



NDCC Bluetongue Virus Update 5 of 2025

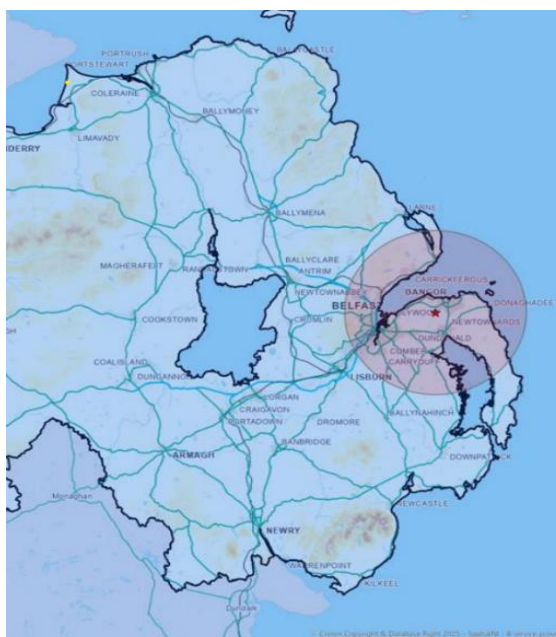
1. Suspicion of bluetongue in Northern Ireland

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is investigating the suspicion of bluetongue (BT) at a premises near Bangor in County Down after surveillance results indicated the presence of the disease in two cows.

Disease control measures have been put in place to protect livestock and limit the spread of the disease:

- A 20 km radius temporary control zone (TCZ) has been introduced (*Figure 1*).
- Movement of susceptible species within the zone are prohibited except for moves direct to slaughter, permitted under a general licence.

Figure 1 Detailing the bluetongue TCZ of the suspect case in Co. Down.



Source: daera-ni.gov.uk

2. What this means 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. 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.
- Ongoing **surveillance** is being carried out to ensure early detection of the disease in the event of an incursion.
- **Vigilance is critical** to detect any cases promptly before the virus can replicate and become established in local livestock and midge populations, as this could have serious implications to animal health and welfare as well as financial and emotional stress for farmers and our



livestock industry.

- As Ireland remains BT free, movements of susceptible **live animals and germinal products to Northern Ireland** can continue at this time.
- If the suspect case in Northern Ireland becomes confirmed, **movements of live susceptible animals for breeding and production and their germinal products into Ireland will only be permitted where the animals can meet standardised animal health certification requirements. Moves direct for slaughter would continue to be permitted.**

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

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
- It does not have implications for human health and food safety.

4. How to report a suspect outbreak of bluetongue virus:

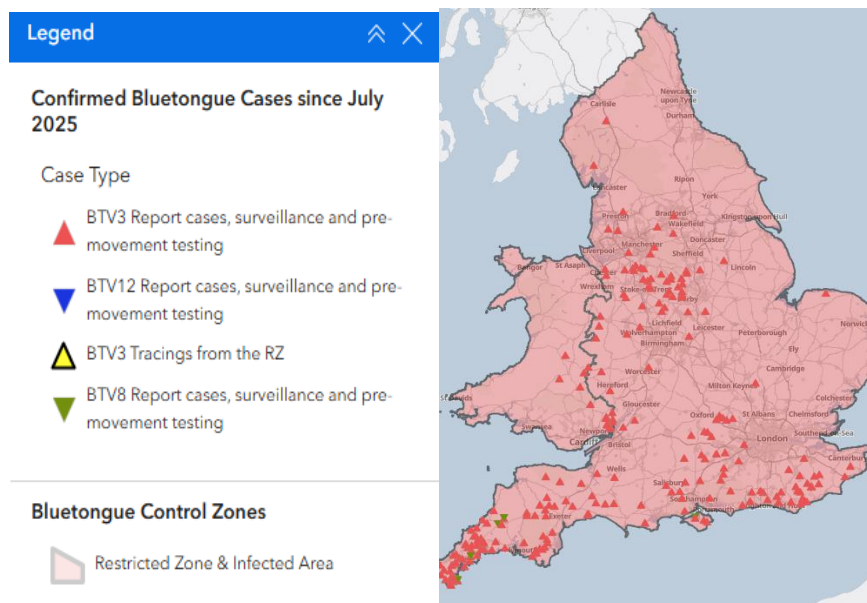
Report a suspect to your local [Regional Veterinary Office](#) or via the National Disease Emergency Hotline on 01- 492-8026 (outside of normal office hours) without delay.

5. Bluetongue Situation Summary across Great Britain and Europe

- **In Great Britain:** There have been **228** cases of bluetongue in Great Britain since July 2025. 213 in England (205 cases of only BTV-3, 1 case of only BTV-8 and 7 cases with both BTV-3 and BTV-8), 15 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 (Figure 2)**. 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.
 - Further information: [Bluetongue: news, information and guidance for livestock keepers - GOV.UK](#)



Figure 2 detailing confirmed cases of bluetongue detected in Great Britain since July 2025 (as of 01/12/2025).



Source: [APHA Bluetongue Case Map](#)

- 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).

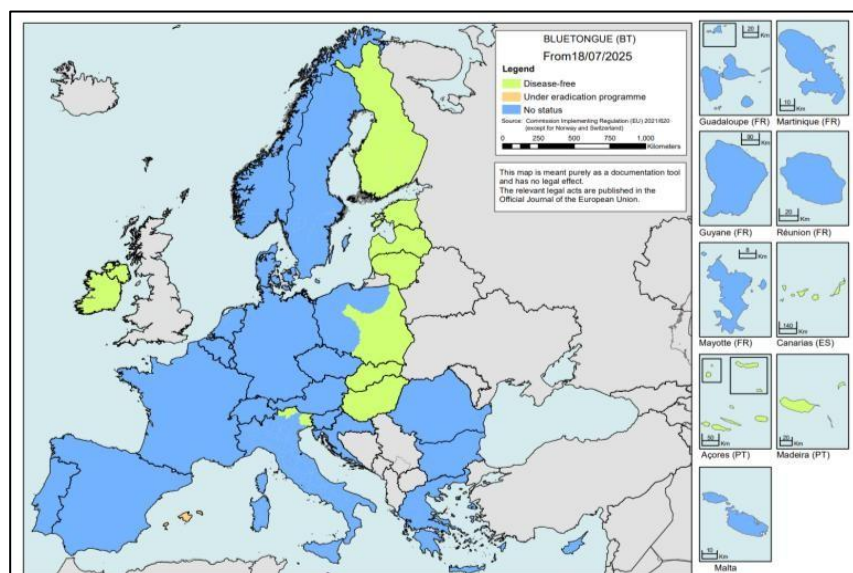


Figure 3 EU Member States with disease-free status or an approved BTV eradication programme.

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 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**

7. Bluetongue Vaccination

- **Vaccination against bluetongue serotype-3:**
 - 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.
 - **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.**
 - Bluetongue serotype 3 (BTV-3) vaccination is now **permitted in Northern Ireland** with a DAERA- issued specific license. Further information can be found [here](#).
- **Vaccination against bluetongue serotype-8:**
 - 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.



- BTV-8 vaccinated animals originating from countries or areas that are not disease-free from BTV-3, cannot currently meet EU standard certification requirements and cannot be certified for the purposes of movement to Ireland.
- BTV-8 vaccines are not currently permitted for use in Ireland.

8. Further information

Further information on bluetongue virus is available at 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

2nd December 2025