

## Update on Bluetongue 15/11/2017

### Background

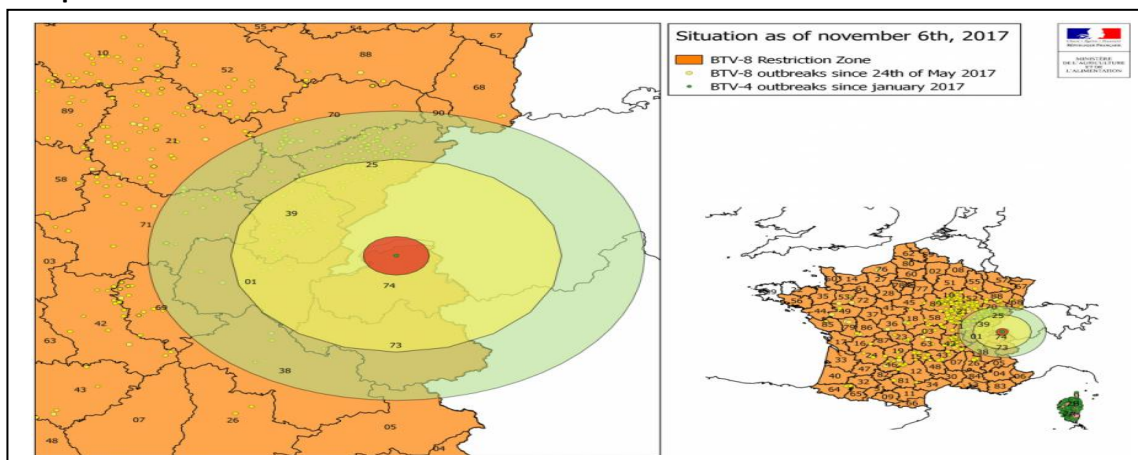
Bluetongue is a viral disease of ruminant animals (e.g. cattle, sheep, goats, deer) and camelids and is primarily transmitted by midges (*Culicoides* species). 90-95% of the midge species in Ireland are capable of transmitting bluetongue. In Ireland the period of midge activity and therefore potential spread of bluetongue in the event of its introduction is between March-April and November-December each year.

### Situation in France

Bluetongue virus serotype 8 (BTV 8) has been circulating in France over the past 2 years. Prior to that France had not recorded a case of BTV 8 since 2010. To date in 2017, 1325 outbreaks of BTV 8 have been detected in France. Table 1 in the Annex to this document illustrates the situation with Bluetongue in France and Italy in particular and includes details of all other outbreaks in Europe since 2015.

In addition to the ongoing situation with BTV 8, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November last Bluetongue virus serotype 4 (BTV 4) was detected in mainland France for the first time. It was detected in a 15 day old calf in a veal fattening unit in the Haute-Savoie region of South East France on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November and confirmed as BTV 4 three days later. The origin of the disease has not yet been established. The French authorities have established restriction zones of 20km, 100km and 150km surrounding the outbreak and have introduced emergency vaccination measures. These restriction zones extend into Switzerland and Italy as shown on the map below:

**Map 1: BTV 4 restricted areas in France**



Corsica, Sardinia and Northern Italy are currently restricted for BTV 4 as are some other southern European countries. Map 2 in the annex to this document shows the overall situation with the various bluetongue serotypes in Europe (not yet updated with the BTV 4 outbreak in France).

### Situation in the UK

On 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2017, Bluetongue (BTV 8) positive animals were detected in the UK as part of routine post import surveillance. The animals had been recently imported from an assembly centre in an area of France where multiple cases of BTV 8 have been confirmed since September this year. As well as culling the positive animals, the four UK farms involved (two in England and two in Scotland) have been restricted by the authorities in the UK and surveillance to rule out any spread of disease is underway.

### Risk to Ireland

The importation of bluetongue infected animals represents the biggest risk of the disease entering Ireland.

Farmers, practitioners and other relevant stakeholders should be vigilant and ensure that they are fully aware of the presenting clinical signs of Bluetongue in both cattle and sheep, and that they report any suspicion of disease to their Veterinary Practitioner or Regional Veterinary Office (RVO) without delay. Further information on bluetongue and contact details for RVOs can be found at:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/bluetongue/>

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/contact/>

In addition anyone importing ruminant animals into Ireland should be vigilant and consider the following risk mitigation measures:

- Do not import ruminant animals from BT restricted areas unless absolutely necessary
- Only import animals from reputable sources
- Do not buy or accept animals which have been recently imported without carefully checking their origin
- Seek additional assurances to ensure that animals are not infected with BT prior to departure, such as a recent negative PCR\* test for BT carried out in an accredited laboratory
- Prior to importation contact your RVO for advice and to arrange for prompt testing post importation
- Post importation, keep any imported animals isolated and indoors until they have been tested for BT by staff from this Department and have returned a negative test result.

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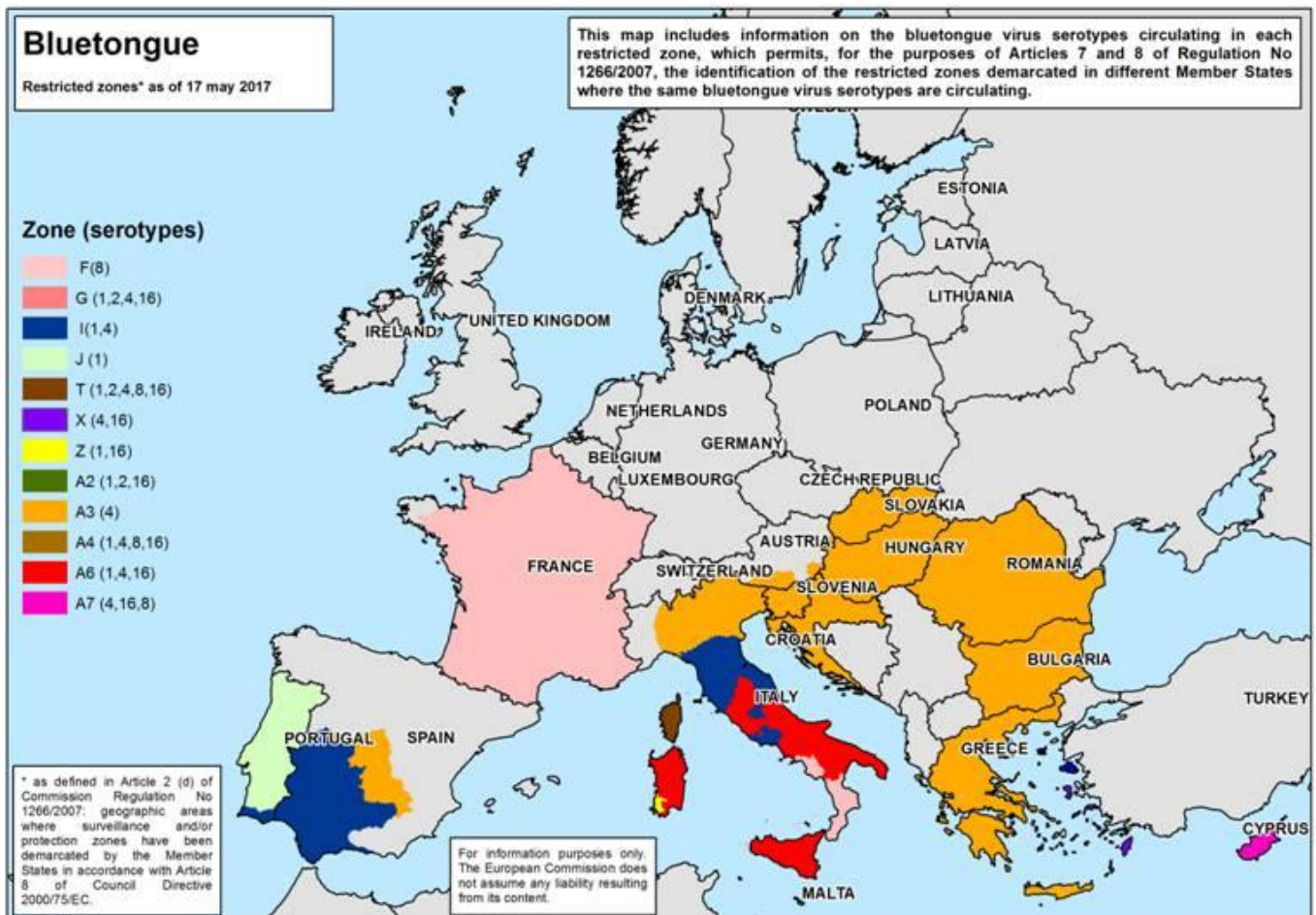
\*PCR or polymerase chain reaction is a technique used in molecular biology to detect virus genome in this case. A test for BT is usually carried out on blood. A positive PCR test essentially means that the virus is present in the sample tested.

## ANNEX

**Table 1: Outbreaks of bluetongue in Europe since 2015.**

Country	2015	2016	2017 (01 Jan -05 Nov)
Austria	4	3	0
Bosnia & Herzegovina	0	4	0
Croatia	22	52	3
Cyprus	0	171	0
France	143	1294	1325
Hungary	37	0	0
Greece	2	2	3
Italy	323	990	1425
Montenegro	1	0	0
Portugal	27	27	2
Romania	30	0	0
Republic of Serbia	0	150	0
Slovenia	1	27	0
Spain	19	20	3
Switzerland	0	0	2

**Map 2 Countries and zones currently restricted for Bluetongue in Europe (BTV 4 in France not yet included)**



Refer to European Commission website below for most up to date information:

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/bluetongue\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/bluetongue_en)