



Update on Bluetongue (September 2018)

Bluetongue positive imported animals in UK

- British authorities have detected bluetongue virus (BTV) in two cattle imported from France to Yorkshire as part of their post import bluetongue surveillance programme.
(<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bluetongue-disease-uk-cows-animal-imports-france-uk-a8552456.html>)
- The two cows have been culled and measures have been taken to prevent spread.
- The UK remains officially Bluetongue free.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will continue to monitor the situation.

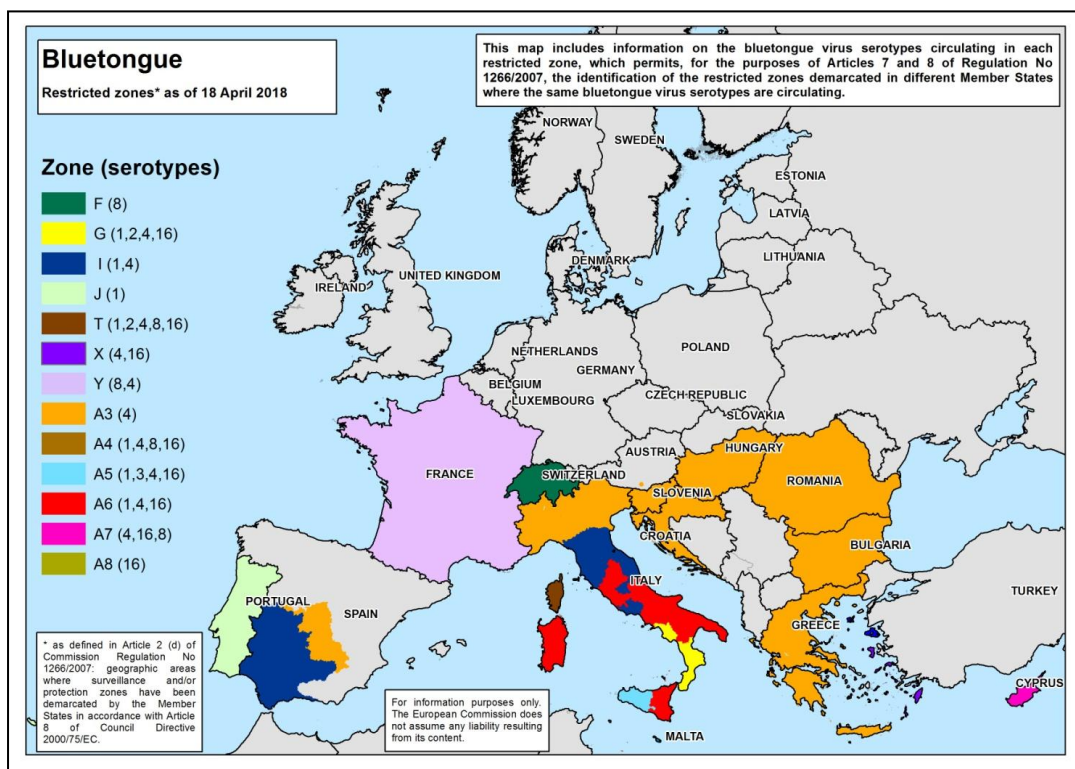
Measures to prevent bluetongue coming to Ireland via imported animals

- Anyone considering importing ruminant animals from bluetongue affected countries should only do so if absolutely necessary and take particular care when sourcing their animals and timing the import as this is the most likely route of introduction of the bluetongue virus into Ireland.
- Infected animals may not show any clinical signs and may only be detected through testing their blood for BTV.
- Even animals with bluetongue vaccination records may harbour BTV.
- The bluetongue vector season in Ireland is likely to be between April and early December.
- If bluetongue is introduced to Ireland, it could have a major impact on our export markets. Also, the control measures required by the EU would have a significant impact on herd management.

Bluetongue in Europe

BTV serotypes 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 16 are present in parts of the Mediterranean Basin. Serotype 4 emerged in the Balkan region in 2014 and spread to northern Italy, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia. Serotype 8 has re-emerged across a large area of France since 2015. The emergence of BTV serotype 4 in eastern France was a new development in 2017, as was the recent incursion of BTV serotype 8 into Switzerland.

Map 1 below shows current bluetongue restricted areas in Europe. Table 1 summarises bluetongue outbreak numbers to date (23rd September) in 2018.



Map 1: Bluetongue restricted zones in Europe as of the 18th of April 2018. For updated maps please see:

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/ad_control-measures_bt_restrictedzones-map.jpg

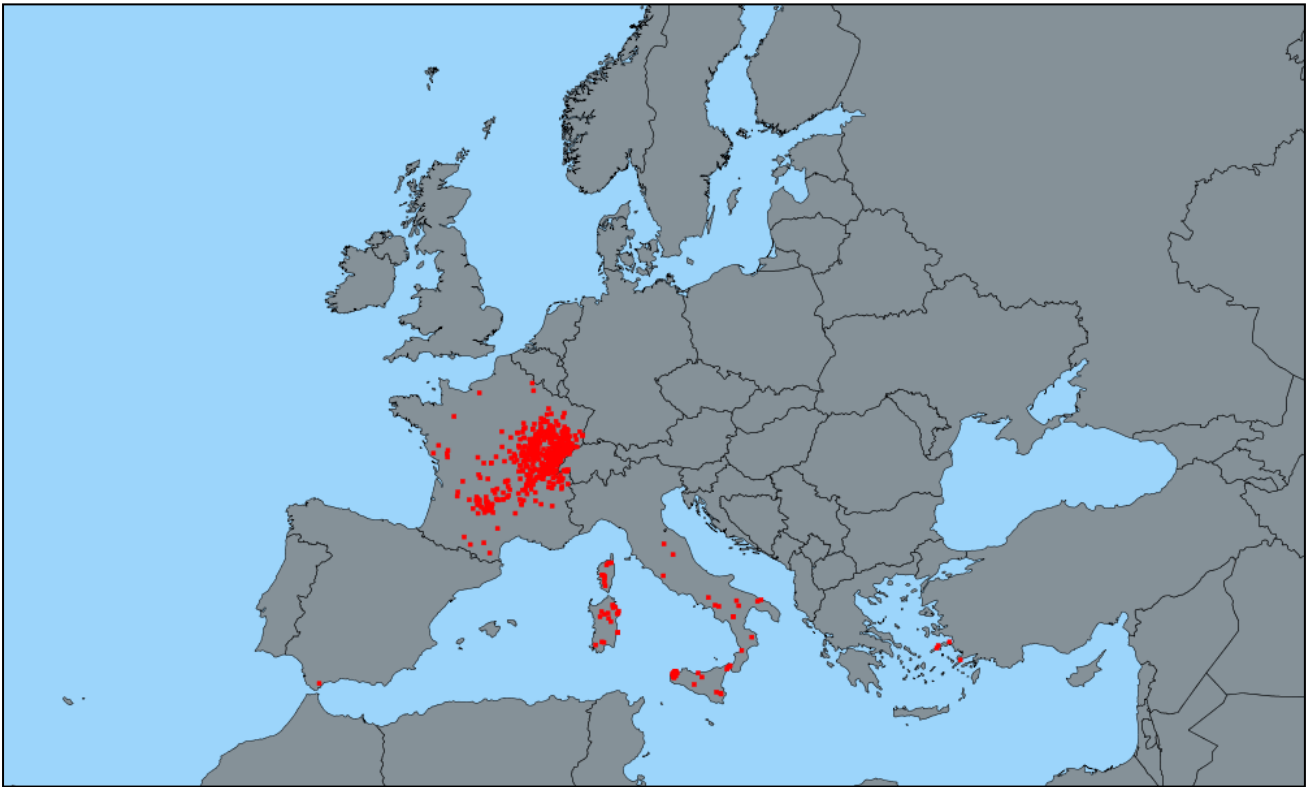
Table 1: Bluetongue outbreak numbers in Europe between the 1st of January and 23rd of September 2018. For updates please see:

https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/ad_adns_outbreaks-per-disease.pdf

Country	Date of last outbreak	N outbreaks
FRANCE	11/09/2018	653
GREECE	07/05/2018	4
ITALY	03/09/2018	65
SPAIN	14/09/2018	1
SWITZERLAND	06/09/2018	1
Total		724

Current situation with bluetongue in France

There have been 143, 1294 and 1926 BT outbreaks reported in France in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively, and 653 outbreaks reported already this year (up to 23rd September 2018). Map 2 below shows bluetongue outbreaks in the EU reported in 2018 to date.



Map 2: Bluetongue outbreaks reported in Europe between 1st of January and 23rd of September 2018.

Managing the risk of bluetongue introduction to 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 Regional Veterinary Office (RVO) without delay.

Bluetongue information leaflet for photographs of clinical signs is available at:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/bluetongue/disease/BluetongueFactsheet2017210617.pdf>

Contact details for RVOs available at:

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

Particular care should be taken when importing ruminants from bluetongue affected countries as this is the most likely route of introduction of the BTV into Ireland. Although specific EU certification requirements apply to the movement of animals originating from bluetongue restricted zones even animals with bluetongue vaccination records may harbour BTV.

In addition, infection with certain serotypes (such as BTV8) may not always produce clinical signs and therefore the risk of infected animals remaining undetected pre and post importation is heightened.

For these reasons the following risk mitigation measures should be seriously considered by farmers when importing ruminant animals:

- Do not import ruminant animals from bluetongue 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 BTV prior to departure, such as a recent negative PCR test for bluetongue carried out in an accredited laboratory.
- On arrival, keep any imported animals isolated and indoors until they have been tested for BTV by staff from this Department and have returned a negative test result (see below).

DAFM control measures

DAFM implements various measures to prevent a BT incursion and to ensure early detection in the event of disease being introduced into Ireland including:

- All animals imported from or transiting through countries restricted for bluetongue are blood tested for bluetongue virus and antibody, within 7 days of arrival in Ireland.
- Ongoing surveillance for bluetongue in the Irish cattle population.
- Close monitoring the situation in affected EU countries.
- Implementation of an ongoing awareness campaign for stakeholder groups.
- An early warning system for *Culicoides* midge incursions from the UK or France implemented in collaboration with Met Éireann.

Implications for intra-community movements of cattle, sheep and goats

Specific EU certification requirements apply to the movement of animals originating from bluetongue restricted zones including animals for export. These requirements are set out in the EU Regulation 1266 of 2007 and would apply in the event of a bluetongue outbreak in Ireland.

The following link is to the detailed regulation:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1526483808190&uri=CELEX:02007R1266-20120605>

There are also additional requirements for animals that are transiting or destined for bluetongue restricted zones. In this case the means of transport must be treated with an authorised insecticide and/or repellent at the place of loading. The transport must be adequately cleansed and disinfected prior to this treatment. However animals do not need to be individually treated.

In addition when a rest period of more than one day is foreseen at a control post during the movement through a restricted zone, the animals must be protected against attacks by vectors in a vector protected establishment. This vector protected establishment must comply with certain criteria including mesh screens over openings etc. These vector protected establishments must also be approved by the competent authority.

NDCC

26/09/2018