



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

# Bluetongue

Virus Serotype 3 (BTV-3)

## What is bluetongue?

Bluetongue is a notifiable disease which affects ruminants (such as cattle, sheep, goats, and deer) and camelids (such as alpacas and llamas). Bluetongue is caused by a virus that is spread by biting midges.

It does not affect people or food safety. Meat and milk are safe to eat and drink.

## When did bluetongue (BTV-3) arrive to the UK?

The first case of a new bluetongue virus serotype (BTV-3) was confirmed in England on the 10 November 2023 and further cases of old infections have been detected through surveillance in the south-east and east of England.

BTV-3 was first reported in September 2023 in the Netherlands, it has since been found in several other northern European countries.

## Clinical signs to look out for

BTV can cause fever, crusting and ulcers around muzzle area, swollen head, salivating and lameness.

In the most severe cases, it can cause abortions, malformations, and death in animals. Clinical signs are not always present despite infection.

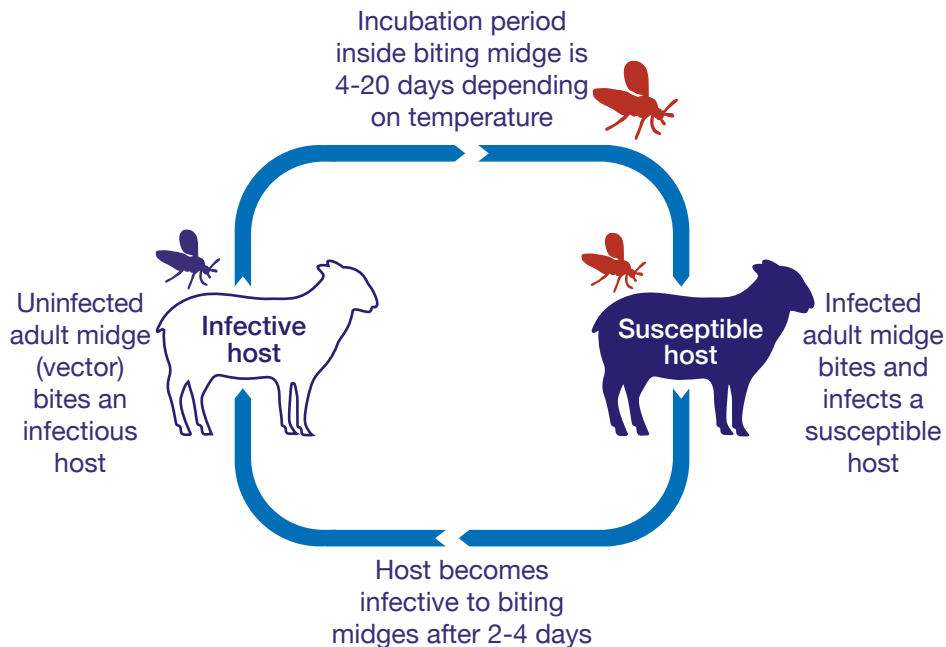
There is currently no authorised vaccine for BTV-3.



# How is bluetongue transmitted?

The most likely source of the arrival of BTV-3 in England was from biting midges infected with BTV-3 that were blown across from Europe.

## BTV transmission cycle



The virus can also be transmitted via infected germinal products (semen, ova, and embryos) as well as passed on maternally from mother to unborn offspring.

## Controlling the spread of bluetongue

- The main control measures for bluetongue are the implementation of control zones and movement restrictions of susceptible species within these zones.
- Keepers of ruminants and camelids can help minimise potential spread of bluetongue by checking the health of your animals and reporting any suspicious clinical signs.
- All livestock **must be registered with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)**. You can do this online at [www.gov.uk/bluetongue](http://www.gov.uk/bluetongue).
- You **must register all land and buildings** used to keep livestock, even short term lets, so the location of susceptible animals can be traced to help prevent and control disease.
- Animals on a bluetongue restricted premises and animals in certain disease control zones can only move with an appropriate licence.
- The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) carries out surveillance to check for disease. This may include blood sampling on holdings with susceptible animals in high-risk areas and in disease control zones.

Guidance on registration and licensing can be found at [gov.uk/bluetongue](http://gov.uk/bluetongue).

## Bluetongue is a notifiable disease.

You must stay vigilant and contact your vet if you have any concerns over the health and welfare of your animals.

Suspicion of bluetongue must be reported immediately to APHA.

### England

03000 200 301

### Wales

03003 038 268

### Scotland

Ayr: 03000 600703  
Galashiels: 03000 600711  
Perth: 03000 600704  
Inverness: 03000 600709  
Inverurie: 03000 600708

You can find out the latest information by visiting [www.gov.uk/bluetongue](http://www.gov.uk/bluetongue)