



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

# Bluetongue

## Virus Serotype 3 (BTV-3)

Bluetongue is a viral disease which affects ruminants (such as cattle, sheep, goats, and deer) and camelids (such as alpacas and llamas). It is mainly spread by biting midges. If you keep any of these animals, you need to be alert to signs of bluetongue.

The first report of the bluetongue virus serotype 3 (BTV-3) was in the Netherlands in September 2023, it has since been found in other Northern European countries. The first case of BTV-3 in England was confirmed on the 10 November 2023 and since then multiple cases have been detected through surveillance in the south-east and east of England.

**There is currently no vaccine for BTV-3.**



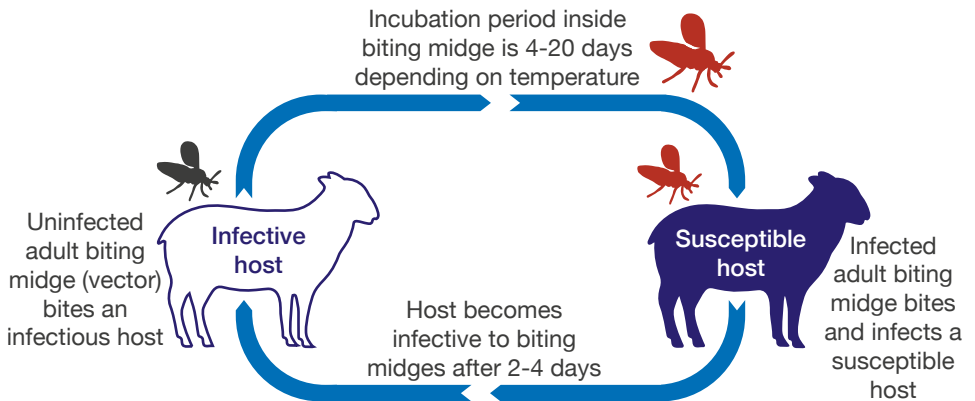
## Where has Bluetongue come from:

The most likely source of the arrival of BTV-3 in England was from biting midges infected with BTV-3 that were blown across from continental Europe. Biting midges are the main way that BTV is transmitted between animals.

In addition to spread via biting midges, the virus can also be spread through germplasm (semen, ova, and embryos) as well as transmitted maternally from mother to unborn offspring.

Movement of infected animals and germplasm, including those imported to the UK from infected areas, and the windborne movement of infected midges can lead to long distance spread.

## BTV transmission cycle



## Clinical signs to look out for

Infection with bluetongue virus can result in clinical signs such as fever, swollen head, swollen legs, crusting and ulceration around the muzzle area, salivation, breathing problems, discharges from the eyes, reduced milk yield, lameness, mortality and abortions.

You must remain vigilant and contact your vet if you have any concerns over the health and welfare of your animals. Suspicion of bluetongue must be reported immediately to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

# Controlling the spread of bluetongue

## Disease control zones

To minimise the spread of bluetongue virus, disease control zones may be put in place to restrict movements of susceptible animals, and thus potential disease spread, out of those zones. If your farm is in an area that is declared as a zone, you will be contacted by APHA, and updates will be posted on the bluetongue gov.uk pages (links on page 4).

## Movement of animals

Movement of susceptible animals into, within and out of any disease control zones are tightly controlled to prevent disease spread and are generally only permitted where approved under a licence issued by APHA. Some of these restrictions may be relaxed during seasonal vector low periods and will be kept under review if circumstances change.

## Registration

If you keep livestock (including those kept as pets), you are considered to have a 'holding' and must register with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) to get a County Parish Holding (CPH) number, and with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to get a flock or herd mark. The RPA will also register the actual land you use on a permanent basis; APHA will register any additional seasonal/temporary arrangements. Your flock or herd mark is then used along with a unique identifier to individually mark your animals (usually with a tag). Please ensure that you register all land and buildings used to keep livestock, even short term lets, so that the government knows where livestock are kept and can trace them to help prevent and control disease.

## For further information:

[Apply for a county parish holding \(CPH\) number - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Register livestock to get a flock or herd mark - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Apply for temporary use of land or buildings to keep livestock - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

You can register your temporary grazing or request a herd flock mark by emailing [customer.registration@apha.gov.uk](mailto:customer.registration@apha.gov.uk) or call 03000 200 301.

## Surveillance

APHA carries out surveillance to check for disease. This includes sampling holdings with susceptible animals in high-risk areas and the disease control zones. If your farm is selected for disease surveillance, APHA will contact you to explain why and, how this will be conducted and to book a visit with you.

## You can find out the latest information by visiting:

[Bluetongue: how to spot and report it - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Bluetongue virus \(Btv\) | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales)

[Bluetongue: how to spot and report the disease - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

[Home - Ruminant Health & Welfare \(ruminanthw.org.uk\)](http://ruminanthw.org.uk)

**Bluetongue is a notifiable disease and suspected cases must be reported immediately to the Animal and Plant Health Agency.**

### England

03000 200 301

### Wales

03003 038 268

### Scotland

Ayr: 03000 600703  
Galashiels: 03000 600711  
Perth: 03000 600704  
Inverness: 03000 600709  
Inverurie: 03000 600708