

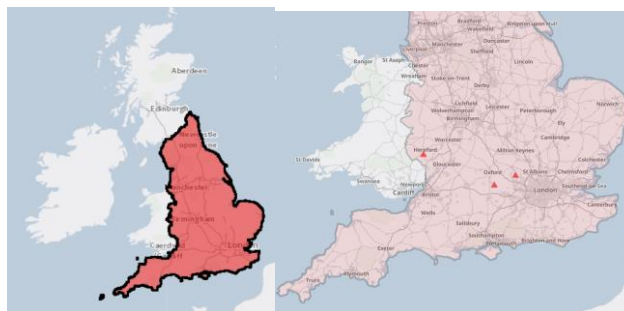
## NDCC Disease Update 2 of 2025- Bluetongue Virus Update

### 1. 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*). Movements within England are now permitted without a movement license or pre-movement testing.

- The **first cases of BTV-3 in Great Britain during this year's vector season (2025-2026)** were reported on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2025 (see *Figure 1 (b)* below).
  - One case involved detection in **two cattle following a non-negative pre-movement test in Herefordshire.**
  - Two cases involved **sheep with clinical signs in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.**
- During the 2024-2025 vector season, 262 of bluetongue serotype 3 (BTV-3) cases and a single BTV-12 case were confirmed in Great Britain.
- Updates from DEFRA/APHA available here:
  - [Bluetongue: news, information and guidance for livestock keepers - GOV.UK](#)

*Figure 1 (a) detailing the Bluetongue Control Zone and (b) the cases of bluetongue detected in Great Britain during this year's vector season (2025-2026) (as of 17/07/2025).*



Sources: [APHA Interactive Bluetongue Virus Map](#), [Bluetongue Cases and Zones](#)

### 2. Ireland enters a higher risk period for bluetongue

This is due to three main factors:

1. Bluetongue virus is spread by infected **biting midges** (*Culicoides species*) which are present in Ireland and are generally most active between **April and November**.
2. Rising summer temperatures make it possible for the virus to replicate and spread, if it were to enter Ireland.
  - Temperature increases result not only in an increase in midge activity, but also the ability for bluetongue virus to replicate in the midge.
  - **Midge activity increases above 4°C. Bluetongue replication can only occur above 12-15°C.**
3. Bluetongue has spread across most of England, and this increases the risk of infected midges being blown on the wind across the Irish sea in the coming months.

**\*BE VIGILANT FOR THE CLINICAL SIGNS OF BLUETONGUE VIRUS\***

### 3. Clinical signs of bluetongue virus

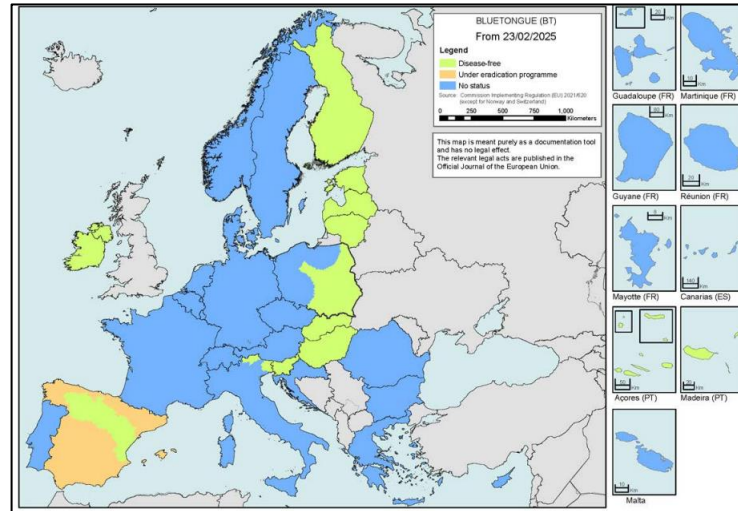
A wide range of clinical signs are associated with bluetongue virus including:

- 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

### 4. Bluetongue Situation Summary across Europe

- BTV-3 continues to circulate widely in mainland Europe (*Figure 2*). Other bluetongue serotypes BTV-1, 4, 8 and 12 have been detected in several European countries (2023-2025).

*Figure 2 Member States and zones with their bluetongue disease status*




Source [Bluetongue - European Commission](#)

### 5. 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** in 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.
  - As a result, **animals vaccinated with the BTV-3 vaccines do not currently meet EU standard certification requirements** and cannot be certified for the purposes of movement to Ireland.

## 6. 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.

**\*BE VIGILANT EARLY DETECTION OF BLUETONGUE IS CRITICAL\***

## 7. 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

18<sup>th</sup> July 2025