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more about bluetongue virus on
our website

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.

...and report

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



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 and lips.
- Swelling of the muzzle and tissue between the jaws, lower limb and coronary band of hoof.
- Lameness



Severe infection

- Showing profuse nasal discharge and hyper-salivation (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
- 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

Movements of ruminants into Ireland must be compliant with EU health certification

