in milk yield
- Reddening of the mucus membranes
- Sores on the nose, gum and dental pads
- Swelling of the face, lips and tongue (i.e. "Bluetongue")
- Breathing difficulties if the tongue swells
- Drooling
- Discharge from the eyes and/or nose
- Lameness
- Abortion or deformities in offspring/foetus
- In severe cases, death can result

## 3. How to report a suspect outbreak of bluetongue virus:

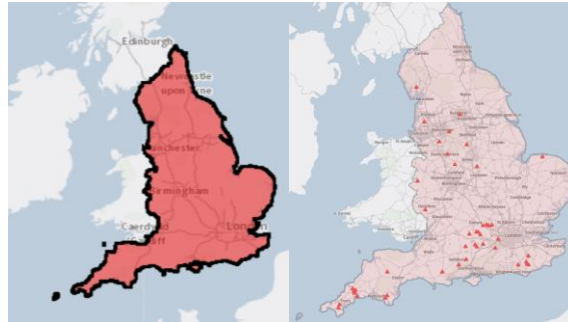
Report a suspect to your  [Regional Veterinary Office](#) / National Disease Emergency Hotline on 01-492-8026 (outside of normal office hours) without delay.

## 4. Current situation in Great Britain

- Since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025 the **Restricted Zone** for bluetongue has been extended to cover **all of England** (*Figure 1(a)*). Movements within England are now permitted without a movement license or pre-movement testing.
- From 21<sup>st</sup> September 2025, only breeding males (cattle sheep and goats), pregnant cattle and camelids, will require pre-movement testing or vaccination with Bultavo-3 for moves from the Restricted Zone to [Scotland](#). As the reduced temperatures are considered to lower the risk of onward spread of disease from infected animals.

- The **total number of BTV-3 cases** in Great Britain for the 2025 to 2026 vector season (since July 2025) is **43**. All cases have been in England (see *Figure 1 (b)* below).
- During the 2024-2025 vector season, 262 of BTV-3 cases and a single BTV-12 case were confirmed in Great Britain.
- Visit [Bluetongue: news, information and guidance for livestock keepers - GOV.UK](#) for more information.

*Figure 1 (a) detailing the Bluetongue Control Zone and (b) the confirmed cases of bluetongue detected in Great Britain since July 2025 (as of 19/09/2025).*

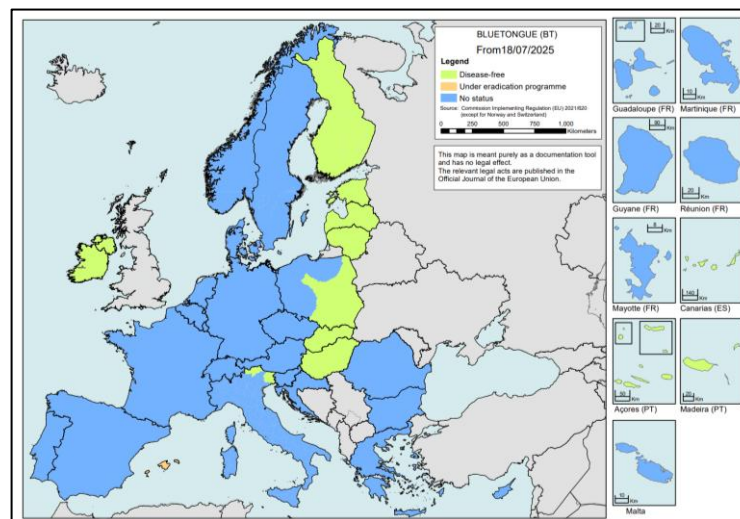


Sources: [APHA Bluetongue Interactive Map](#) & [APHA Bluetongue Case Map](#)

## 5. Bluetongue Situation Summary across Europe

- BTV-3 and BTV-8 continue to circulate widely in mainland Europe, with France reporting a large increase of both serotypes during Summer 2025. BTV-8 has been reported for the first time in Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia.
- Other bluetongue serotypes such BTV-1 and 4 have been detected in several European countries (2023-2025).

*Figure 2 Member States or zones with disease-free status or with an approved eradication programme*



Source [Bluetongue - European Commission](#)

## 6. Managing the Risk

- Bluetongue surveillance is ongoing across the country, with the aim of early detection of the disease in the event it reaches Ireland.
- **Movements of live susceptible ruminants into Ireland must meet certification requirements**
  - Import of live susceptible species from Great Britain has remained suspended since November 2023 due to the inability to meet import certification requirements.
  - There has been no movement of BTV susceptible species to Ireland from mainland Europe since prior to July 2024. This is due to the ongoing dynamic situation and rapid spread of BTV-3 in mainland Europe and animals unable to meet certification requirements for entry to Ireland.
    - ➔ **Movements of ruminants and germinal products from Northern Ireland are still permitted subject to all usual conditions.**
- **Movements of germinal products (semen, ova, embryos) into Ireland must meet certification requirements**
  - Germinal products from Great Britain/Europe can enter Ireland once the relevant animal health requirements for BTV can be certified.
  - **IMPORTANT TO NOTE that importing semen from affected countries is not without risk.**
- **Bluetongue Vaccination**
  - BTV-3 vaccines are not currently permitted in Ireland.
  - BTV-3 vaccines have been **authorised to use** in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and other EU countries.
  - Three vaccines have now obtained European Marketing Authorisation for use in exceptional circumstances:
    - *Syvazul BTV 3 (sheep)*
    - *Bluevac 3 (sheep and cattle)*
    - *Bultavo 3 (sheep and cattle)*
  - The duration of the immunity period guaranteed in the specifications of these vaccines has not been determined to date.
  - As a result, **animals vaccinated with the BTV-3 vaccines originating from countries that are not disease-free, do not currently meet EU standard certification requirements** and cannot be certified for the purposes of movement to Ireland.

## 7. Vaccination in Northern Ireland

- Bluetongue serotype 3 (BTV-3) vaccination is now **permitted in Northern Ireland** with a DAERA-issued specific licence. Further information can be found [here](#).
- No cases of bluetongue have been reported to date in Northern Ireland, and it remains a disease-free country, therefore, **movements of vaccinated ruminants from Northern Ireland are still permitted subject to all usual conditions.**

## 8. Further information

 Further information on bluetongue virus is available at [www.gov.ie/bluetongue](http://www.gov.ie/bluetongue)

*This update is designed to keep you informed and help protect Ireland's ruminant population and livelihoods. The cooperation of all stakeholders is crucial in the protection of the health and welfare of the Irish livestock industry.*

National Disease Control Centre

19<sup>th</sup> September 2025