

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment #5

Sheep and Goat pox in Europe

15 May 2025

Disease report

Since the last update in September 2024, Bulgaria and Greece have continued to report outbreaks of sheep and goat pox (SGP) to WOAAH (World Organisation for Animal Health). After the outbreak in September 2024, Bulgaria reported 11 outbreaks through January 2025 and an additional outbreak in May 2025. From September 2024 to 12 May 2025, Greece has reported 379 outbreaks. Previous outbreak assessments are available online to view with other [reports](#).



Figure 1: Map showing Sheep and goat pox outbreaks from 1 July 2024 to 15 May 2025. Dots with a black dot inside are after 12 September 2024.

Situation assessment

SGP is a viral disease that generally only affects sheep and goats. Usually, the disease is transmitted by direct contact between animals in pens, in groups, or at gatherings for example at pasture or at markets. It can also be transmitted through inhalation of aerosols of saliva, nasal, respiratory and conjunctival secretions. Transmission by indirect contact with contaminated environments and fomites, including wool and hair is possible, but less frequent than direct transmission (Sprygin et al. 2019). Indirect transmission through contaminated vehicles, bedding, fodder or animal products (such as wool) is also possible. Virus is abundant in skin lesions and scabs and is viable for months in the environment (Kitching 2004; Bowden et al. 2008). SGPV can also be transmitted mechanically by biting insects such as stable flies (Bhanuprakash et al. 2006).

Bulgaria

Twelve outbreaks have been reported in Bulgaria since our last report on 12 September 2024, with two of them occurring in 2025. The latest was reported on 7 May in the Haskovo province in the south of the country. A majority of the outbreaks (9) have been in sheep herds, with the remaining in mixed herds. All but one of the outbreaks have been on farm premises housing between 1 and 394 animals and 139 cases have been identified amongst all outbreaks.

The latest outbreak occurred after a three-month break in outbreak detection. According to [media reports](#), protection (3km) and surveillance zones (10km) have been established around the infected premise.

Greece

Greece has reported 381 outbreaks since the last report, including 78 outbreaks so far in 2025. A majority of the outbreaks have been in sheep herds (289 outbreaks), 91 outbreaks have occurred in mixed herds and only 1 outbreak in goats. All outbreaks have occurred on farms holding between 5 and 2,816 animals. Cases have been confirmed in 3,328 animals. Between August 2024 and April 2025, 94,017 sheep and goats have been culled to help reduce the risk of spreading the disease (PAFF 2025b).

Similar measures to those used in Bulgaria, such as zoning, stamping out of animals, cleaning and disinfection, enforcement of biosecurity measures and surveillance, have been implemented. The increase in SPG outbreaks in Greece is linked to the gradual lifting of movement bans from the PPR outbreaks (PAFF 2024b).

In late 2024, a biosafety manual for sheep and goat farms was issued by the Laboratory of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases from the Veterinary School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Training workshops have also been carried out under the supervision of the Greek Ministry and Rural Development and Food (PAFF 2025a).

As of 25 April 2025, all measures for PZ, SZ, and FRZ as outlined in Regulation 2020/687 will apply until 3 June 2025, when the epidemiological situation will be

reevaluated. In addition to this, Commissioning Implementing Decision 2025/716 prohibits the movement of small ruminants from Greece to any other country until 30 September 2025 (PAFF 2025b).

Türkiye

According to [ADIS summaries](#), Türkiye have continued to report outbreaks of SGP with a total of 84 outbreaks reported between September 2024 and April 2025.

Conclusions

Although the source of introduction of SGP into Bulgaria and Greece is inconclusive, they remain the only two countries within the EU reporting SGP.

There have been no imports of live sheep or goats, fresh or chilled skins or hides or germplasm from Greece, Türkiye and Bulgaria. Greece and Bulgaria are currently restricted due to previous SGP outbreaks and Great Britain does not trade with Türkiye in any relevant commodities. Additionally, due to the FMD situation in Europe, from [12 April 2025](#) it has been illegal for travellers to bring cattle, sheep, goat, and pig meat, as well as dairy products, from EU countries into Great Britain for personal use (personal imports) with very [limited exemptions](#). Live animals, germinal products and untreated wool, hair, skins and hides are not permitted for personal import under separate rules.

Based on the distance to these outbreaks, commercial import restrictions and EU wide restrictions regarding personal imports, the risk of introduction of SGP to the UK through all pathways is currently considered to be **LOW**.

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