Updated Situation Assessment No.3

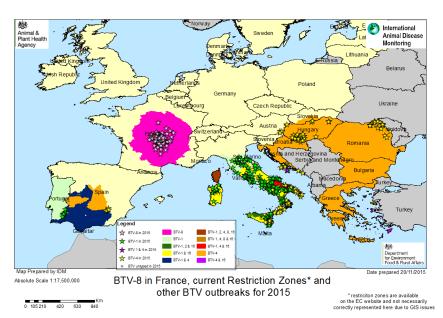
Bluetongue virus (BTV-8) in France

25th November 2015

Ref: VITT/1200 BTV-8 in France

Disease Report

France has now reported a total of 95 outbreaks of BTV-8, with new regions now affected: Bouches du Rhone, le Gard, Haute Loire, l'Aude, l'Aveyron, l'Herault, Loiret and Vaucluse



(OIE, 2015; see map). As a result, the restriction zones have been increased in size again (Ministère de L'Agriculture (FR), 2015). Of the 95 outbreaks, 4 are in mixed sheep and cattle holdings, 4 are in sheep only holdings and the other 87 outbreaks are in cattle. Twelve outbreaks were identified as a result of clinical signs reported to the French veterinary authorities. The rest are a result of the

widespread active surveillance (32), surveillance around the original outbreak in a 2 km zone (11) or pre-export and zonal movement tests (40) which are being carried out. This continues to support the evidence that BTV-8 presents with few clinical signs in cattle.

In addition, Austria and Slovenia have now reported BTV along the Hungarian border in cattle. The three Austrian outbreaks are confirmed as BTV-4; Slovenia is yet to confirm the strain.

Situation Assessment

Vaccination is being carried out, concentrating on animals in genetic breeding programmes and animals destined for export or moving out of the restricted zone, due to the limitation on vaccine doses. During the winter months, continued surveillance for clinical cases, active surveillance within the restriction zone and the free area and vector surveillance (for the vector free period) will take place.

The French risk assessment agency, ANSES, has been requested to produce a risk assessment on the movement of vaccinated and non-vaccinated animals from the

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restricted zone and the role of vector protection. This will inform the requests made by the French Authorities (under EU Directive 1266/2007/EU article 8 1(b)) for accepting animals for trade under a bilateral agreement, whereby animals may move from the restriction zone, including for export ten days after the final vaccination is given. We will await this risk assessment before a decision is taken to accept such animals.

Conclusion

The continual (slow) spread of BTV-8 in France and the spread into Austria of BTV-4 (and quite likely Slovenia) are no particular surprise, given the mild autumn. Some "jumps" are being seen – which could be because these strains are generally not causing significant clinical disease in cattle, so cases may be missed. This does not affect the risk level to the UK, particularly at this time of year, as cold weather leads to lower vector activity. We will continue to report any further updates.

Authors

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