



## Battle Bluetongue Vaccination Update – March 2026

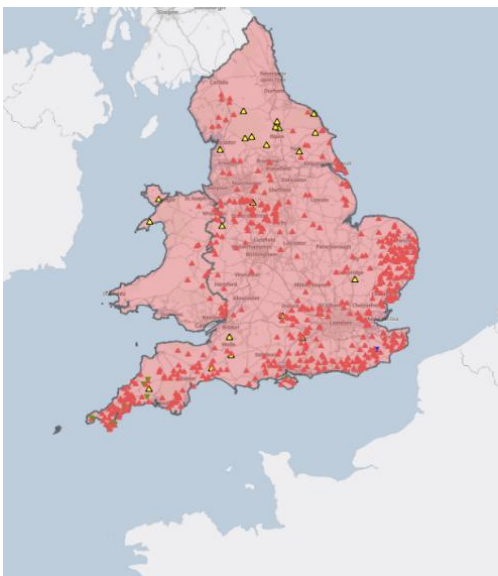
The bluetongue situation in the UK is constantly evolving, and we encourage conversations between farmers and their vet to assess their farms risk to bluetongue, and to consider vaccination as an option.

For best protection, vaccination should be undertaken as early in the summer as possible, and the vaccination course should be completed at least two weeks before bluetongue infected midges arrive or are active on the farm. Figures from mainland Europe suggests that large numbers of bluetongue cases do not generally occur before July.

Thus far, BTV-3 has been the predominant strain in the UK since 2023 but there were also cases of BTV-8 confirmed in 2025 which means that there may be BTV-8 in circulation when the temperature warms up in 2026.

In mainland Europe, BTV-3 caused severe clinical signs in sheep with high mortality. The BTV-8 that has been circulating in France since 2023 is a strain that causes more severe disease than seen in a small number of cases caused by the previous BTV-8 strain which was seen in UK in 2007/8.

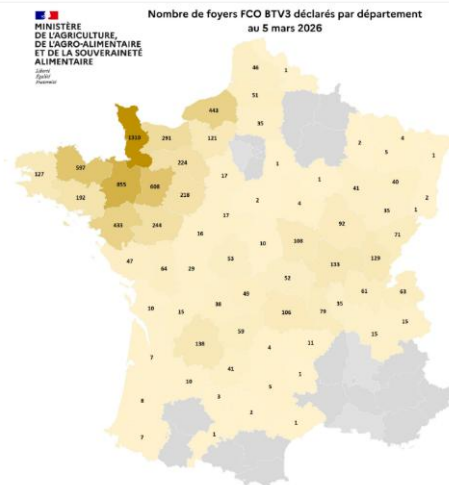
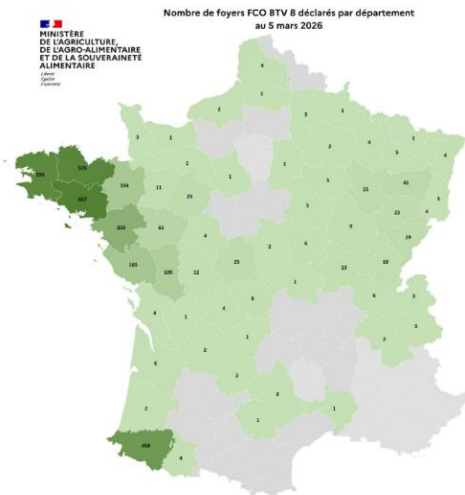
It is not possible to distinguish between BTV-3 and BTV-8 on the basis of clinical signs, so it is very important to report cases.



This map of UK (with all the 2024 and 2025 reported cases of BTV-3 in red and BTV-8 in green) also shows the proximity of northern France.

In beige colour below, the BTV-3 situation in France where there were 7609 cases between June 2025 and March 2026 and 10813 cases in the previous year. The very dark colour beige represents over 1600 cases of BTV-3 in that area alone.

In green colour below, the BTV-8 situation in France where there were 3338 cases between June 2025 and March 2026 and 17038 cases in the previous year. The three areas in the very dark green colour represents over 500 cases of BTV-8 in each of those three areas alone.



## Vaccination

There are three BTV-3 vaccines available in the UK ([Bultavo-3](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Bluevac-3](#)<sup>2</sup> and [Syvazul BTV 3](#)<sup>3</sup>; (in blue in the vaccine comparison table). Cattle that have not previously been vaccinated require two doses and sheep require one or two doses depending on the vaccine. Animals that were given the primary course within the previous year, require a single booster dose.

There are two BTV-8 vaccines available in the UK ([BTVPUR](#)<sup>4</sup> and [Syvazul BTV8](#)<sup>5</sup>) (in green in the vaccine comparison table). Note that Syvazul BTV8 is one dose for sheep and two for cattle but BTVPUR is two doses for both sheep and cattle.

There are separate general licences that covers use of BTV-3 and BTV-8 vaccines -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-licence-for-bluetongue-serotype-3-btv-3-vaccine--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bluetongue-general-licence-for-vaccination-against-the-disease/general-licence-to-vaccinate-against-bluetongue-serotypes-124-and-8>

**Note that there is not cross protection between the serotypes so that vaccination with BTV3 vaccine will not protect against BTV8 and vaccination with BTV8 vaccine will not protect against BTV3.**

## Infertility in Cattle

We are already seeing the impacts of last year's bluetongue infections (both BTV-3 and BTV-8) with abortions, dummy calves and cows that are empty despite previously being confirmed as pregnant. For these cases, it is too late to do anything, but all farmers can prepare for next year by vaccinating.

Now is the time to get vaccine into animals or revaccinate if done last year, prior to turnout/breeding if spring calving.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.noahcompendium.co.uk/?id=-488741>

<sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d82b4ba399e0dcf5200b3f/BLUEVAC-3\\_SPC.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d82b4ba399e0dcf5200b3f/BLUEVAC-3_SPC.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.noahcompendium.co.uk/?id=-488865>

<sup>4</sup> [https://vmd.defra.gov.uk/productinformationdatabase/files/SPC\\_Documents/SPC\\_2235791.PDF](https://vmd.defra.gov.uk/productinformationdatabase/files/SPC_Documents/SPC_2235791.PDF)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/productinformationdatabase/files/SPC\\_Documents/SPC\\_3107289.PDF](https://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/productinformationdatabase/files/SPC_Documents/SPC_3107289.PDF)

Updated March 2026

APHA have made this helpful document for investigating fertility issues which could be bluetongue <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/poor-reproductive-performance-in-cattle-and-sheep-during-bluetongue-outbreaks/investigating-poor-reproductive-performance-in-cattle-and-sheep-during-bluetongue-outbreaks-accessible-version>

## Summary

- We don't know what impact BTV-8 may have had this year, but we know the majority of cases up to now have been BTV-3. Risk based decisions can be made on an individual farm with vet and farmer using the Ruminant Health & Welfare '[Vaccine Decision Maker](#)' on whether to incorporate BTV-8 vaccination this year.
- Keep informed with the Battle Bluetongue webinar series ([Bluetongue virus webinars | AHDB](#)), check GOV website ([Bluetongue: latest situation - GOV.UK](#)) and look at case numbers in your area ([Bluetongue Cases and Zones](#)).
- Ultimately there is no "one size fits all" approach.

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