



NDCC Bluetongue Virus Update 2 of 2026

1. Bluetongue virus in Ireland: An evolving situation

- Bluetongue virus serotype-3 (BTV-3) has been confirmed in multiple cattle herds to date in Southern and Eastern areas.
- The first case of BTV- 3 was confirmed in a suckler herd in Co. Wexford on 24th January 2026. It was detected through the culled cow routine surveillance in a slaughterhouse.
- Further investigations have identified BTV-3 in 10 additional herds.
 - ➔ Through tracing and active surveillance in the southeast. Animals did not present with clinical signs.
 - ➔ Two cattle abortion reports (which are a legal requirement to report under SI 114 of 1991) have disclosed two further cases in farms in coastal areas of Wicklow and Louth. These are the first two cases reporting clinical signs.
 - ➔ One further cow detected on the abattoir surveillance in a herd close to the index herd, Co. Wexford
- The likely source of incursion was by infected midges blown across the Irish sea in late Autumn 2025. Bluetongue virus is spread by infected biting midges (Culicoides species) which are present in Ireland and are generally most active between April and November. The replication of the virus can only occur in the midge in temperatures above 12-15°C. Spread of the virus is less likely to occur in winter and early spring months.
- Current policy is to identify the geographical extent of cases to assist farmers and PVPs in the decision regarding vaccination before the high-risk season in warmer Summer-Autumn months.
- **Farmers and PVPs nationwide are encouraged to submit abortion samples (post-abortion dam bloods and deformed/aborted fetuses) to their local RVL. Bluetongue screening has been added to these profiles as part of disease surveillance. Any follow up investigations will not result in on farm restrictions.**
- No restriction zones or movement controls are in place.
- There are no food safety or human health risks from Bluetongue. Milk and meat are safe to consume.

Live animal movements between Ireland and Northern Ireland

- Since Ireland confirmed its first case of Bluetongue Virus Serotype 3 (BTV3) in January 2026, only movements of cattle and sheep direct to slaughter have been allowed as certification requirements could not be met.
- A derogation from certain certification requirements is now in place (from 6th March 2026) which will allow cattle and sheep to move with no restrictions from other member states where BTV3 is the only serotype present, as is the case in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

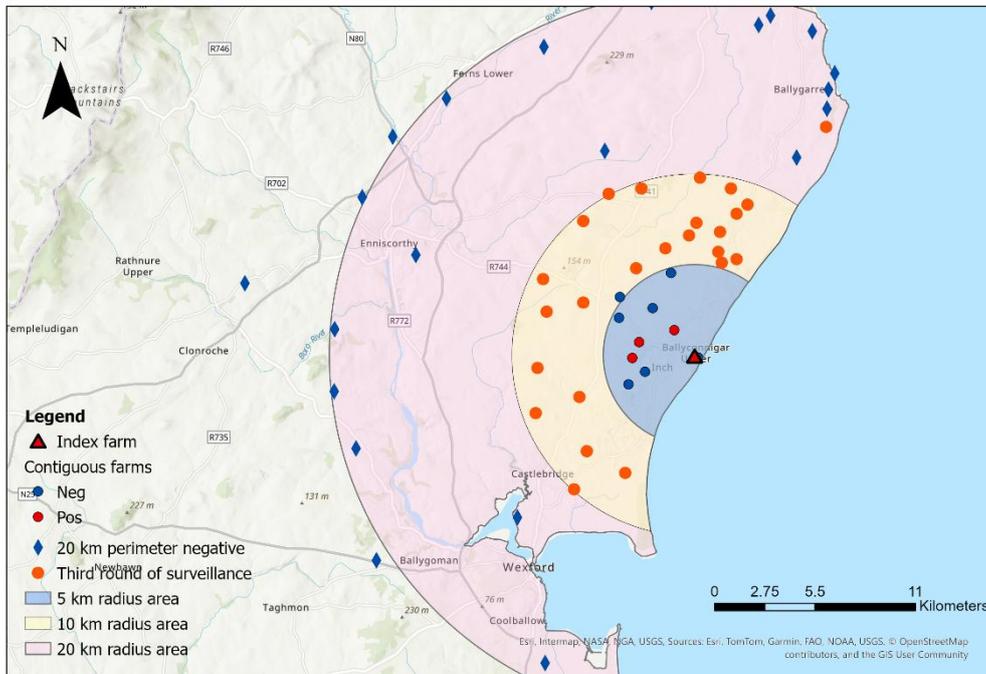
***BLUETONGUE IS HERE IN IRELAND. ALL LIVESTOCK STAKEHOLDERS
NATIONWIDE SHOULD BE AWARE AND PREPARE***



Figure 1 detailing confirmed case of bluetongue detected in January-February 2026



Figure 2 detailing the active surveillance performed in January-February 2026 in the Southeast.





2. **BE VIGILANT FOR THE CLINICAL SIGNS OF BLUETONGUE VIRUS***

Clinical signs can be severe in sheep, while cattle and goats can be asymptomatic or have subclinical disease. Infection in wild ruminants vary in susceptibility by species.

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

- 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
- Early embryonic death, abortion or deformities in offspring/foetus
- In severe cases, death can result

3. **Impact on trade**

Movement of animals for export and import must meet standardised animal health certification requirements.

- **Movements of live susceptible ruminants within the EU:**

- **Northern Ireland (NI)** – Derogation in place as of 6th March 2026 . Under the terms of the derogation in Northern Ireland, movements of susceptible livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, camelids, cervids and other ungulates) are permitted into Northern Ireland when moving from a Member State where BTV3 is the only serotype reported. The same applies to animals moving into Ireland as a similar derogation is in place here. No pre-movement testing requirements are required for cross-border moves. As with movements prior to the bluetongue outbreaks, an ITAHC (intra cert) is required to accompany any livestock movement.
- **The following countries specify no additional conditions for BTV3 movements:** Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic (Confined establishment moves only), France, Germany, Hungary (Confined establishment moves only), Luxembourg, Netherlands and Spain. Italy and Portugal specify that if the serotype is present at destination, they have no specific conditions. BTV3 is present in both Italy and Portugal.
- **Movement direct to slaughter in another Member State:** Allowed if they come from establishments in which infection with bluetongue virus (serotypes 1-24) has not been reported during the last 30 days prior to the date of departure of the consignment.
- **Movement of live susceptible animals for breeding & production to other EU member States MAY be possible if the Member State is not BTV Free and allows derogations from BTV requirements.** Specific details for each country can be found here: [Bluetongue - Food Safety - European Commission](#)



- **Movements of live susceptible ruminants to third countries:** In general, Third Country bilateral animal health certificates require country freedom from Bluetongue for a period of 12 to 24 months. DAFM are engaging with Competent Authorities of Third Countries.
 - **Great Britain (GB):** BTV 3 vaccines do not have an established duration of immunity so cannot be used as a basis for certification of **live animal movements**. DAFM is engaging with DEFRA.
- **No implications for dairy/meat products to be exported to GB, NI or the EU**
- **Movements of germinal products (semen, ova, embryos)**

Similarly to live animal movement, the movement of germinal products (semen, embryos) must meet certification requirements for movement between EU Member States. For queries related to Germinal Products please contact: GPN@agriculture.gov.ie

4. **Bluetongue Vaccination**

- **Vaccination against bluetongue serotype-3:**
 - BTV-3 vaccines are **permitted in Ireland under licence**.
 - BTV-3 vaccines do not fully stop infection/disease but greatly reduce viremia and severity of clinical symptoms.
 - Three vaccines have obtained European Marketing Authorisation for use:
 - *Syvazul BTV 3 (sheep and cattle) – Stock available soon*
 - *Bluevac 3 (sheep and cattle) - Stock available soon*
 - *Bultavo 3 (sheep and cattle) – currently in stock in Ireland*
 - The duration of the immunity period guaranteed in the specifications of these vaccines has not been determined to date. Therefore, vaccination cannot currently be used to meet EU standard certification requirements.
 - Contact veterinarymedicineswmc@agriculture.gov.ie for more information on vaccine licencing
- **Vaccination against bluetongue serotype-8:**
 - BTV-8 vaccines are **permitted in Ireland under licence**.
 - BTV-8 vaccines are currently in widespread use in France and some other EU Member States.
 - BTV-8 vaccines are approved, and they have an established duration of immunity.
 - Animals vaccinated with BTV-8 vaccines may be certified for the purposes of movement into Ireland.

5. **How to report a suspect outbreak of bluetongue virus:**

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



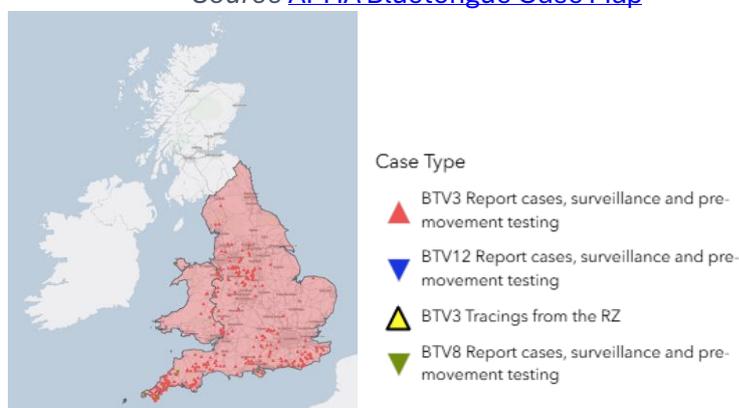
6. Bluetongue Situation Summary across Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Europe

BTV-3 and BTV-8 continue to circulate widely in **mainland Europe**. Other bluetongue serotypes such BTV-1 and BTV-4 have been detected in several European countries (2023-2025).

- **Northern Ireland:**
 - On the 5th of December 2025, the UK National Reference Laboratory Pirbright confirmed Bluetongue virus serotype 3 (BTV-3) infection in a herd near Bangor, County Down. Since then, BTV3 outbreaks in three further farms in Co. Down were confirmed.
 - In addition, to the introduction of the derogation, the BTV Temporary Control Zone (TCZ) in place in County Down, will be lifted effective from the same time on 6th March 2026. This will mean that all animals, will be free to move within Northern Ireland.
 - For additional information please visit [Bluetongue Situation Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)
- **Great Britain:** There have been **272** cases of bluetongue in Great Britain since July 2025. 251 in England (243 cases of only BTV-3, 1 case of only BTV-8 and 7 cases with both BTV-3 and BTV-8), 21 cases in Wales (BTV-3) and no cases in Scotland.
 - Since 1st July 2025 the **Restricted Zone** for bluetongue was extended to cover **all of England**. Movements within England are permitted without a movement license or pre-movement testing.
 - Since 21st September 2025, only breeding males (cattle sheep and goats), pregnant cattle and camelids, 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.
 - On 10th November, an **all-Wales restricted zone** was introduced. Livestock movements between England and Wales no longer require vaccination or pre-movement testing.
 - [Bluetongue: news, information and guidance for livestock keepers - GOV.UK](#)

Figure 4 detailing confirmed cases of bluetongue detected in Great Britain since July 2025

Source [APHA Bluetongue Case Map](#)



7. Further information



Further information on bluetongue virus is available at www.gov.ie/bluetongue and [*Bluetongue - Food Safety - European Commission*](#)

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.

For Bluetongue specific queries please email NDCCBTV@agriculture.gov.ie

National Disease Control Centre

6th March 2025