#### Bluetongue virus (BTV)



An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

## Why it matters

- BTV can have serious impacts on the health and productivity of affected animals
- An outbreak of BTV in Ireland would have impacts on trade of live animals and germinal products

Stay vigilant

#### Take action



It is critical that **all livestock farmers maintain vigilance** for any suspicions of bluetongue, and report any such suspicions to their local Regional Veterinary Office (RVO) without delay.

## Contact your veterinarian

- If you suspect BTV in your animals, notify your Regional Veterinary Office immediately
- If you plan on importing BTV susceptible animals into the country, contact your local Regional Veterinary Office for advice before you purchase

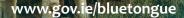




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# Bluetongue virus (BTV)





**Bluetongue virus** (BTV) affects sheep, cattle, goats, llamas and alpacas.

It is spread by infected biting midges

# What is Bluetongue?

Bluetongue is a notifiable disease caused by infection with bluetongue virus (BTV). It primarily affects ruminants, especially sheep, cattle, goats, llamas and alpacas. It is spread by infected biting midges (Culicoides species).

# **Does bluetongue affect humans?**

Bluetongue does not affect human health or food safety. Meat and milk are safe to eat and drink.

## How is BTV spread?

- The most common way BTV spreads is by infected biting midges (a midge bites an infected animal, becomes infected and then goes on to bite and infect another animal).
- Infected biological material such as blood and germinal products (semen, ova, and embryos).
- BTV does not generally spread directly from one animal to another, however, infected pregnant mothers can pass the infection to their unborn offspring.

## What are the clinical signs to look for?

#### In sheep



- **Mild infection** 
  - Showing fever, depression, hunched stance.
  - Showing swelling and oedema of the face and lips.
  - Showing reddening of the gums and lining of the mouth.

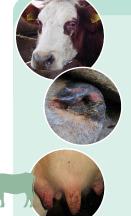
#### Moderate infection

- Showing reddening of tissue around eye.
- Crusting around the nostrils and nasal discharge - swollen face
- Swelling of the muzzle and tissue between the jaws, lower limb and coronary band of hoof.

#### Severe infection

- Showing profuse nasal discharge and hypersalivation (drooling).
- Swollen face, lips, and tongue.
- Blue discolouration to tongue.
- Abortion or deformities in offspring
- Death in severe cases

#### In cattle



- **Moderate infection**
- Showing fever, depression, conjunctivitis (red eyes), and nasal discharge.
- Showing erosion of the tissue around the nostrils and a profuse nasal discharge
- Showing reddening of the udder with crusting and cracking of the skin on the teats.
- Reduced milk production and impacts on fertility

Sheep may show more obvious signs than cattle. Not all infected animals show signs of disease but will still pose a risk of disease spread.

## How could BTV be introduced in Ireland?

Bluetongue is present across mainland Europe and Great Britain.

It could be introduced into a new area by:

Imports of infected animals

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- Imports of infected biological material (blood) or germinal products
- Infected biting midges carried on the wind from bluetongue affected countries

# **Bluetongue virus is** present in Europe





