

Updated Situation Assessment No.21

Bluetongue virus (BTV-8) in Europe

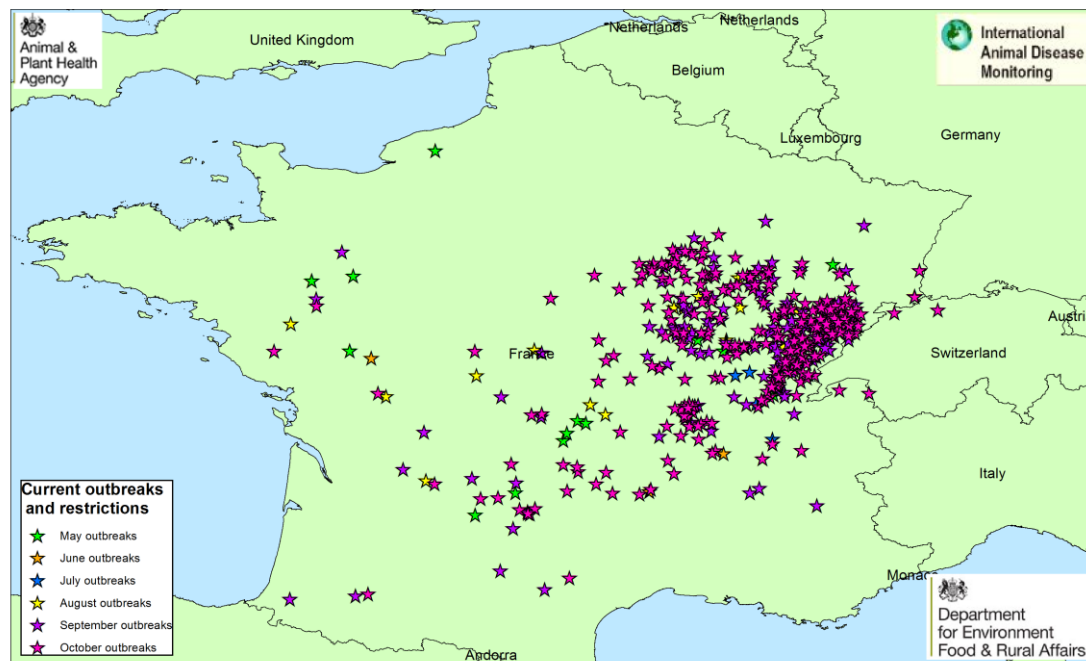
6th November 2017

Ref: VITT/1200 BTV-8 in Europe

Disease report

Since our last update, on the 25th July 2017, France has reported 474 BTV-8 positive cases, the majority of which were in three regions: Doubs, Jura and Cote d'Or, with the peak of reports being made in October. Nevertheless, there has been no expansion of the surveillance zone and no new cases reported from near the French northern coast.

This last week, Switzerland has now reported BTV-8 in two regions, Jura and Basel, in cattle. Single animals tested positive in herds of 90 and 58 cattle respectively, and the single animals were both culled (OIE, 2017). According to the Swiss Ministry of Agriculture (2017), the animals were detected as part of a surveillance programme. A restriction zone covering the whole country has been put in place to allow free movement of animals around the regions, but exports to other countries must meet certain conditions.



Map Prepared by IDM
Absolute Scale 1:5,800,000

**BTV-8 in France: outbreaks detected since May2017
and current Restriction Zones* by date of map**

0 35 70 140 210 280 Km

* restriction zones are available on the French Min of Ag website
<http://agriculture.gouv.fr/liste-des-departements-et-des-communes-classes-en-zone-reglementee-fo>

Date prepared 06/11/2017

Situation assessment

The cases in Switzerland are not a surprise given the proximity to cases in France. Indeed, the authorities had been communicating to farmers to expect cases, to vaccinate their animals and to report any suspicious signs to their vets. Vaccination against BTV-4 and BTV-8 is allowed, but this is a voluntary measure which farmers are encouraged to take.

Recent meteorological modelling has shown there have been very few days in the last few months where the wind has been sufficiently strong or in the right direction to reach the UK mainland from the areas in France with the highest level of disease circulation. The lack of disease being reported in the North of France is the main risk mitigation factor. The cases in Switzerland, which appear to be a result of vector movement rather than live animal trade, highlight that proximity to affected areas with high levels of virus circulation and cattle density are key factors in disease transmission.

The detection of PCR positive animals in the UK which recently arrived from France from a region with high virus circulation (Vet Record, 2017) is not confirmation of disease in UK animals. Instead these were picked up as part of our post import checks and those animals which represented an animal health risk were culled. This serves as a reminder that if farmers wish to import from any BTV restricted zone, vaccinating their own herd before-hand would be a sensible risk mitigation measure.

Conclusion

The risk of BTV incursion into UK population remains at **LOW** ("rare, but could occur") to reflect the low levels of infection in northern France.

We will continue to monitor the current situation in France and disseminate any further updates from the French Authorities, particularly with regards to the most recent cases.

BTV-8 vaccine has been available for the GB market since mid-July 2016, and the decision to vaccinate will be taken by the farmer, which the GB authorities have encouraged all of them to consider, in consultation with their private veterinary surgeon.

For information on bluetongue and the vaccine availability in GB, see the latest materials recently posted on line by the National Farmer's Union (NFU) at www.nfuonline.com/bluetongue and the latest information to encourage BTV vaccination by the Joint Action against Bluetongue (JAB) campaign.

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References

OIE (2017) Bluetongue in Switzerland: Immediate Notification.

http://www.oie.int/wahis_2/public/wahid.php/Reviewreport/Review?page_refer=MapFullEventReport&reportid=25166

Switzerland Ministry of Agriculture (2017) Bluetongue disease (in French)

<https://www.blv.admin.ch/blv/fr/home/tiere/tierseuchen/uebersicht-seuchen/alle-tierseuchen/bt.html>

Vet Record (2017) Bluetongue confirmed in UK cattle.

<http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/vetrec/181/17/435.1.full.pdf>



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