

Updated Outbreak Assessment #4

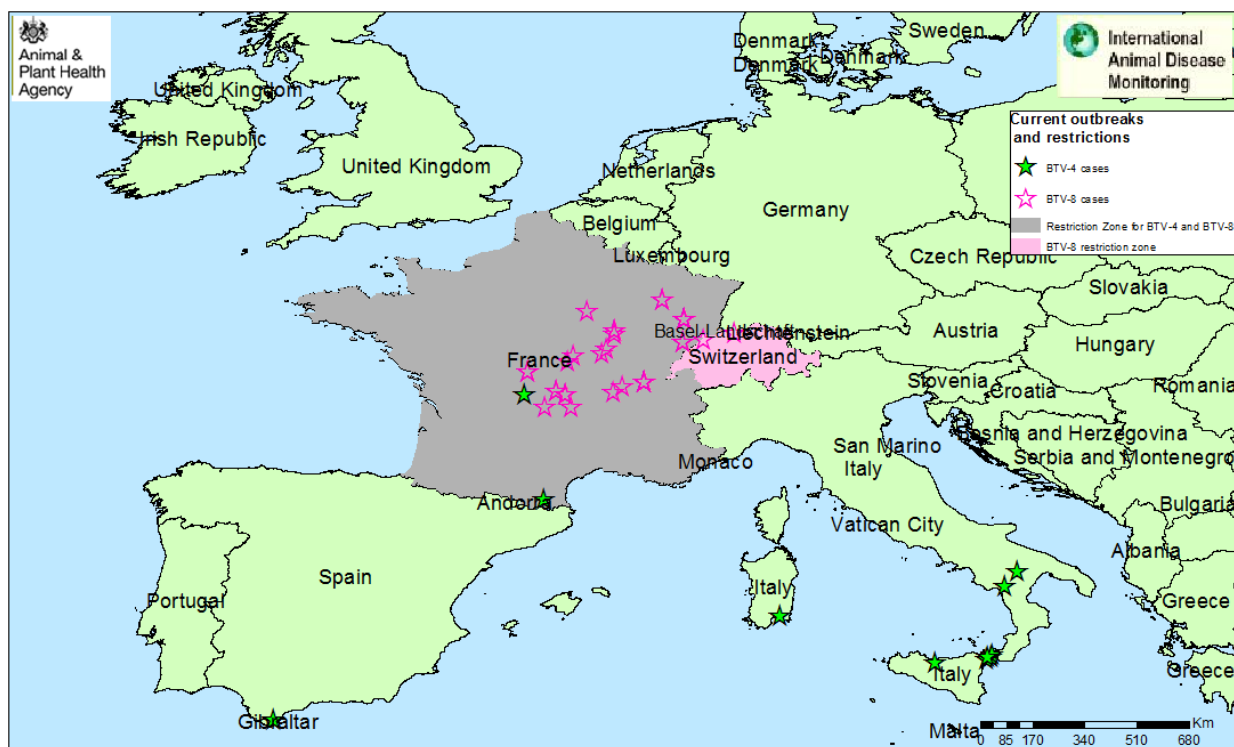
Bluetongue virus (BTV-4 and BTV-8) in France

23rd October 2018

Ref: VITT/1200 BTV-4 and BTV-8 in France

Disease Report

Since our last report on the 9th May 2018, France has reported 28 new cases of BTV-4 and BTV-8 in various regions (see map). There has been a recent increase in numbers of outbreaks reported, with 15 of the 28 outbreaks reported in September, which is what we would expect at this time of year, when bluetongue often re-emerges in Europe towards the end of the Summer. Seven of the outbreaks were reported in sheep, and 21 of the outbreaks were reported in cattle.



Map Prepared by IDM
Absolute Scale 1:8,000,000
Date prepared 23/10/2018

BTV-8 and BTV-4 in France:
Outbreaks detected since May 2018

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Situation Assessment

Little is known about the 28 new reported cases of BTV-4 and BTV-8 in mainland France. The regions which have reported disease in this period are those which have reported BT

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most frequently in the past three years. In the majority of these reports, the cattle and sheep tested were the only animals affected, which suggests that they may be clinical reports. There are no reports of wider spread to other parts of France nor information about wider virus circulation. The French authorities have confirmed they will only report bluetongue cases to the OIE every 6 months, therefore, we rely on the ADNS system and the French epidemiological platform for more up-to-date reports.

In this period, there have also been reports of BTV-4 in Italy (15), Spain (2), Portugal (1), Cyprus (2) and BTV-8 Switzerland (3), and BTV-1 in Italy (14). In October, Italy has also reported nine outbreaks of BTV-3 in Sardinia in sheep and goats. This is the first report of this serotype, BTV-3, in Sardinia. BTV-3 was first reported in the north of Tunisia in 2016, and then had been identified in the north of Sicily in 2017. There is currently no inactivated vaccine available for this serotype.

Switzerland reported an outbreak of BTV-8 in August, in cattle that were showing clinical signs. This was at a location 3km from the French border.

Average temperatures in the past two months in Northern France and Southern England have been on or above the threshold for vector transmission (12°C).

Trade in susceptible species may continue to other Member States, provided the animals are vaccinated or naturally immune against both BTV-4 and BTV-8 and transport has been treated with insecticide. Some countries may agree under a bilateral arrangement to accept animals which have not been vaccinated or are not naturally immune but are moved during the low vector activity season. The UK has no such arrangement with France and therefore these unvaccinated animals are not accepted by the UK for trade purposes.

Conclusion

In view of the latest disease intelligence, suitable weather over Europe, considerable midge activity, short virus replication rates our risk level remains at LOW. We will continue to keep this under review.

We would like to remind all livestock owners that they should source animals responsibly by working with their private veterinarians and livestock dealers to make sure animals are correctly vaccinated and protected prior to travel. **This means that animals must be correctly vaccinated against BTV-4 and BTV-8 or be naturally immune to both virus serotypes, prior to leaving the Restriction Zone.**

We would also like to remind keepers that if they wish to take animals for show purposes to a restriction zone and then return to a free area, they will need to make sure the animals are vaccinated *against both virus serotypes* prior to travelling into the Restriction Zone.

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We will continue to monitor the current situation in France and will report any further updates from the French Authorities, particularly with regards to the most recent cases and the BTV-4 situation.

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