

**What is bluetongue?** In England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, bluetongue, including BTV-3, is a notifiable disease, so anyone suspecting the disease **MUST** act and report it to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) 03000 200 301 or DAERA in NI

**There is currently no vaccination available for BTV-3**, the recent strain confirmed in the UK, however, vaccination is available for bluetongue virus serotypes 1,2, 4, and 8.

**Which species are affected?** The disease affects cows, goats, sheep, deer, and camelids, such as llamas and alpacas.

**How is it spread?** The virus can be spread long distances by wind dispersal of infected biting midges and through the import or movement of affected animals, their germplasm (sperm and eggs) and foetuses.

## Clinical signs of bluetongue

### Sheep

Sheep are more likely to show obvious clinical signs of bluetongue, these include:

- Ulcers or sores in the mouth and nose
- Discharge from the eyes or nose and drooling from the mouth
- Swelling of the lips, tongue, head and neck and the coronary band (where the skin of the leg meets the horn of the foot)
- Other clinical signs:
  - Red skin as a result of blood collecting beneath the surface
  - Fever
  - Lameness
  - Breathing problems
  - Abortion
  - Death

### Cattle

Signs of the disease include:

- Lethargy
- Crusty erosions around the nostrils and muzzle
- Redness of the mouth, eyes and nose
- Reddening of the skin above the hoof
- Nasal discharge
- Reddening and erosions on the teats
- Fever
- Milk drop
- Not eating
- Abortion

Adult cattle may serve as a source of virus for several weeks while displaying little or no clinical signs of disease and are often the preferred host for insect vectors.

### Calves

Calves can become infected with bluetongue before birth if the mother is infected while pregnant.

Signs of infection include:

- Calves born small, weak, deformed or blind
- Death of calves within a few days of birth
- Abortions

Livestock keepers and vets should consider bluetongue as a possible cause for calves showing these signs.

## Pictures from sheep with bluetongue



This sheep has a high temperature, reddening of the mouth and lining of the nose. The lips, tongue and face are swollen



Foot of a lame sheep with BTV. Note the reddening of the skin at the top of the horn (coronary band). In some cases, horn may slough off



This is an image of the roof of the mouth (hard palate) of a sheep with BTV. Note there are blood spots (haemorrhages) on the ridges of the palate and also on the lips



A sheep with BTV. Note the swelling (oedema) of the muzzle and face and the crusting and discharge around the nose

Bluetongue hotline: **024 7771 0386**

Bluetongue hub: [www.ruminanthw.org.uk/bluetongue-virus/](http://www.ruminanthw.org.uk/bluetongue-virus/)



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## What can you do?

1. **Buyer beware**, source animals from Europe responsibly and request pre-movement testing
2. **Take action**, prioritise biosecurity and report any suspicious clinical signs
3. **Vigilance** is key, monitor livestock closely

## How you can help others?

- Register all ruminants and camelids - it is never too late  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/register-livestock-to-get-a-flock-or-herd-mark](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-livestock-to-get-a-flock-or-herd-mark)
- Prioritising biosecurity will help slow the spread

## Who is currently affected?

- Temporary control zones (TCZ) remain in place around confirmed case premises to enable testing and surveillance and to prevent spread
- Check if you are in a TCZ using the Defra APHA interactive map
- Restrictions on movements are in place in the TCZ – please visit the bluetongue hub for up-to-date information on licenses and movements
- Surveillance is being undertaken as quickly as possible

## For the latest information and advice

Call the bluetongue hotline

9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

**024 7771 0386**



For the most up-to-date information, visit the  
**RH&W bluetongue hub**



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

For queries relating to bluetongue  
surveillance testing or licences, visit Defra



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

To access the interactive bluetongue  
virus map, visit APHA



Bluetongue does not affect people or food safety, but outbreaks can result in prolonged restrictions on animal movement and trade.

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