Preliminary Outbreak Assessment #3

Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) in Europe

28 August 2025

Disease report

On 23 August 2025, an outbreak of LSD was reported for the first time in the department of Ain in France. Outbreaks have continued to occur in Savoie and Haute-Savoie in France, with the departments recording 32 and 44 outbreaks respectively since the first report in France. Outbreaks also continue in Sardinia in Italy, with 8 reported in August. Our previous outbreak assessment of the situation can be found at: Lumpy skin disease in Europe - GOV.UK. The risk of incursion into the UK is maintained at **low (rare but can occur)**.

These are the first detections in Europe since outbreaks in the Balkans in 2018 (according to WOAH reports). There has been spread of the disease in North Africa since July 2024, in Algeria and Tunisia. Find our preliminary outbreak assessments for other regions: Lumpy skin disease in North Africa and East Asia - GOV.UK.

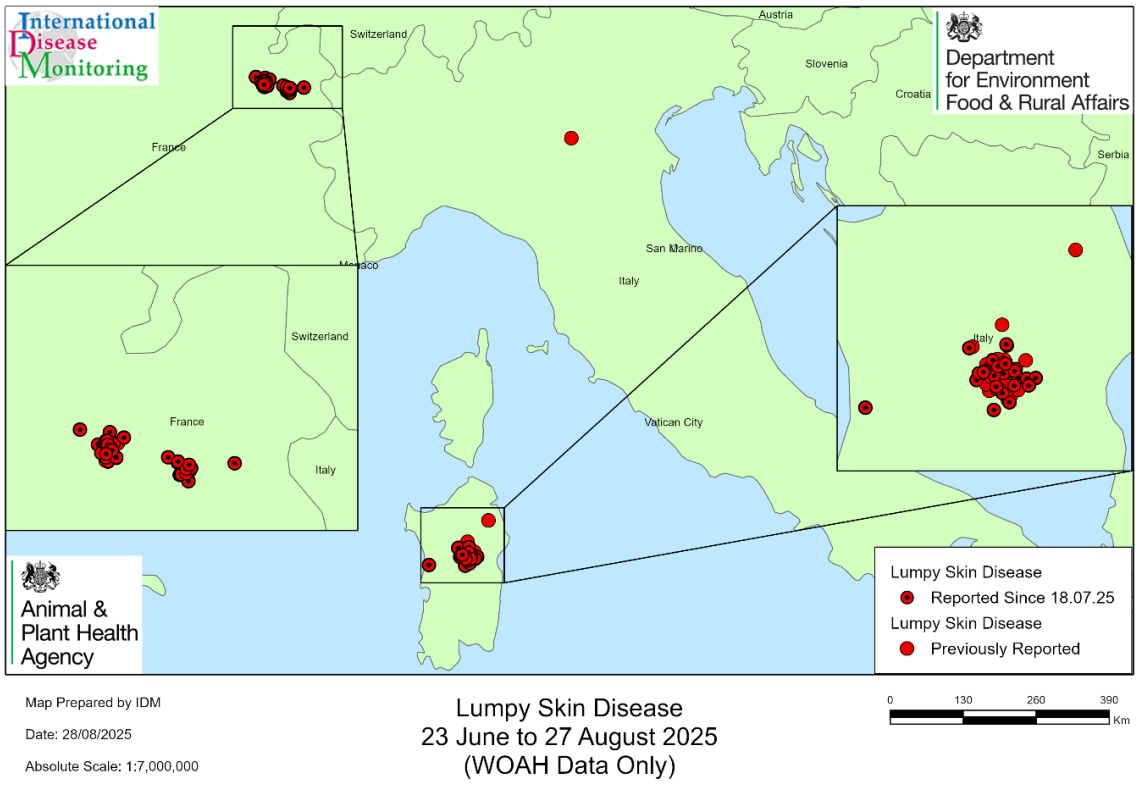

Figure 1: Reports of Lumpy Skin Disease in Italy and France. The map shows outbreaks of LSD reported to WOAH in Europe from 23 June to 27 August. Outbreaks that have occurred since our last update on 17 July contain a dot in the circle.

Situation assessment

LSD is a pox virus mainly affecting cattle and water buffalo, which is notifiable to the WOAH (Eom, Lee and Yoo, 2023). The virus is mainly transmitted by mechanical transmission by biting insect vectors.

The mortality rate is relatively low (typically 1-5%) but may reach up to 40% in naïve and young animals (Coetzer, 2004). Infection damages the hides and affects beef and milk production (WOAH, 2022) and affects export trade.

LSD is endemic within most African countries, with Morocco now being the only country where cases have not been reported (Eom, Lee and Yoo, 2023). In many countries in Africa the true prevalence of LSD is unknown or yet to be studied (Abebaw, 2024). From 2012, LSD spread through the Middle East, part of south-east Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus, Russia and Kazakhstan (WOAH, 2022). According to WOAH reports, the last reported cases in the Middle East and the Balkans were from 2019, while Russia continued reporting cases through March 2024. Turkey reported outbreaks through 2023 (ADIS). Since 2019, it has also been reported in southeast Asia, including Taiwan, China, India, Nepal Bhutan, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and Thailand (Eom, Lee and Yoo, 2023) (and WAHIS data).

There has not been a case of LSD reported within the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Lumpy skin disease is difficult to control and eradicate by stamping out of livestock alone and often requires vaccination to eradicate the disease from the national herd.

Italy

Since our last report on 17 July, Italy has confirmed 27 additional outbreaks of LSD in Sardinia (National Veterinary Epidemiological Bulletin (BENV)), bringing the total number of outbreaks recorded to 54. While a majority of the outbreaks are clustered in the same communes where outbreaks were initially recorded, there has been some spread. In addition to the outbreak in the Padru commune included in the last update, an outbreak in the Cuglieri commune was reported on 16 August 2025. This is located about 44 km west of the cluster of outbreaks in the centre of the island. There has been no change in the surveillance or protection zones on the island (ruminantia.it)

Media reports state vaccination rates have reached 40.5% of the cattle in Sardinia, although the use of wild pasture in the region is curtailing vaccination efforts (alimentando.info). However, these reports note the improvement in the situation, with 37 outbreaks reported in July versus the 8 so far in August (alimentando.info; BENV).

On 21 July, WAHIS reported that genotyping showed the virus circulating in Italy is closely related to cluster 1.2, which includes strains isolated in Nigeria and South Africa. Clinical surveillance is ongoing in the region (WAHIS event 6568). The source of the incursion is yet to be confirmed.

France

Since our last update, 56 outbreaks have been reported in France. Savoie, where the first outbreak was reported, has reported 17 outbreaks since our last update.

Haute-Savoie has reported 38 additional outbreaks in that time. The first outbreak in the department of Ain was reported on 25 August 2025 (WAHIS event 6584).

According to media reports, the case in Ain was confirmed in a vaccinated cow. Since the vaccine requires three weeks to provide full protection, infection likely occurred prior to vaccination (WOAH; franceinfo.fr). To prevent further spread of the disease, the entire herd has been culled (leprogres.fr). Ain is also implementing surveillance and prohibiting movement of cattle in the area to help prevent the spread of the disease (ain.gouv.frain.gouv.fr). The regions surveillance and protection zones have expanded to areas surrounding the new outbreak location (franceinfo.fr).

A vaccination campaign aimed at all cattle within the 50km restriction zones around outbreaks began on 18 July (agriculture.gov.fr). According to media reports, vaccination has reached about 90% of the animals in these areas. Efforts are now being made to reach isolated animals in mountain pastures (ledauphine.com; ouest-france.frouest-france.fr). French media has also reported that, on 28 August, France's National Steering Committee for Animal and Plant Health Policy voted to begin a preventative vaccination campaign in cattle in Corsica. This will begin on 1 September and continue for four months (ouest-france.fr).

Switzerland

The 50 km surveillance zone from the French outbreaks extends into Switzerland. To protect the country, the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) has made vaccination mandatory for all cattle, buffalo and bison located within the surveillance zones. Vaccination is prohibited outside of the zone to protect the countries disease-free status (FSVO).

Vaccination in Switzerland began on 19 July 2025 and has reached rates approaching 100%. A few bison remain unvaccinated and they have been separated from their herds. Switzerland has not reported any outbreaks of LSD so far (20min.ch.fr).

Impact for Great Britain

Incursion of LSD into Great Britain could occur either by importing infected live cattle or mosquitos or biting flies carrying the virus entering the country and infecting animals present in the area.

No live cattle imports have been identified from either country. As Italy has lost its LSD-free status, the UK has suspended the import of several bovine commodities, including live animals, germplasm, raw milk and raw milk products, offal, hides and skin (unless treated), and animal by products (unless undergoing specific heat treatment). More details can be found on 25 June 2025: Outbreak of lumpy skin disease in Italy - GOV.UK. Similar restrictions were brought in for France on 1 July after they lost their LSD-free status. Details can be found on 1 July 2025: Outbreak of lumpy skin disease in France - GOV.UK.

Additionally, from 12 April 2025 (due to the outbreaks of foot and mouth disease in Europe earlier in the year) 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 (outlined on Bringing food into Great Britain: Overview). Live animals, germinal products and untreated wool, hair, skins and hides are not permitted for personal import under separate rules.

Biting flies carrying LSD into the UK is another potential route of incursion. Midges from the continent are capable of crossing the Channel and introducing bluetongue virus into the UK. Stable flies, a primary vector for LSD, are capable of being blown distances greater than 13 km (Showler 2015). EFSA estimates LSD can spread about 2 km a day, given the vector-borne nature of the disease (EFSA 2017). The location of the current outbreaks is too far away for flies to reach UK borders from natural dispersal. There is the possibility of flies being carried on vehicles from Italy or France, but the risk of this is difficult to estimate.

Given the continued presence of LSD in Sardinia and the limited spread of outbreaks in France, the risk of incursion to GB is maintained at **low (rare but can occur)**.

Conclusion

LSD has continued to spread in Sardinia and France, with a total of 131 outbreaks reported from both countries. The incursion of LSD into Italy follows spread in recent years in the North Africa region.

Since the 1 June 2024 there has been no trade in live bovine animals or bovine germplasm collected in Italy or France. Restrictions are being placed on specific bovine products from Italy and France in light of the LSD outbreaks mentioned above. The lifting or maintaining of restrictions are under constant review depending on information that we receive about the outbreaks.

Biting flies are capable of transmitting the disease, although the location of the outbreaks makes this risk pathway less likely.

Considering the ongoing outbreaks and circulation of LSD in these areas, uncertainty in the source of incursion and the slight spread, the current risk level of incursion of LSD is maintained at **low (rare but can occur)**. This reflects the continued occurrence of outbreaks in these areas, which is mitigated by the restricted trade in cattle and bovine germplasm from these countries.

We will continue to monitor the situation.

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This publication is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/animal-diseases-international-monitoring

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