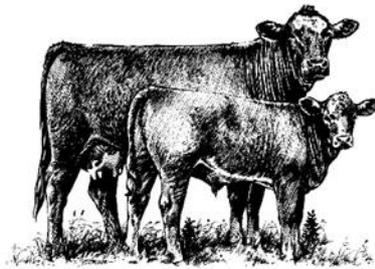




Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency



# Great Britain cattle quarterly report, disease surveillance and emerging threats

---

**Volume 29: Quarter 4 (October to December) 2025**

---

## Highlights

- **Bluetongue updates – Page 4**
- **The 10 most frequent diagnoses from carcase submissions – Page 5**
- **Mannheimiosis in dairy cows – Page 11**
- **The 10 most frequent diagnoses from abortion and stillbirth submissions – page 17**

## Contents

Introduction and overview .....	2
New and re-emerging diseases and threats .....	7
Changes in disease patterns and unusual diagnoses.....	7
Centre of Expertise for Extensively Managed Livestock .....	21
Chemical food safety .....	20
Horizon scanning .....	21
APHA publications of interest .....	22

Editor: Vanessa Swinson, APHA Thirsk

Email: [CEG@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CEG@apha.gov.uk)

## Introduction and overview

This quarterly report reviews disease trends and threats for the fourth quarter of 2025 (Q4), October to December. It is compiled using data available at the time of writing. It contains interesting cases, and analyses carried out on disease data gathered from APHA, SRUC Veterinary Services division of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), and Surveillance Pathology Partners; and intelligence gathered through the Cattle Expert Group networks. We are aware that there were SRUC data missing from the database at the time of writing. This could not be rectified in time, and analysis and trends based on later updated data may therefore differ from this report. The focus will therefore be on trends detected in APHA data from England and Wales, plus interesting and unusual cases from the GB Surveillance Network. In addition, links to other sources of information, including reports from other parts of the APHA and Defra agencies, are included. A full explanation of [how data is analysed](#) is provided in the annexe available on GOV.UK.

## Dairy sector update

**Production:** [GB milk volumes continue to soar](#) above last year's levels, building on growth seen since Autumn 2024 and December was 6.9% above the 5-year average for the month's production. This year's milk season so far (April-January) has reached 10,913 million litres, up 5.2% compared to the same period in the previous milk year. The growth has been supported by favourable dairy economics and increased usage of concentrate feeds. A 20-year high in the milk to feed price ratio has been in play for all of 2025 which has boosted yields.

[Global milk flows](#) also continue to surge and EU milk deliveries have seen strong growth since autumn, following delayed spring calving.

Our [Dairy Market Outlook](#) predicts that GB milk production is forecast to stabilise in 2026, with only marginal growth for the calendar year in the region of 0.3% expected. But this is still a record-breaking amount of milk which keeps pressure on processing capacity, especially around the flush.

**Prices:** The latest [published farmgate price](#) was for December 2025 was announced by Defra as being 40.29 pence per litre (ppl), down 2.62 pence (6.1%) on the previous month. The November UK price was reported as 42.91ppl, down 2.39 pence (5.3%) compared to October 2025.

Latest [announced farmgate prices](#) remained negative from February and into March.

High milk volumes started to pressure [commodity prices](#) in September, and when the EU saw a huge spike in milk through the Autumn, prices fell significantly.

Fats saw the worst losses with cream losing half of its value over the quarter and butter one third. Mild Cheddar's losses were more constrained at 29% and skimmed milk powder (SMP) dwindled a further 15%.

January brought a more mixed picture on commodity markets than seen in recent months. Whilst cheese and skim markets enjoyed a modicum of recovery, fats continued in the doldrums even discounting the dire week between Christmas and January. High milk supplies both here and on the continent are proving particularly influential on the fats market.

**Trade:** Total [export volumes of dairy products from the UK for Q3 2025](#) increased 5.5% year-on-year. Exports of dairy products to the EU increased by 12,000 tonne (t) and that to non-EU nations increased by 3,400 t.

Powders saw the biggest year-on-year increase, with supplies boosted by record highs in milk deliveries.

Milk powder export volumes were up by 14,400 t: bound for both EU nations such as Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, France and non-EU nations like Nigeria, Indonesia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and New Zealand.

This was followed by the exports of whey and whey products, which increased by 3,500 t, cheese by 1,500 t and that of butter by 900 t.

However, a decline in the exports of milk and cream by 3,900 t (2.2%) and yogurt by 10.7% (1,000 t) weighed on overall exports.

**Demand:** [During the 12 weeks ending 24 January 2026](#), overall volumes of cows' dairy declined 0.5% year-on-year. Spending on cows' dairy increased by 6.1% year-on-year, driven by a 6.7% increase in average prices paid [NielsenIQ Consumer Panel (NIQ Homescan POD), Total GB].

- Cows' milk volumes saw a 1.7% decline in volumes purchased year-on-year
- Cows' cheese remained in volume growth, seeing a 1.6% increase year-on-year.
- Cows' butter saw a 0.6% decrease in volumes purchased year-on-year.
- Cows' yogurt, yogurt drinks and fromage frais volumes continue to see growth (+5.9%).
- Cows' cream volumes saw a 0.3% increase year-on-year.

## Beef sector update

**Prices:** [GB deadweight prime prices](#) saw high levels in Q4 compared to 2024. The all-prime average reached 646p/kg in the week ending 27 December 2025, a 93p/kg rise on the year. Cow prices fell throughout Q4, in the same week ending 27 December the overall average GB deadweight cull cow price reached 489p/kg. However, this was up 114p/kg on the year.

**Production:** Q4 beef production totalled 234,000 tonnes, down 2% from last year. This has been driven by a decline in throughputs. Prime cattle slaughter for October-December was down 4% on the year to total 507,000 head, whilst cow numbers were down 2% to 176,000 head. UK prime cattle carcasse weights averaged 348kg in Q4, which was growth of 3% on the year.

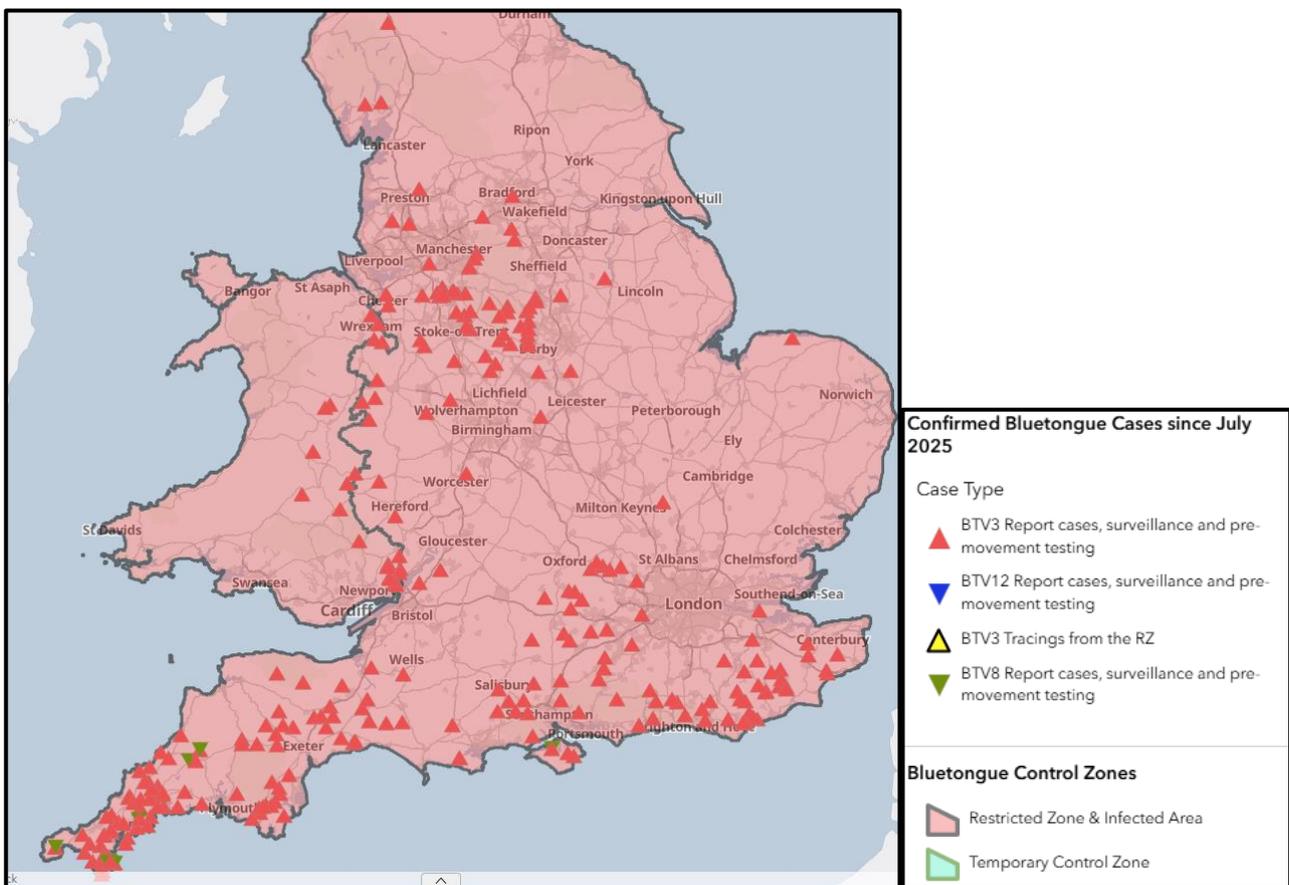
**Trade:** Fresh and frozen beef import volumes for the last 3 months of 2025 totalled 62,200 tonnes, a decrease of 3% compared to the last 3 months of 2024. This reduction has primarily come from Ireland as their domestic production remains tight. Meanwhile, export volumes of fresh and frozen beef were up 2% to 31,000 tonnes.

**Demand:** In the [12 week ending 28 December 2025](#), beef spend increased 9.8% year-on-year, driven by average price rises of 17.5%, resulting in volume declines of 6.6%. Roasting joints, which have been in strong decline in previous periods, performed well across Christmas.

Acknowledgment for the dairy and beef updates: Hannah Clarke AHDB.

## Bluetongue updates

The 2025 to 2026 vector season started on the 1 July 2025. Figure 1 shows the geographic distribution of confirmed BTV cases between 1 July 2025 and 15 January 2026. These interactive maps can be found here: [Bluetongue Cases and Zones](#).



**Figure 1: Map of England and Wales showing the confirmed bluetongue cases between 1 July 2025 and 15 January 2026**

Images of the clinical signs can be found here: [Clinical signs of bluetongue | AHDB](#)

Bluetongue virus is a notifiable disease. Suspicion of bluetongue virus in animals must be reported to the Animal and Plant Health Agency on 03000 200 301 in England, on 03003 038 268 in Wales, and to the [local Field Services Office](#) in Scotland. Further guidance and information are available on the [Ruminant Health & Welfare site, Bluetongue: information and guidance for livestock keepers \(GOV.UK\)](#) and on [Bluetongue: how to spot and report it \(GOV.UK\)](#).

### **Cattle disease surveillance dashboard outputs**

The most frequent diagnoses from carcase submissions made in Q4 of 2025, compared to Q4 in 2024, and Q4 for 2015 to 2025 inclusive, through the Great Britain (England, Wales, and Scotland) scanning surveillance network, are illustrated in Table 1. These can be interrogated further using the interactive cattle [disease surveillance dashboard](#) which was launched in October 2017. Please see the note in the introduction on Page 2 regarding SRUC data.

**Table 1: Great Britain scanning surveillance 10 most frequent carcase submission diagnoses in Q4 of 2025, Q4 of 2024, and Q4 for 2015-2025**

10 most frequent carcass diagnoses Q4 2025	10 most frequent carcass diagnoses Q4 2024	10 most frequent carcass diagnoses Q4 2015-2025
1. Pneumonia due to <i>Mycoplasma bovis</i>	1. Pneumonia due to <i>Mycoplasma bovis</i>	1. Pneumonia due to <i>Mycoplasma bovis</i>
2. Pneumonia due to <i>Mannheimia haemolytica</i>	2. Pneumonia due to <i>Mannheimia haemolytica</i>	2. Pneumonia due to <i>Pasteurella multocida</i>
3. Pneumonia due to <i>Pasteurella multocida</i>	3. Pneumonia due to <i>Pasteurella multocida</i>	3. Pneumonia due to <i>Mannheimia haemolytica</i>
4. Pneumonia due to <i>Histophilus somni</i>	4. Pneumonia – not otherwise specified	4. Pneumonia – not otherwise specified
5. Cryptosporidiosis	5. Pneumonia due to <i>Histophilus somni</i>	5. Pneumonia due to <i>Histophilus somni</i>
6. Pneumonia – not otherwise specified	6. Digestive disease due to other causes (not listed)	6. Cryptosporidiosis
7. Poisoning due to oak or acorns	7. Cryptosporidiosis	7. Digestive disease due to other causes (not listed)
8. Pneumonia due to BRSV	8. Ruminal acidosis	8. Pneumonia due to BRSV
9. Salmonellosis due to S. Dublin	9. Pneumonia due to BRSV	9. Salmonellosis due to S. Dublin
10. Ruminal acidosis	10. Parasitic pneumonia	10. Rotaviral enteritis

Six of the Top 10 diagnoses for Q4 2025 belong to the respiratory syndrome category, and this is also a common finding in other quarters. *Mycoplasma bovis*, *Pasteurella multocida*, and *Mannheimia haemolytica* can be primary respiratory pathogens but are also frequently secondary respiratory infections, usually following a primary viral respiratory pathogen. Therefore, in investigating an outbreak of respiratory disease, it is important to choose carefully which calves to sample (either live or postmortem), and which samples to take, if accurate diagnoses are to be made from the acute phase of disease. Veterinary investigation officers are always happy to discuss sampling and may be able to undertake an investigative farm visit for farms with severe outbreaks or long-standing issues.

The diagnoses for the ‘pneumonia not otherwise specified’ category included lung abscessation due to *Fusobacterium necrophorum*, and pneumonia with *Mycoplasma dispar* detected.

# New and re-emerging diseases and threats

## Changes in disease patterns and unusual diagnoses

### Systemic disease

#### Septicaemia due to *Salmonella* Dublin

Septicaemia due to *Salmonella* Dublin was confirmed on multiple calf rearing sites, whilst abortion due to *Salmonella* Dublin was also diagnosed in dairy herds. The challenges of managing *Salmonella* Dublin in calf rearing enterprises were discussed with the submitting vets, with control involving various aspects of management, including potential vaccination. This would be best done on the farm of origin and may attract a premium for some calves or, could be introduced as a standard policy for integrated systems. Other key areas to focus on included hygiene and disinfection of pens between batches and, having a unidirectional flow through the sheds to limit spread and minimise clinical disease. In all cases the isolates displayed minimal antibiotic resistance. The [In Practice article](#) by Henderson and Mason was highlighted in the reports for each case.

Reports of [salmonella in livestock, dogs, birds and wildlife in Great Britain](#) can be found on GOV.UK. There was an increase in incidents of *Salmonella* Dublin in May 2025, compared to May for the five previous years.

### Digestive system disease

The most common diagnoses in the digestive system disease category were cryptosporidiosis and ruminal acidosis.

#### Investigations into suspected lack of efficacy of anthelmintics

Suspected lack of efficacy was investigated in two unrelated herds during autumn 2025: suspected lack of moxidectin efficacy in *Cooperia oncophora* and suspected lack of benzimidazole efficacy in *Ostertagia ostertagi*. In both cases, carcasses and faecal samples were submitted to investigate severe diarrhoea, malaise, and weight loss in first grazing season dairy calves at grass. There had been a disappointing clinical response to the anthelmintic treatments given 1-2 weeks previously. No concerns were identified regarding dose rate, administration technique or product storage, raising the suspicion of lack of efficacy. In both cases, this suspicion was reported to the relevant marketing authorisation holders. Recognised risk factors for development of anthelmintic resistance were identified in both herds, namely the repeated use of the same worming products for many years, and the annual use of the same fields for youngstock grazing. Development of anthelmintic resistance in GB cattle herds is an emerging issue that should be considered when reviewing herd health plans or advising on roundworm control.

#### Suspected lack of moxidectin efficacy in *Cooperia oncophora*

Laboratory testing found individual faecal egg counts ranging from 140-1660 eggs per gram (epg) in 6-month-old calves, 14 days following pour-on moxidectin treatment. Coproculture (undertaken at Moredun Research Institute) identified 98% of resultant larvae as *Cooperia oncophora*. Although very few *Ostertagia ostertagi* had survived moxidectin treatment, postmortem examination found abomasal mucosal pathology suggestive of ostertagiosis having contributed to the clinical signs described prior to treatment.

### **Suspected lack of benzimidazole efficacy in *Ostertagia ostertagi***

Fatal ostertagiosis was diagnosed by detection of an estimated 151,000 adult *Ostertagia* spp. worms at post-mortem examination of a 7-month-old dairy calf, despite treatment with oral albendazole seven days previously. The individual faecal egg count was 350 epg, with counts from others in the group ranging from 50 to 500 epg, highlighting the need to consider clinical signs and productivity when interpreting faecal egg counts in cattle. This is the second clinical presentation of suspected benzimidazole-resistant ostertagiosis investigated by AHPA (Bartley *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, a recent APHA study of 60 English and Welsh herds found BZ-resistant *O. ostertagi* genotypes in 10%, representing all herd types and regions (Jewell *et al.*, 2024). Further investigation including molecular characterisation is ongoing in collaboration with Moredun Research Institute.

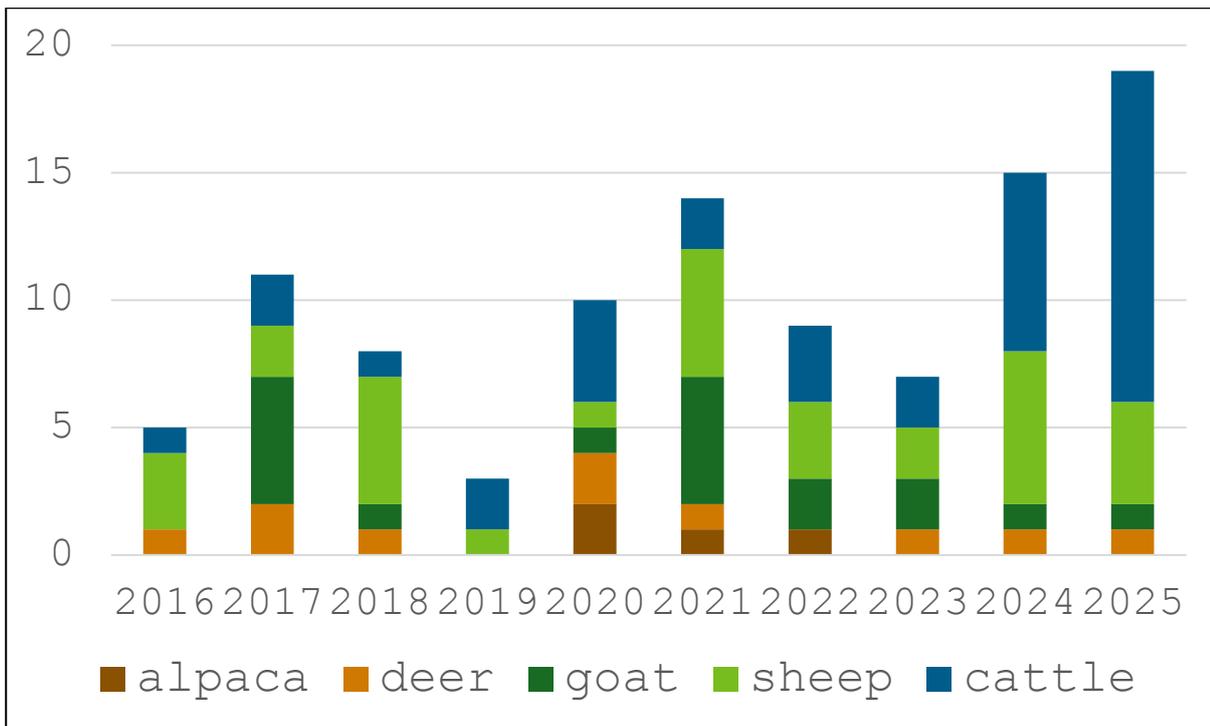
Bartley, D. J., Jewell, N. J., Andrews, L. M., Mitchell, S., & Morrison, A. A. (2021). Molecular and phenotypic characterisation of fenbendazole resistance in a field-derived isolate of *Ostertagia ostertagi*. *Veterinary parasitology*, 289, 109319.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vetpar.2020.109319>

Jewell N J, Swinson V, Miller T, Davies D, Wheeler A M, Morrison A A, MacLeod E T, Bartley D J, Melville L A. 2024. What worms? What wormer resistance risk? Insights from next generation sequencing of gastrointestinal nematodes obtained from first grazing season cattle in England and Wales in 2022 and 2023. *Cattle Practice*, 32 (1), pp55-57. Available at: <https://www.bcva.org.uk/content/what-worms-what-wormer-resistance-risk-insights-next-generation-sequencing-gastrointestinal>

### **Yersiniosis in cattle**

An increase in cases of yersiniosis in cattle has again been detected during 2025. Since 2016, there have been 101 cases in all ruminant species recorded in the VIDA database from across the GB surveillance network. An increase in cattle cases has been seen in the last 2 years, as shown in Figure 2, with 20 of 37 cattle cases recorded since 2016 occurring in the last two years. Individual cases have been described in quarterly reports during Q1 and Q3 of 2025, as well as Q4 of 2024.



**Figure 2: cases of yersiniosis in ruminants and camelids recorded in the GB VIDA database per year from 2016 to 2015**

The median age of submitted cases has been six months, ranging from 10 days to two years. Both dairy and beef herds have been affected, with cases seen in both housed and outdoor-managed animals. Yersiniosis is often secondary to other infectious or non-infectious stressors and may also be predisposed to by weather conditions which promote high bacterial burden: cases are predominantly seen between November and January and the majority, 22 of 37, had additional diagnoses recorded, including pneumonia, coccidiosis and parasitic gastroenteritis. Control should therefore focus on minimising exposure and controlling concurrent disease and environmental stressors as well as the prompt identification and treatment of cases.

### Abomasal disorders in milk-fed calves

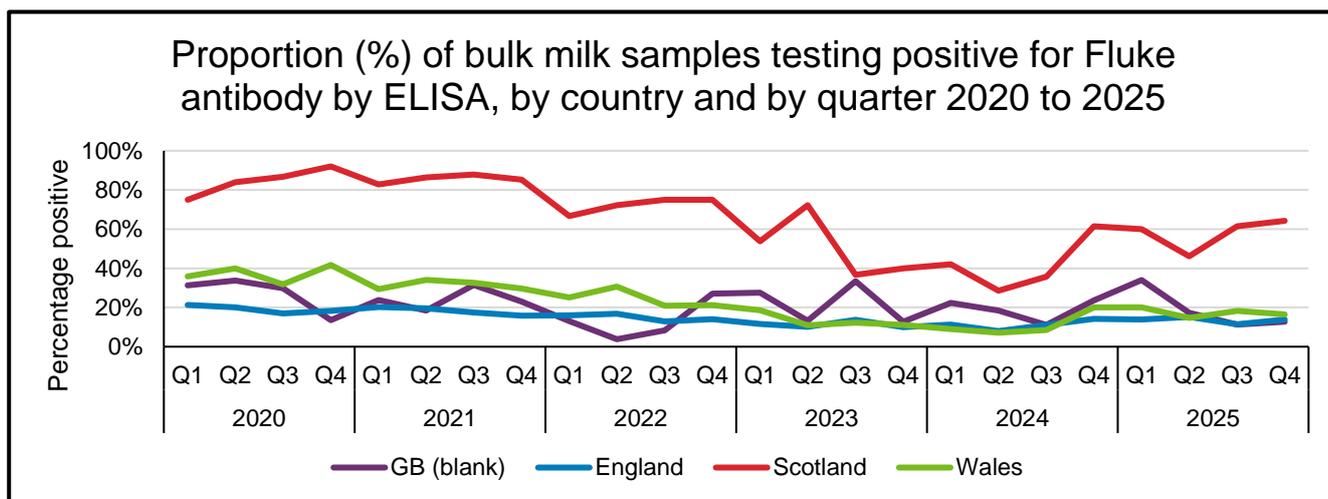
Abomasal disorders in milk-fed calves, including abomasal bloat, ulceration, and necrotising abomasitis, have been frequently diagnosed across the surveillance network throughout 2025. Individual cases have been described in previous quarterly reports including Q3 of 2024 and Q3 of 2025. Several cases were also reviewed in an APHA Surveillance Update in November 2024 (APHA, 2024). Typically, disease is seen in artificially reared dairy calves, often fed via automated machine. Often affected calves have a history of previous tube-feeding of colostrum or other feeds. Enteric pathogens such as *Cryptosporidium* spp., rotavirus and *Salmonella* Dublin have been detected in some cases; although the primary problem is usually thought to be issues with feeding management, such as incomplete mixing of milk replacer, over-feeding, or poor hygiene. An enhanced surveillance project is planned for 2026, to include analysis of existing VIDA data, and assessment of information on proposed risk factors provided in clinical histories collected at the time of carcass submissions. A workshop is then planned for later in 2026.

If you have had cases of this, and would be able to discuss them with us, or you would like to be involved in the workshop, please contact us at the email address on Page 1.

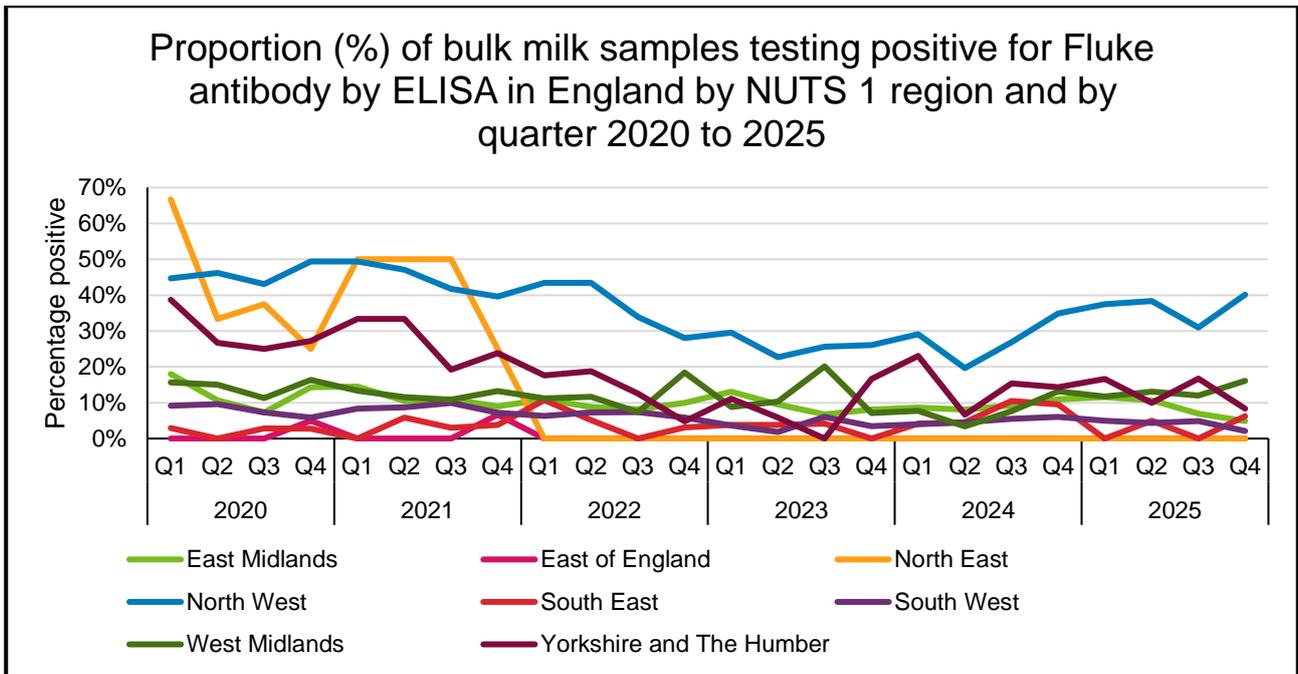
## Liver fluke bulk milk serology

Figure 3 shows the proportion of National Milk Records (NMR) bulk milk samples testing positive for liver fluke antibody, by ELISA, by country, from Q1 2020 to Q4 2025 inclusive. In some cases, samples are not geo-referenced. They are included in the GB total only, and as such the percentage positive by country may not equate to the GB percentage positive. Figure 4 shows this by NUTS 1\*\* region for England for the same period (\*\*Nomenclature des Unités territoriales statistiques (NUTS) provides continuity with the UK's statistical framework for regional and local data in an international context).

This data is kindly provided under agreement from National Milk Records (NMR) to support the collection of disease surveillance information across GB. NMR provide milk testing for endemic disease in cattle. Most of the bulk milk samples tested will be routine quarterly surveillance ('monitoring') and a few may be part of a clinical disease investigation ('diagnostic'), but these are not differentiated in Figure 3. In line with agreed APHA reporting, the number of samples tested is not shown. For further information on this data please contact [vetenquiries@nmrp.com](mailto:vetenquiries@nmrp.com).



**Figure 3: Proportion (%) of bulk milk samples testing positive for liver fluke antibody by ELISA, by country, and by quarter Q1 2020 to Q4 2025\* (\*to date)**



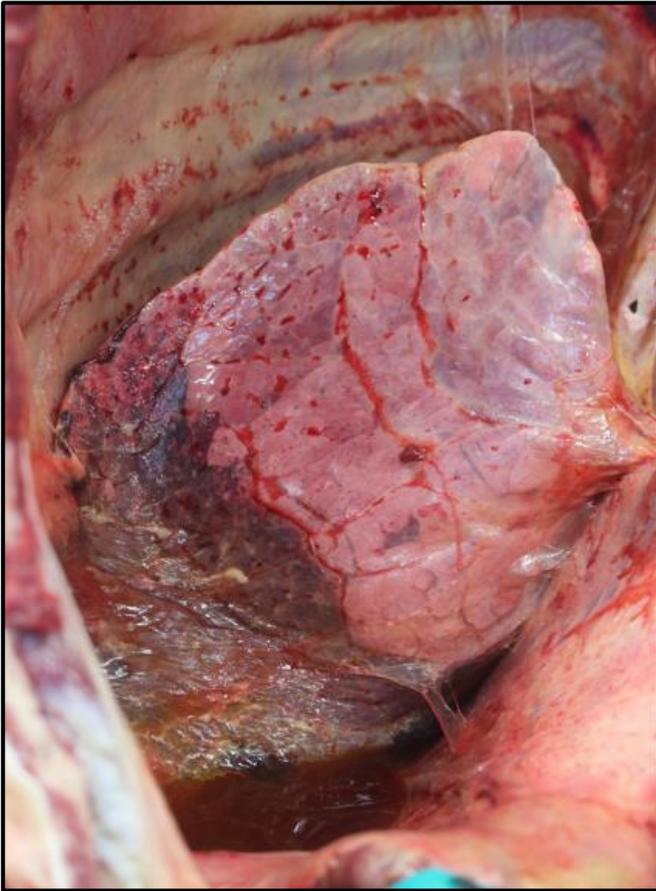
**Figure 4: Proportion (%) of bulk milk samples testing positive for liver fluke antibody by ELISA, by NUTS 1 region in England, and by quarter Q1 2020 to Q4 2025\* (\*to date)**

Acknowledgements for the liver fluke data: Eamon Watson MRCVS, NMR Product Manager and Karen Bond MRCVS, NMR Veterinary Team Lead

## Respiratory system

### *Mannheimia haemolytica* outbreaks in adult dairy cows

A 240-milking cow unit submitted multiple animals from different management groups to investigate mortality, sudden milk drop, and reduced rumination. Some cows also exhibited pyrexia and/or respiratory signs. There were 36 animals affected and significant numbers died or were euthanased (at least 20). Consistent findings among the submissions were a severe fibrinosuppurative pleuropneumonia, with dark red-purple consolidation mostly in cranial and middle lobes (Figure 5), bullae mainly in caudal lobes, thick fibrinous pleural exudation and thickening, and marked expansion of the interlobular septa with yellow oedema and fibrin. The thorax contained fluid and fibrin with multiple pleural adhesions. *Mannheimia haemolytica* was isolated from the lungs of all the submitted animals. Influenza D and Coronavirus were detected in multiple samples; however, histopathology supported *Mannheimia haemolytica* as the significant agent and did not identify lesions indicating any viral involvement.



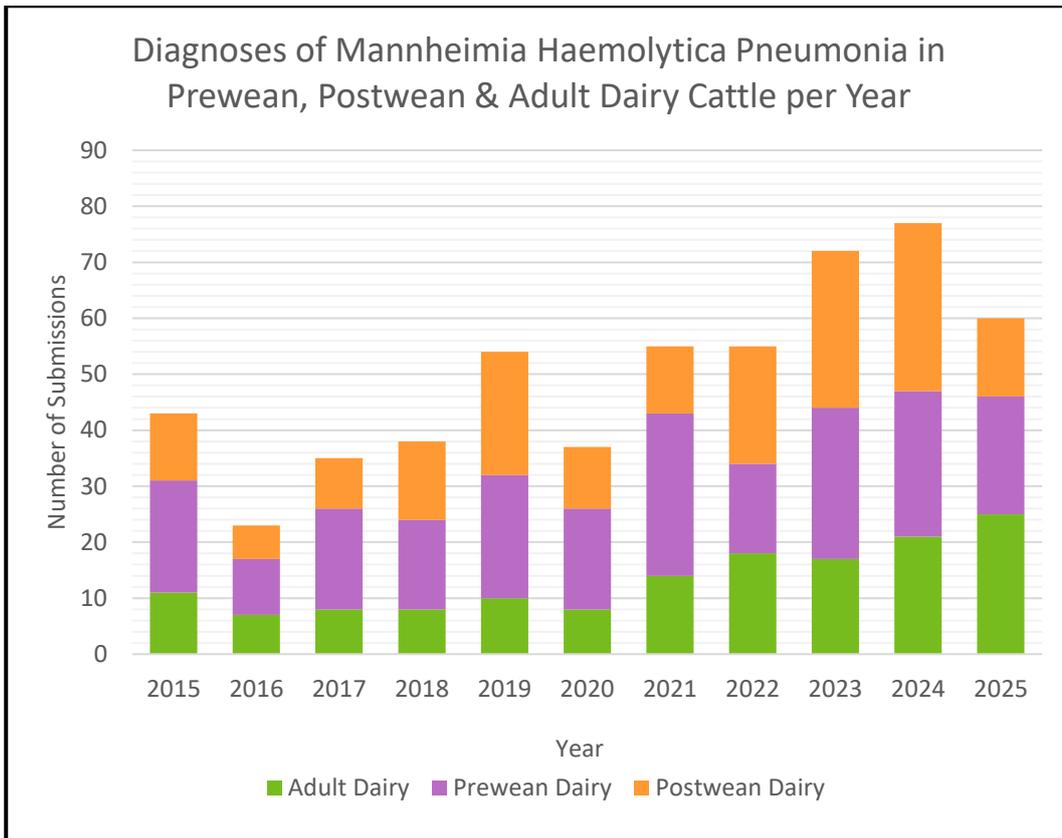
**Figure 5: dark red-purple consolidation of cranial and middle lobes, with fluid and fibrin within the pleural cavity, in a cow with *Mannheimia haemolytica* pleuropneumonia**

Outbreaks of mannheimiosis in dairy herds have been recognised since the 1990s (Harwood, Otter and Gunning, 1995). There has been no consistent evidence of any specific co-infections; instead, environmental, housing and management factors appear to ‘trigger’ these sudden flare-ups, and aiming to address these, employing rapid detection and treatment regimes, and sometimes the use of vaccination, are attempted in the face of these outbreaks. As well as six recent cases in the Shrewsbury area, several others have also been investigated at other Veterinary Investigation Centres, and we are currently undertaking further investigation for evidence of consistent risk factors.

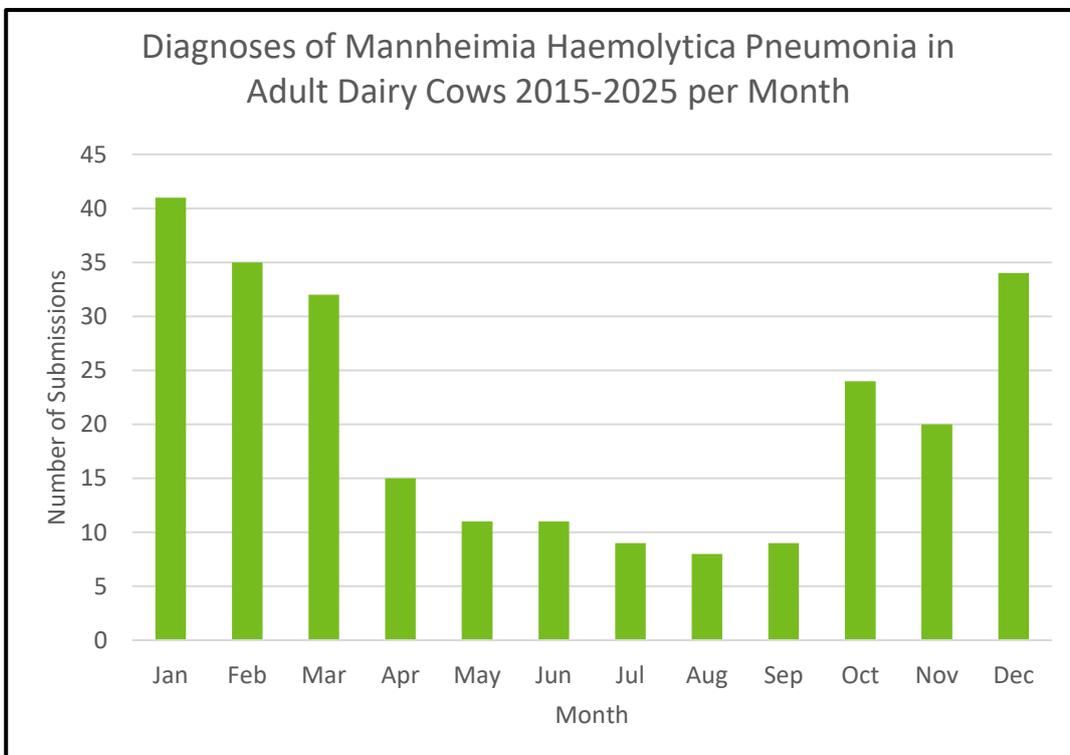
### Reference

Harwood DG, Otter A, Gunning R. Peracute pleuropneumonia in adult cattle. *Veterinary Record* (1995) 136, 252

Figure 6 shows the *Mannheimia haemolytica* cases by year (2015-2025) in adult dairy cows, and for pre-weaned and weaned dairy calves (these could potentially be mixed infections with other VIDA diagnoses). Figure 7 shows the seasonality of *M. haemolytica* in dairy cows.



**Figure 6: *Mannheimia haemolytica* diagnoses by year (2015-2025) for adult dairy cows, and for pre-weaned and weaned dairy calves**



**Figure 7: numbers of diagnoses of *M. haemolytica* per month in adult dairy cows**

## Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR) gE bulk milk serology

Figure 8 shows the proportion of National Milk Records (NMR) bulk milk samples testing positive for IBR gE antibody (used for herds vaccinating with a gE deleted IBR vaccine), by ELISA, by country, from Q1 2020 to Q4 2025 inclusive. In some cases, samples are not geo-referenced. They are included in the GB total only and as such the percentage positive by country may not equate to the GB percentage positive.

This data is kindly provided under agreement from National Milk Records (NMR) to support the collection of disease surveillance information across GB. NMR provide milk testing for endemic disease in cattle. Most of the bulk milk samples tested will be routine quarterly surveillance ('monitoring') and a few may be part of a clinical disease investigation ('diagnostic'), but these are not differentiated in Figure 8. The values indicate a high level of, and widespread, IBR exposure in England, Scotland, and Wales. In line with agreed APHA reporting, the number of samples tested is not shown. For further information on this data please contact [vetenquiries@nmp.com](mailto:vetenquiries@nmp.com).

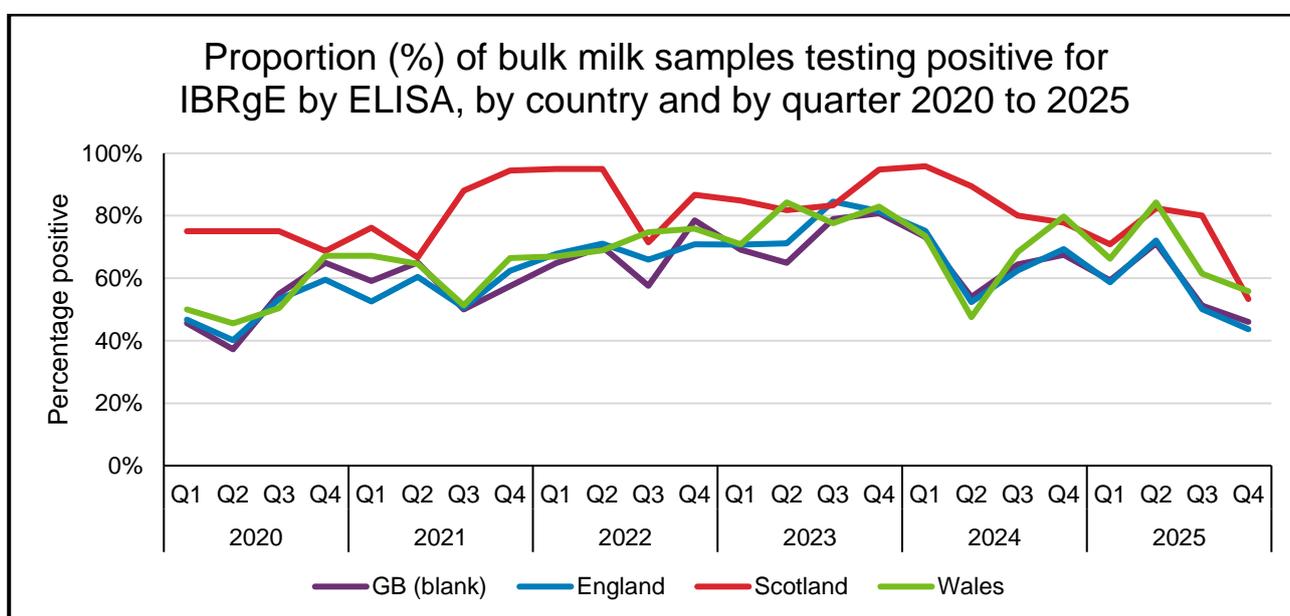


Figure 8: Proportion (%) of bulk milk samples testing positive for IBRgE antibody by ELISA by country and by quarter Q1 2020 to Q4 2025\* (\*to date)

Acknowledgements for the IBR data: Eamon Watson MRCVS, NMR Product Manager and Karen Bond MRCVS, NMR Veterinary Team Lead

## Musculoskeletal system

We continued to see cases of blackleg (myositis due to *Clostridium chauvoei*) during this quarter across the surveillance network.

## Urinary system

No significant trends this quarter.

## Nervous system and organs of special sense

### Cerebrocortical necrosis (CCN) in a fattener

The carcass of a 20-month-old Charolais cross was presented to investigate the cause of neurological signs in two animals from a group of 30 on a diet of straw and maize gluten. Postmortem examination found an increased volume of cerebrospinal fluid and bilateral symmetrical fluorescence of the cerebral grey matter under ultra-violet light.

Cerebrocortical necrosis (CCN) was suspected and confirmed on histopathology. The rumen content in this case was liquid and lacked fibre suggesting that the CCN was diet related and a result of thiamine deficiency.

### Non-suppurative meningoencephalitis due to astrovirus in two calves

Two, ten-month-old Aberdeen Angus cattle developed neurological signs in August while the group of 34 were grazing a silage aftermath. They failed to respond to treatment and died after a few days. There were no significant findings on postmortem examination, however, histopathology revealed marked non-suppurative meningoencephalitis with gliosis, perivascular cuffing and neuronophagia. This suggested the possibility of louping ill, but PCR testing of brain tissue was negative.

A positive *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* PCR result confirmed exposure to tick borne fever but as the timing of this was unknown the significance was not clear. There was no evidence of lead poisoning. Further investigation detected the presence of bovine astrovirus in both cases. Bovine astrovirus is a fairly recently reported cause of sporadic cases of encephalitis in cattle. The epidemiology is not well-defined making recommendations for prevention and control challenging.

### Reference

Comeau D, Spinato MT, Ojkic D et al Bovine astrovirus and its role in lymphocytic encephalitis in cattle in Ontario, Canada 1988-2019. *J Vet Diag Invest*; 2024;36(3):447-56

## Skin disease

### Squamous cell carcinoma on the head of a 9-year-old cow

A fixed section of a rapidly growing tissue lump in the middle of the forehead of a nine-year-old house cow was submitted for histopathology. The microscopic appearance was consistent with a well-differentiated squamous cell carcinoma. In some areas the proliferation resembled a papilloma, however, significant dysplasia and evidence of infiltrative growth in some places together with anisokaryosis was more supportive of

malignancy in this case. Squamous cell carcinomas of the skin are usually locally invasive and reasonably slowly progressive and late to metastasise. Complete excision of or neoplastic tissue with surrounding marginal tissue can therefore prove curative. Further monitoring for locally recurrent and possibly metastatic growth was advised.

### **Udder cleft dermatitis and mastitis**

A dairy cow that had died overnight on a farm with more than 1000 permanently housed cows was submitted to investigate ongoing illnesses on the premises. The cow was mid lactation, due to calve in 3 months and was in its 4<sup>th</sup> lactation. It had been milking very well but was found recumbent with signs similar to milk fever. It was given calcium, fluids and NSAIDs and stood within 10 minutes, but the following day became recumbent again, failed to respond to similar treatment and died overnight. Five other high yielding cows had gone down in similar circumstances in the last 6 weeks. Some had survived but were producing minimal milk. Other concurrent issues described in the herd included cases of severe mastitis, suspected stomach ulcers and very high liver copper concentrations in 5 recent liver biopsies (supplementation of copper in the diet had since ceased). At postmortem examination there was an oval udder cleft dermatitis (UCD) lesion approximately 10-15cm at the base of the fore quarters; the affected skin was ulcerated, dark and crusty with inflammation, necrosis and oedema extending into subcutaneous tissue adjacent the mammary tissue (Figure 9). The surface layers of skin were peeling adjacent to the fore teats and three of the quarters were enlarged, firm and reddened. The liver was also enlarged, with tan/bronze coloured parenchyma. Haemorrhages were present around the larynx and on the epicardial and endocardial surface and the pleura, and there was yellowing of fat. Mixed flora were isolated from mammary glands including *Streptococcus dysgalactiae* from 2 and *Streptococcus uberis* from the third affected quarter. Liver copper analysis confirmed a concentration of 19,193  $\mu\text{mol/l}$  (reference interval 314-7850  $\mu\text{mol/l}$ ). The conclusion was that the large UCD lesion and mastitis were the cause of recumbency and death; the high copper concentration could have affected hepatocyte function increasing susceptibility to disease, and a review of diet and management for mastitis and UCD were recommended.



**Figure 9: ulcerated skin in a cow with udder cleft dermatitis**

An unusual presentation of malignant catarrhal fever, with extensive dermatitis was reported by SRUC: [Seasonal rise in nematodiosis deaths among Scottish sheep](#)

## Circulatory disease

No significant trends this quarter.

## Reproductive system – abortion, stillbirth, and congenital deformities

The most frequent diagnoses from abortion and stillbirth submissions made in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2025, compared to Q4 in 2024, and Q4 for 2015 to 2025 inclusive, through the Great Britain (England, Wales, and Scotland) scanning surveillance network, are illustrated in Table 2. These can be interrogated further using the interactive cattle [disease surveillance dashboard](#) which was launched in October 2017.

**Table 2: Great Britain scanning surveillance 10 most frequent abortion and stillbirth submission diagnoses in Q4 of 2025, Q4 of 2024, and Q4 for 2015-2025**

10 most frequent abortion diagnoses Q4 2025	10 most frequent abortion diagnoses Q4 2024	10 most frequent abortion diagnoses Q4 2015-2025
1. Fetopathy due to <i>Neospora</i> infection	1. Fetopathy due to <i>Neospora</i> infection	1. Fetopathy due to <i>Salmonella</i> Dublin

2. Fetopathy due to <i>Salmonella</i> Dublin	2. Fetopathy due to <i>Trueperella pyogenes</i>	2. Fetopathy due to <i>Neospora</i> infection
3. Fetopathy due to <i>Trueperella pyogenes</i>	3. Fetopathy due to <i>Bacillus licheniformis</i>	3. Fetopathy diagnosis not listed
4. Fetopathy diagnosis not listed	4. Fetopathy due to <i>Salmonella</i> Dublin	4. Fetopathy due to <i>Trueperella pyogenes</i>
5. Fetopathy due to fungi	5. Fetopathy diagnosis not listed	5. Fetopathy due to fungi
6. Fetopathy due to <i>Campylobacter</i>	6. Fetopathy due to fungi	6. Fetopathy due to <i>Bacillus licheniformis</i>
7. Fetopathy due to <i>E. coli</i>	7. Fetopathy or stillbirth due to congenital abnormality	7. Fetopathy with BVD detected in the fetus
8. Fetopathy due to traumatocia	8. Fetopathy due to <i>Listeria</i>	8. Fetopathy or stillbirth due to congenital abnormality
9. Fetopathy due to <i>Bacillus licheniformis</i>	9. Fetopathy due to IBR/IPV	9. Stillbirth due to dystocia
10. Fetopathy or stillbirth due to congenital abnormality	10. Stillbirth due to bradytocia	10. Fetopathy due to <i>Campylobacter</i>

The carcase of a perinatal calf was submitted from a 110-cow dairy herd which had recorded eight abortions in the previous month. The most recent calves displayed deformities including arthrogryposis, hydrops, and additional, multiple limbs. The gross findings in the submitted calf included arthrogryposis, scoliosis, kyphosis, an abnormal rib cage, and poor development of the left ventricle. No infectious abortifacients were detected, and it was proposed that exposure to a teratogen in the early gestation had occurred. Possible aetiologies included the ingestion of plant toxins such as quinolizidine or piperidine alkaloids though given the time elapsed since the original insult confirming this exposure would be difficult.

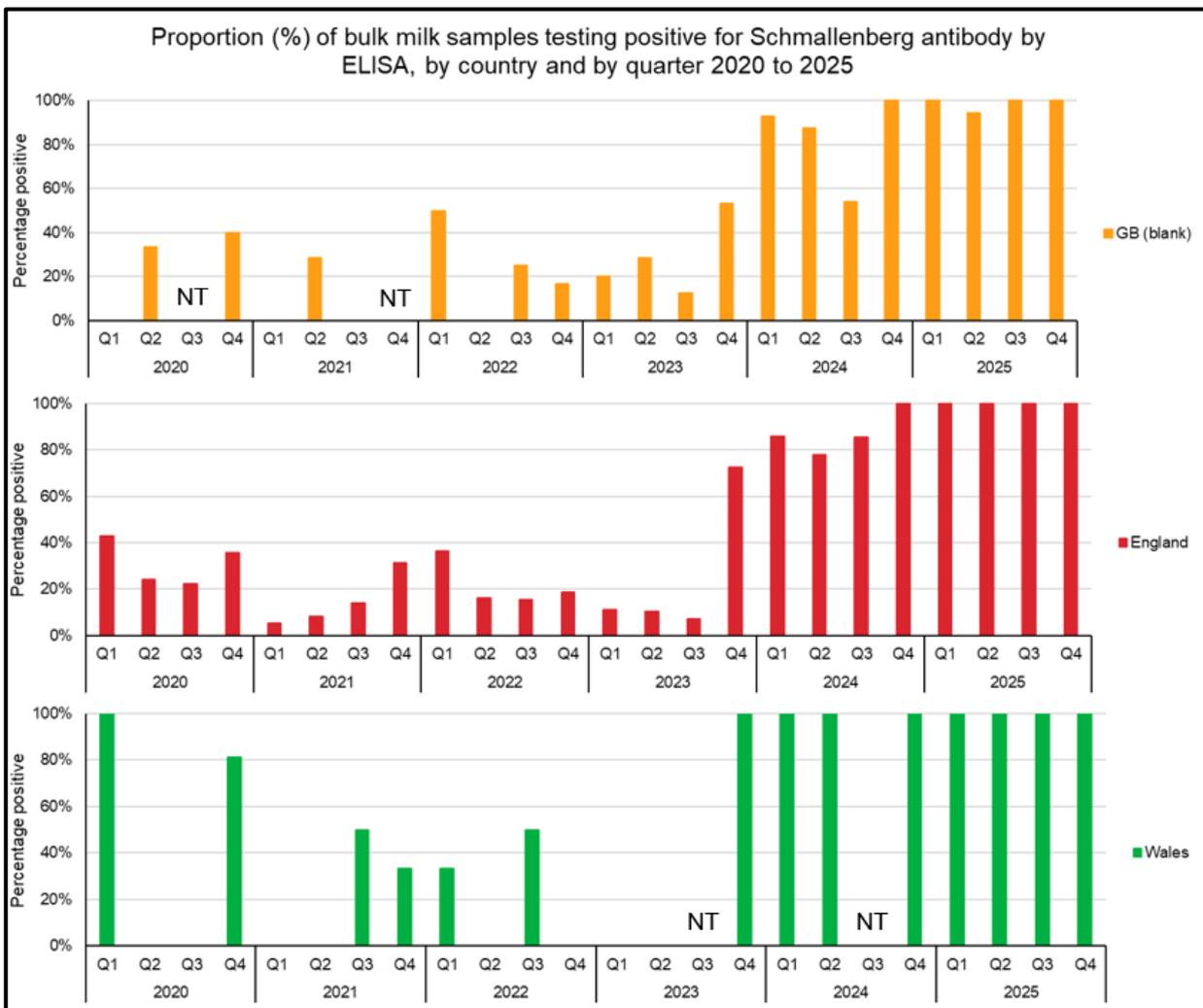
## Schmallenberg virus serology

Figure 10 shows the proportion of National Milk Records (NMR) bulk milk samples testing positive for Schmallenberg virus (SBV) antibody, by ELISA, by country, from Q1 2020 to Q4 2025 inclusive. This data is kindly provided under agreement from National Milk Records (NMR) to support the collection of disease surveillance information across GB. NMR provide milk testing for endemic disease in cattle. Most of the bulk milk samples

tested will be routine quarterly surveillance ('monitoring') and a few may be part of a clinical disease investigation ('diagnostic'), but these are not differentiated in Figure 10. In line with agreed APHA reporting, the number of samples tested is not shown. For further information on this data please contact [vetenquiries@nmp.com](mailto:vetenquiries@nmp.com).

**Notes about Figure 16:**

1. Where no samples were tested for SBV in a quarter, this is labelled as NT (not tested) on the graph.
2. Where samples were tested, but with no positive results, these are shown as blank columns on the graph.
3. In some cases, samples are not geo-referenced. They are included in the GB total only and as such the percentage positive by country may not equate to the GB percentage positive.



**Figure 10: Proportion (%) of bulk milk samples testing positive for SBV antibody by ELISA, by country, and by quarter Q1 2020 to Q4 2025\* (\*to date)**

Acknowledgements for the SBV data: Eamon Watson MRCVS, NMR Product Manager and Karen Bond MRCVS, NMR Veterinary Team Lead

## Mastitis

There were no significant trends for this quarter.

## Chemical food safety and toxic conditions

### Acorn toxicity

Multiple cases of acorn toxicity were recorded throughout quarter 4 of 2025, as expected given the description of 2025 as a 'Mast Year'. The risk posed by oak tree material incorporated onto silage is also a consideration as well as acorns consumed by grazing animals. [What is a Mast Year? How and Why it Happens - Woodland Trust](#)

Acorns contain toxins including tannins and phenols that cause renal pathology leading to kidney failure. Toxin levels are highest in green acorns and young leaves, which are more palatable to livestock. Weathered, brown acorns still contain toxins at reduced levels, so if consumed in substantial quantities intoxication can arise. The clinical signs observed in affected animals include anorexia, depression, polydipsia and polyuria, haematuria, icterus and constipation. The latter is then followed by diarrhoea, which may appear black due to blood loss into the lumen of the alimentary tract. In addition to acute deaths, surviving animals may develop chronic renal failure leading to ill thrift and failure to thrive. Blood sampling to assess renal parameters is advocated with euthanasia typically required on welfare grounds. A useful confirmatory postmortem test for suspect cases is urea analysis of the aqueous humour. With a normal reference range for urea being 0-30 mmol/l, results over 60mmol/l are considered indicative of a terminal uraemia. SRUC reported acorn toxicity cases here: [Autumn acorn poisoning cases common in cattle and sheep across Scotland](#)

### Copper poisoning

Copper poisoning was diagnosed following the submission of two calves from a group of 80, recently purchased animals. One animal had been observed prior to death displaying neurological signs including opisthotonus and paddling of the legs. The group was on a diet comprising of silage and a mixed blend, with no additional licks or mineral buckets. The gross postmortem findings were of extensive haemorrhages throughout the carcass, hepatomegaly with the liver parenchyma orange in colour, and mild jaundice of the subcutis and brain dura. Laboratory analysis for infectious agents was unremarkable whilst liver biochemistry identified very high levels of copper. It was proposed that the calves had toxic copper levels on arrival due to fetal loading and stress combined with acute dietary change triggered acute copper toxicoses. The gross hepatopathy had resulted in

disruption of the clotting cascade. Neither level recorded was high enough to trigger a food safety incident.

### **Doxycycline overdose**

SRUC VS reported a doxycycline toxicity case: [Doxycycline overdose leads to multiple deaths among preweaned dairy calves - 2025 - Veterinary Record - Wiley Online Library](#)

## **Antimicrobial use and resistance**

The Veterinary Antibiotic Resistance Sales and Surveillance (UK-VARRS) Report 2024 has recently been published by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD): [Veterinary Antimicrobial Resistance and Sales Surveillance 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

In addition, the latest RUMA Targets Task Force report can be found at: [Latest RUMA Agriculture Targets Task Force report released – 18 November 2025 – RUMA](#)

The Medicine Hub, a voluntary industry initiative, developed and managed by AHDB, was launched in 2021 and provides a central location for the collection of medicine data, including antibiotic use: [Medicine Hub for dairy, beef and sheep farmers | AHDB](#)

## **Centre of Expertise for Extensively Managed Livestock**

The COEEML was developed by APHA to address potential surveillance gaps for extensively managed animals. Extensive management of livestock potentially makes regular or close inspection for disease detection more challenging. The Centre is based at the APHA Veterinary Investigation Centre in Carmarthen; however, it is a Great Britain-wide resource and forms part of the wider veterinary surveillance system operated by APHA. For more details, please see [Animal disease scanning surveillance at APHA - GOV.UK](#).

## **Horizon scanning**

International Disease Monitoring (IDM) horizon-scanning activities monitor for major, notifiable, or new and re-emerging animal disease outbreaks worldwide. This is done to provide an early warning and to assess the risks they may pose to the United Kingdom (UK), particularly for those diseases which impact on animal health and welfare, international trade, public health, or wider society. IDM also assess the risk that animal diseases might come into the UK through the trade in animals or animal products (legal or illegal), through movements of wildlife, or through the movement of fomites and vectors such as insects which may carry infectious disease. These outbreak assessments are used to guide decisions how to manage or reduce the risks and are published on the web: [Animal diseases: international and UK monitoring](#).

**Bluetongue virus (BTV) in Europe:** Further information can be found at: [Bluetongue virus in Europe](#).

**Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease (EHD):** [Epizootic haemorrhagic disease in Europe](#)

**Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD):**

Recent risk assessments for FMD and other notifiable diseases can be found here : [Animal diseases: international and UK monitoring - GOV.UK](#)

Links to information on differential diagnoses can be found here:

[Differential diagnosis of diseases causing oral lesions in cattle - Holliman - 2005 - In Practice - Wiley Online Library](#)

[Differential diagnosis of oral lesions and FMD in sheep](#)

**Lumpy skin disease (LSD):** recent outbreak assessments for LSD in Europe can be found here: [Lumpy skin disease in Europe - GOV.UK](#)

**Influenza A (H5N1) of avian origin in domestic livestock in the USA**

On 25 March 2024, the United States of America (USA) made an immediate notification to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) of an outbreak of influenza A of avian origin (H5N1) affecting dairy cattle in Texas. The outbreak strain, a high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) virus strain, belonged to clade 2.3.4.4b, genotype B3.13. This genotype has never been detected outside of the Americas. Further information can be found here: [Influenza A \(H5N1\) infection in mammals: suspect case definition and diagnostic testing criteria - GOV.UK](#). Details of the national milk testing scheme in the USA can be found here: [National Milk Testing Strategy | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#)

## APHA publications of interest

Monthly APHA disease surveillance reports can be found at: [APHA disease surveillance monthly reports - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

APHA focus articles in the Veterinary Record can be found at: [APHA focus articles in the Veterinary Record - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Emerging and endemic disease alerts can be found at: [Alerts for vets: emerging and endemic disease alert system \(EEDAS\) - GOV.UK](#)

The 2024 edition of the *Salmonella* in animals and feed in Great Britain (previously called *Salmonella* in Livestock Production in GB) has been published and is now available here: [Salmonella in animals and feed in Great Britain](#)

SWINSON V; REICHEL R; PITTALIS L; BIDEWELL C; WIGHTON H (2025)

Brain lesions in BTV-3-positive calves in England (letter).

Veterinary Record 196 (5) 192-193 <https://doi.org/10.1002/vetr.5293>

MASTIN A; Gubbins S; Ashby M; PAPADOPOULOU C; WADE C; Batten C (2023) BTV and EHDV – what’s new and what do I need to know? Veterinary Practice: InFocus 4th October 2023. BTV and EHDV – what’s new and what do I need to know? - Veterinary Practice (veterinary-practice.com)

Baird R; Dewé T; Glennie A; Kirby A; Light E; Healey K; Brown C; MARTELLI F; Papadopoulou A; Haynes E; Wilson J; Glasgow H; Kinsella E; Callaghan K; Mcenery K; Moore CE; Cotgreave P (2025) One Health antimicrobial resistance surveillance roundtable. Journal of Medical Microbiology 74 (11) 002099  
<https://doi.org/10.1099/jmm.0.002099>

GUPTA YK; Adams I; van Aerle R; Avant J; Bass D; Batista FM; Benucci M; BRIGGS T; Cano I; CHOUDHURY B; Crampton B; ELLIS RJ; Freimanis G; Haynes E; Hill SC; Jones E; Laurenson L; Maclaren A; MASKELL D; Olivieri L; Paley R; Pybus OG; Raghwanji J; Roberts H; Ruba T; Samal P; SCHILLING M; Subramaniam S; Taylor N; Ward GM; Ward L (2025). An integrated One Health initiative for pathogen genomic surveillance in the UK. Microbial Genomics 11 (11) 0015939 <https://doi.org/10.1099/mgen.0.001539>

MCCRORY K; KONOLD T; SPIROPOULOS (2025) Recognising transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and the role of the practising vet. In Practice 47 (10) 547-555  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/inpr.70027>

VAN DIEMAN PM; RAMSAY AM; EVERETT HE; HURLEY S; LEAN FZX; NUNEZ A; CALLAWAY R; Lion A; Gaudino M; Secula A; Sikht F-Z; Meyer G; Ducatez MF (2025) Experimental infection of alpacas (*Vicugna pacos*) with influenza C or D viruses results in subclinical upper respiratory tract disease. Journal of General Virology 106 (12) 002185 <https://doi.org/10.1099/jgv.0.002185>



© Crown copyright 2026

### **Statement regarding use of this material**

The material in this report has been compiled by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) Surveillance Intelligence Unit in collaboration with the APHA Surveillance and Laboratory Services Department. Images are governed by Crown Copyright except where specifically acknowledged to have been provided by others external to APHA. Use of material directly from the report is acceptable provided APHA (or others where specifically indicated) is acknowledged as the owner of the material. This does not include use of the APHA logo which should be excluded or used only after permission has been obtained from APHA Corporate Communications ([apha.corporatecommunications@apha.gov.uk](mailto:apha.corporatecommunications@apha.gov.uk)).

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v.3. To view this licence visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/) or email [PSI@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:PSI@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

Data Protection:

For information on how we handle personal data visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search Animal and Plant Health Agency Personal Information Charter.

This publication is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/animal-disease-surveillance-reports>

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [SIU@apha.gov.uk](mailto:SIU@apha.gov.uk)

<http://apha.defra.gov.uk/vet-gateway/surveillance/index.htm>

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.