

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment #1

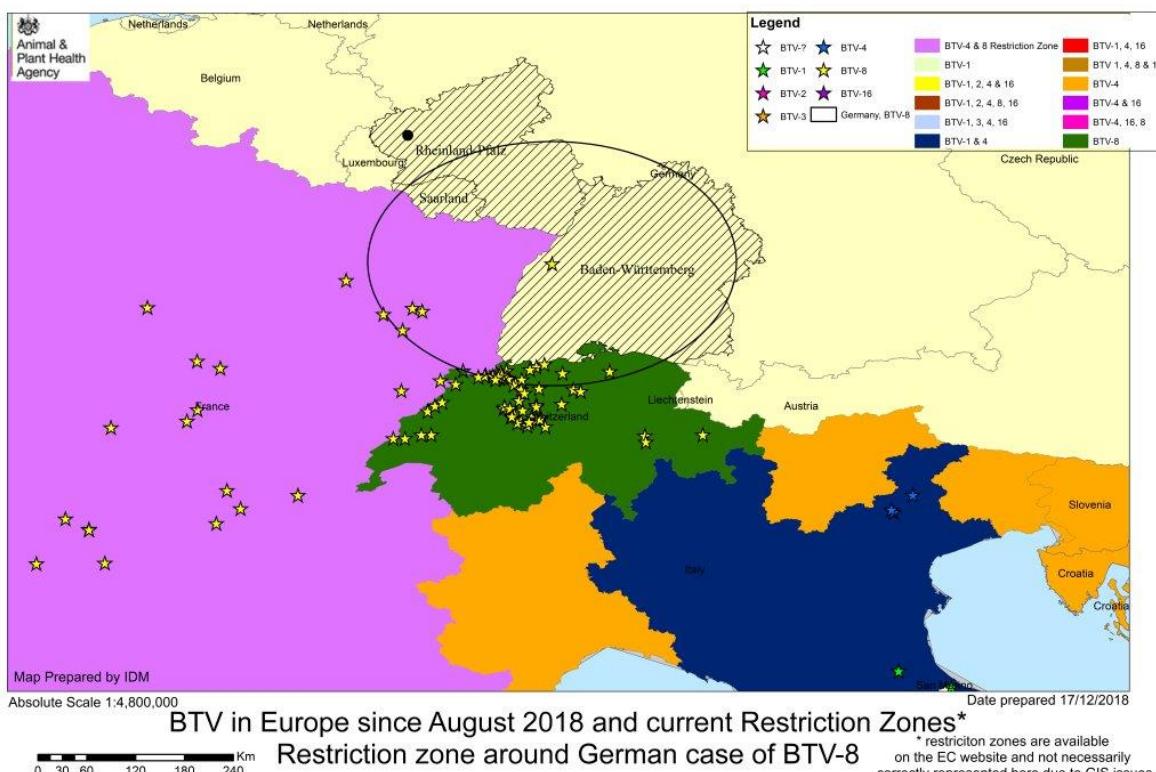
Bluetongue virus (BTV-8) in Germany

17 December 2018

Ref: VITT/1200 BTV-8 in Germany

Disease report

Germany has reported an outbreak of BTV-8 in cattle (OIE, 2018), in the district of Rastatt in Baden-Württemberg, near the border with France. The infected animals showed no clinical signs, and were identified as part of routine BTV surveillance. Of the 91 cattle on the holding, two were positive for BTV-8. The Competent Authority has put in place the legally required 150 km zone (see map). Consigned animals (in particular cattle, sheep and goats) may only be moved from this area to areas not under restriction if the animals have been vaccinated against BTV-8 or tested for BT with a negative result. In the area around the outbreak population, monitoring will be intensified. In Germany, BTV was last detected in 2009. Germany was officially BTV-free from February 2012 until now.



Situation assessment

Vaccination of cattle against BTV has been used in Baden-Wuerttemberg in recent years on a voluntary basis because of the BTV cases in neighbouring France and Switzerland. However, vaccination is not mandatory as it is in France and Switzerland, and according to the Competent Authority, only about 25% vaccine coverage has been achieved, which is not sufficient for the comprehensive prevention of outbreaks (Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut, FLI, 2018). For this purpose, at least 80% of susceptible animals must be vaccinated.

At present, there are no reports of wider spread to other parts of Germany, nor information about wider virus circulation. Animals that have been vaccinated against BTV-8 are protected against reinfection. Duration of protection is limited, in some cases to one year, dependent on vaccine used. In addition, the current BTV-8 seems to be less virulent than the virus which circulated in Germany from 2006, as there have been many reports of subclinical infection in France and Switzerland this year. However, there are reports from Switzerland indicating higher levels of virulence in sheep (including some deaths). BTV-8 was last reported in France on 25th October 2018. As of the end of November, average temperatures in the past two weeks (from mid to end November) in Northern France and Southern England had been on or below the threshold for vector transmission (12°C) (APHA, 2018).

Since 19 September 2018, TRACES has reported certificates for 37 consignments of live bovines being imported into the UK from Germany. This is a total of 750 live animals.

Conclusion

In view of the latest disease intelligence, unsuitable weather in France, Germany and Switzerland, the reduced midge activity at this time of year and poor virus replication rates, the risk the UK remains LOW. Over the last three months there has been non-negligible risk of importing BTV-8 positive animals from Germany, however, these would pose a low risk to GB cattle because of the low likelihood of vector transmission at this time of year. 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.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
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We will continue to monitor the current situation in Germany and France and will report any further updates from the German and French Authorities, particularly with regards to the most recent BTV-8 case and the evolving BTV-8 situation in Germany.

References

APHA (2018). Bluetongue Assessment 2018 No 12 - Risk of airborne introduction to UK from the near-continent.

FLI (2018). <https://www.fli.de/en/news/animal-disease-situation/bluetongue-disease/>

OIE (2018).

http://www.oie.int/wahis_2/public/wahid.php/Reviewreport/Review?page_refer=MapFullEventReport&reportid=28927

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