

Updated Situation Assessment No.12

Bluetongue virus (BTV-8) in France

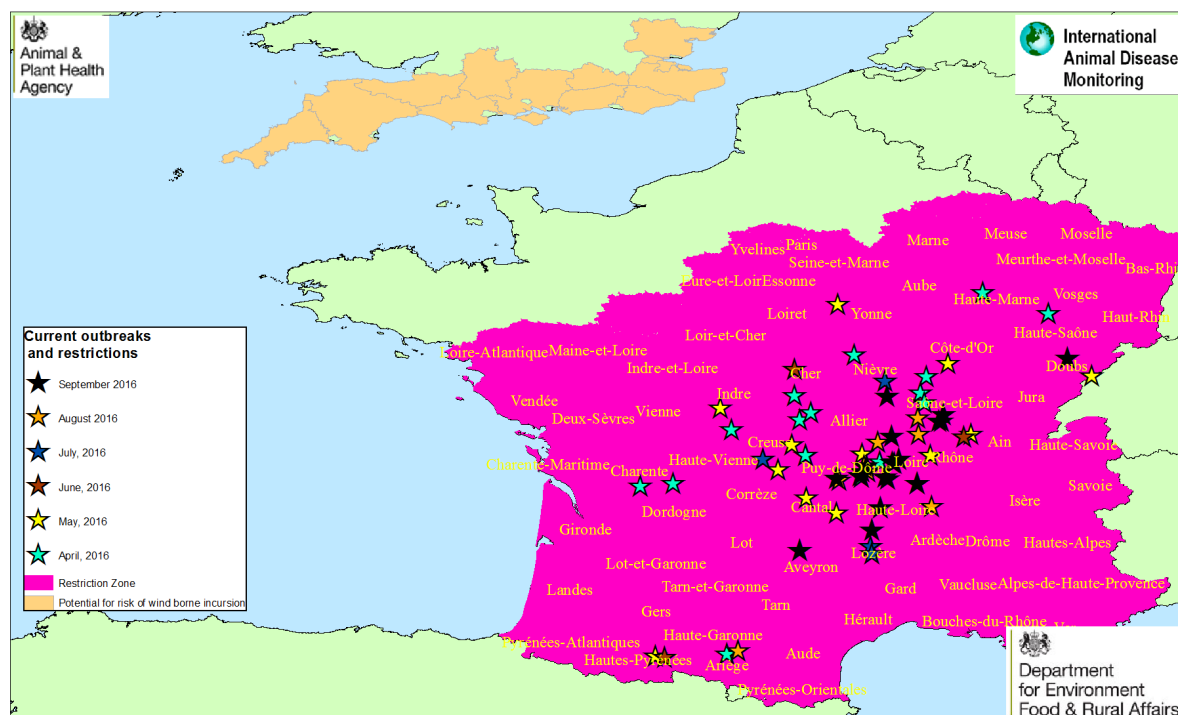
14th September 2016

Ref: VITT/1200 BTV-8 in France

Disease Report

France has reported twenty new outbreaks (since our last update on the 2nd September) in the départements of Allier, Doubs, Haute-Loire, Loire, Puy de Dome and Saône et Loire regions, making a total of 318 outbreaks (OIE, 2016; see black stars on the map below). All of the cases were detected as part of active surveillance as part of pre-movement testing, and all were in cattle where just one or two animals tested positive out of the consignment (variable numbers). None were clinical cases. However in six cattle, with low CT values, indicating high levels of viral RNA, virus was also isolated, confirming that virus is now circulating again in these Central regions. France has sentinel surveillance in place along the north coast, in the free areas, as well as the regions on the border of the restriction zone.

The extent of the restriction zone has not changed as a result of these cases and has been the same since April 2016.



Map Prepared by IDM
 Absolute Scale 1:5,400,000

BTV-8 in France: outbreaks detected since April 2016 and current Restriction Zones* by date of map

Date prepared 14/09/2016

0 40 80 160 240 320 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-fco>

Situation Assessment

The French Authorities have updated their surveillance information on their website (Centre de Ressources Épidémiosurveillance, 2016). There was a distinct drop in outbreaks identified over the June to July period, and the suggestion is that this was only partly due to lower virus circulation, but also to a lower level of farmer reporting and requirement for pre-movement testing, particularly as animals are out at grazing. However, the submissions have now increased and testing has shown that virus is circulating again in the Central regions.

We have started to run our meteorological models for potential for wind-borne midge movement from Northern France over the last two weeks (see map above). The assessment confirms that counties along the south coast of England would have been at risk of incursion **if disease were circulating** along the northern regions in France. It should be emphasised that disease has not been confirmed in this region, however clinical signs for this particular strain of BTV-8 are mild; overt clinical signs, as seen in early 2006 in some Member States may not be seen in either sheep or cattle due to strain attenuation (Caporale, *et al.*, 2014) or if there is some residual immunity in the herd. The level of vaccine uptake in France, and in the North specifically, is not known. The French Authorities are carrying out sentinel surveillance, testing on a monthly basis cattle from farms in the free area and along the border of the restriction zone. A positive case resulting from this surveillance would suggest significant virus circulation is or has been occurring recently.

Conclusion

Our risk level remains the same as our previous report, at medium, for this time of year. This level could increase at any time over the next few weeks, as the French Authorities continue with sentinel surveillance and if the virus is found to be circulating in the northern France.

We will continue to monitor the current situation in France and report any further updates from the French Authorities.

BTV-8 vaccine has been available for the GB market since mid-July, and the decision to vaccinate should be taken by the farmer, in consultation with their private veterinary surgeon.

For information on bluetongue and the vaccine availability in GB, see the announcement by the NFU at www.nfuonline.com/bluetongue

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Animal and Plant Health Agency
Veterinary & Science Policy Advice Team - International Disease Monitoring**

Author

Dr Helen Roberts

References

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Centre de Ressources épidémiologie (2016) Increase in number of outbreaks of BTV-8 since 29th August, 2016. (in French) <http://www.plateforme-esa.fr/article/augmentation-du-nombre-de-foyers-fco-btv-8-depuis-le-29-ao%C3%BBt-2016>

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http://www.oie.int/wahis_2/public/wahid.php/Reviewreport/Review?page_refer=MapFullEventReport&reportid=20948



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at iadm@apha.gsi.gov.uk