Updated Outbreak Assessment #11

Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) in Europe

19 June 2026

Disease report

Since our last update on 16 April 2026, the World Organisation of Animal Health (WOAH) has reported 6 additional outbreaks of Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) in Sardinia, Italy. The outbreaks have all been reported in the southeast of the island and within 30km of each other. This is a continuation of reports emerging from Sardinia as detailed in our previous outbreak assessment. There have been no further reports of LSD in the rest of Europe since our last update.

Lumpy Skin disease is a viral disease characterised by nodular skin lesions (lumps) that form on various parts of the infected animal's body. Nodules may also develop internally, such as in the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts. Additional symptoms include fever, listlessness, reluctance to eat, discharge from the nose and eyes, as well as a reduced milk yield resulting from weight loss. Younger animals are more severely affected (Pirbright Institute).

The mortality rate is relatively low (typically 1-5%) (WOAH) but may reach between 20 to 85% in naïve and young animals (Ochwo, VanderWaal, Munsey, et al., 2018). Infection decreases milk production, causes weight loss, infertility, damages the hides (WOAH, 2025).

LSD primarily infects cows and buffalo. Infections in springbok, impala, giraffe, camel, Indian gazelle, and yak, have also been reported. The exact mechanisms of transmission are not fully recognised, however strong evidence suggests there is a significant vector-borne component, stemming from biting insects such as flies, ticks, and mosquitos. With wind assistance, these insects may be able to spread the virus over long distances (Owada K, et al; 2024). Direct animal to animal transmission may also occur, but to a lesser impact.

The incursion of lumpy skin disease (LSD) to Europe was first reported in June 2025, after successful eradication from the Balkans in 2017. Further information about the European outbreaks is detailed in our previous reports, which can be found here.

There has never been a case of LSD reported within the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). LSD is difficult to control and eradicate in livestock by stamping out alone and often requires vaccination to eradicate the disease from the national herd.

The risk of incursion into Great Britain is maintained at **low (rare but can occur**).

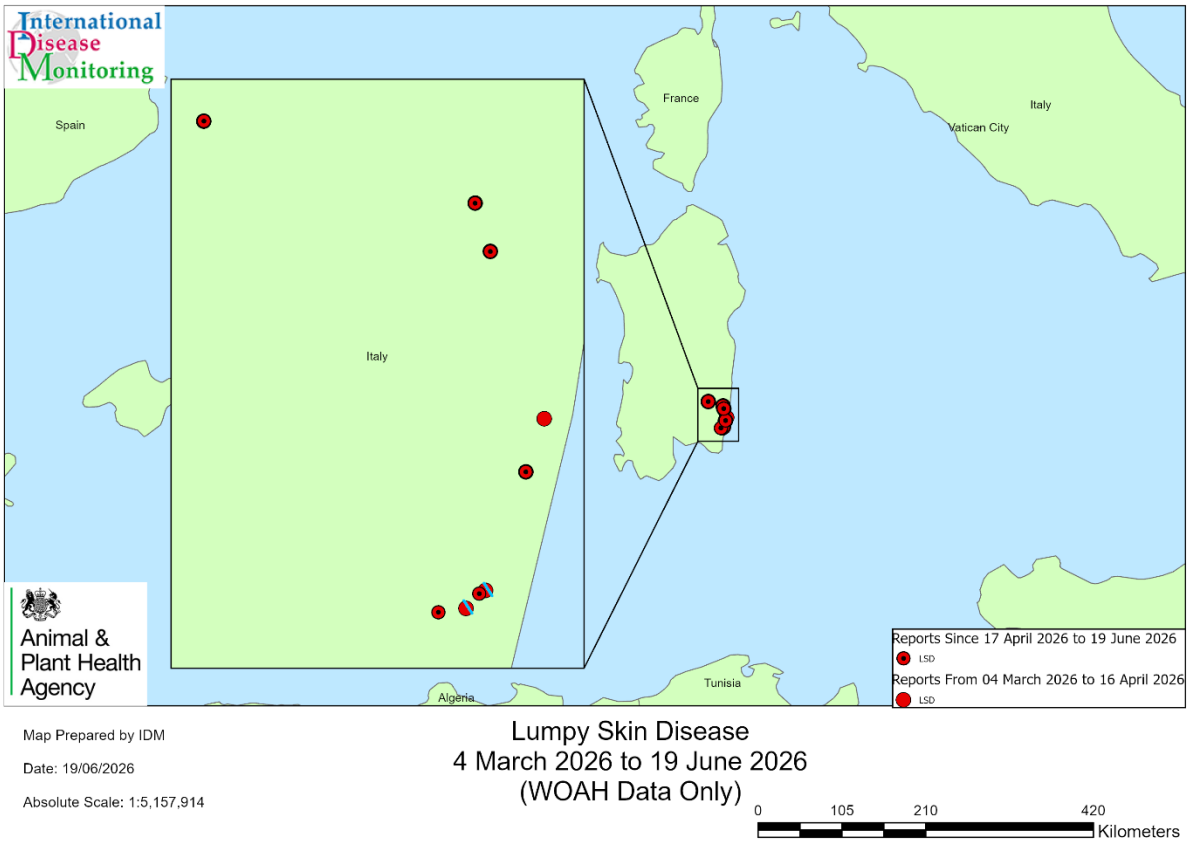

Figure 1: Map of lumpy skin disease outbreaks (red points) in Europe, reported to the World Organisation of Animal Health (WOAH) from 4 March to 19 June 2026. The inset shows south-east Sardinia, where the new outbreaks occurred. New outbreaks since our last update on 16 April 2026 are indicated by a dotted centre. Points with an additional blue line indicate separate reports that were later merged into one report.

Situation assessment

Italy

Since our previous outbreak assessment on 16 April 2026, 6 additional outbreaks of LSD have been reported to WOAH. Taken alongside those reported in our previous assessment, this constitutes a total of 9 outbreaks that have been reported on the island since the initial 2026 incursion. It is worth noting that both the Bollettino Epidemiologico Nazionale Veterinario (BENV) and WOAH have since epidemiologically grouped the shared herd reports, and therefore there may be small discrepancies in report numbers from the previous assessment. These new reports all occurred on farms in the south-east of Sardinia, within 30km of one another and the earlier outbreaks in April 2026. Only cows were affected in each case. The Sardinian outbreaks seen in 2025, (see our 2025 reports), occurred further north on the island.

In the recent June PAFF presentation, the European Union Veterinary Emergency Team (EUVET) reported that sequencing showed similarity between the 2026 and 2025 strains, indicating epidemiological continuity from last year's outbreaks. Genotyping the 2025 virus suggested a close relation to strains isolated from Nigeria and South Africa, where it remains endemic, (WOAH).

In our previous assessment, 3 events were reported via BENV data. These were later reported to WOAH on 17 April 2026. The first 2 were confirmed on 14 April 2026. These both occurred on farms in the Muravera region, approximately 1.4km from each other. Out of a susceptible population of 163 cows between these farms, 6 positive cases were reported. As a result of the disease, 1 of these farms, housing 148 individuals experienced 4 deaths. According to recent April PAFF presentations, the cows in these 2 outbreaks, belonged to the same herd, though had different owners. This thus indicates the animals from both farms shared close proximity to one another, though they appear as separate points in Figure 1, due to the separation of the owners' farms. Co-grazing may have been happening due to shared localities.

The same presentation also further confirms that the LSD positive animals were unvaccinated calves, born from a vaccinated mother, as detailed in our previous report. These calves had high mortality and exhibited clinical signs including ocular and nasal discharge, severe oedema of the hind limbs, as well as subcutaneous nodules that could be felt by touch. Further investigation also revealed that the mother of these calves was herself heavily infested with ticks, and is being considered as a possible transmission route.

The third outbreak in our last assessment was also reported to WOAH on 17 April 2026. This took place at a premises in Villaputzu, around 9.5km from the previous farms. This location housed 15 cows, with one confirmed case of LSD reported.

The 6 additional reports came from late April 2026. The first report was confirmed on the 28 April 2026, in the same region as the initial 2026 outbreaks. This farm contained 9 susceptible cattle, with 1 testing LSD positive, 4 of these animals were culled. The remaining 5 cows, (all vaccinated adults), were identified as being almost 7km away from the reported case. Issues were identified with some of the cattle on this farm going missing during the time investigations were underway. On the same day another outbreak was confirmed in the Ballao region, close to 28km from the preliminary farms mentioned. All of the cows on this farm were culled and disposed of after 1 LSD case was registered in the herd of 17 individual animals.

On 29 April 2026, an additional case was confirmed, with 18 out of 20 susceptible cows testing positive for LSD. All cattle at this location were culled. PAFF presentations from May 2026 imply that this farm was unvaccinated against LSD.

The next 2 outbreaks were reported by WOAH on 11 May 2026, and 22 May 2026, with investigations suggesting the outbreaks may have started close to a week before the initial reporting took place. These farms had populations of 27 and 10 cows, with

5 cases (including one death) and 1 confirmed case at each farm respectively. The latter of these 2 outbreaks was also in the Muravera region of Sardina.

The final of the 6 reports by WOAH was on 29 May 2026. A farm holding 22 cattle showed PCR positive for 1 individual. This outbreak was confirmed to have started on 21 May 2026, and took place in San Vito, the same municipality as the outbreak reported on 11 May 2026. Many of the affected cows in these herds were reported to PAFF as being calves aged 4-5 months in age.

Additionally, May PAFF presentations have further detailed Italy's plans for disease management of LSD in south-east Sardinia. Protection zones of 20km, alongside surveillance zones of 50km have been established around the affected locations. Clinical and entomological surveillance has also increased in the entire region. Data from April 2026, suggests that the presence of the LSD virus in biting insect vectors, like ticks and mosquitoes, has been rapidly declining since mid-April 2026. Not enough is known however to determine if this will result in lower transmission of the disease.

All movement of bovine animals from restricted zones to external regions have been prohibited. Animals not in the restricted zone can only be moved if the following conditions are met. No investigations of suspicion are underway within 50km of the premises, insecticide and repellent treatment has occurred at least 10 days before transport, as well as negative PCR test results given for cows that have only undergone one round of vaccination, or calves that are less than 6 months old.

The 2026 vaccination campaign, see previous report, has also improved upon the numbers from 2025. A total of 98.24% of the susceptible animals now vaccinated. Moreover, talks are currently underway for the possibility of vaccinating calves born to vaccinated mothers at a younger age.

Spain

In our LSD update from March 2026, no further outbreaks have been reported. A total of 20 Outbreaks have been reported in Spain, with the last occurring 3 March 2026.

Spain's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA), confirmed the lifting of the last restriction zones in Aragon, (see previous report), by late April 2026. According to April Paff Presentations, this was determined due to all surveillance efforts in the region returning favourable results.

France

Since our March update, no new outbreaks have been reported in France. The total number of LSD outbreaks reported from France therefore remains at 117. April PAFF reports detail that all cattle affected by the 117 outbreaks have been culled as of April

16, 2026. This is in keeping with France's 3 pillar strategy for LSD management, which involves total depopulation, vaccination of all susceptible animals in restriction zones, and movement restrictions. As of 22 April 2026, Vaccination Zone I is still in place for Corsica, and the South-West. Vaccination Zone II is still in effect for Auvergne Rhône Alpes, Bourgogne Franche-Comté, and part of Occitanie. All protected and surveillance zones have been removed from Pyrénées-Orientales, and Hautes-Pyrénées. RZ3, RZ6, and RZ8 in these regions have all been adapted to Vaccination Zone II.

All affected regions have fulfilled the requirements set out by relevant authorities to have their RZ removed. This demands the completion of the required disease control measures, the fulfilment of the relevant minimum periods laid down for the restricted zones (45 days), and the minimum vaccine coverage are reached for 28 days (75% of bovine in 95% of establishments).

Impact for Great Britain

LSD incursion into Great Britain could occur either by importing infected live cattle, or insect vectors carrying the virus entering the country and infecting animals present in the area.

No live cattle imports have been identified from any of the affected countries. In response to the outbreaks in 2025, the UK suspended imports 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) from Italy, France and Spain. More information can be found on the gov.uk page: Imports, exports and EU trade of animals and animal products: topical issues.

In addition to this, an EU wide ban is in place for personal imports to GB of fresh meat, meat products, milk, dairy products, colostrum, colostrum products and certain composite products as well as animal by-products of ruminant and porcine origin. This is in response to multiple disease outbreaks across the EU. These special measures were applied from 18 December 2025 until revoked or amended and replace earlier safeguard declarations. Live animals, germinal products and untreated wool, hair, skins and hides are not permitted for personal import under separate rules. Those found with these items will need to either surrender them at the border or will have them seized and destroyed.

Given that these outbreaks of LSD are currently contained within a small area of Sardinia, and there have not been any further reports elsewhere in Europe, the risk of incursion of LSD to Great Britain is maintained at **low (rare but can occur)**.

Whilst the newly ongoing situation is Sardinia are concerning, especially given the high vaccination coverage in 2025 and the potential of a new incursion, the location of the

current outbreaks are too far away for flies to reach UK borders from natural dispersal, even with wind assistance (Owada K, et al; 2024). It should also be noted that many of the animals affected in these new outbreaks were either unvaccinated or immunologically naïve. Cattle aged between 4 and 6 months old were likely to have not yet received vaccination and given the young age of many affected animals maternally derived antibodies may have declined to levels insufficient for protection against LSD. Considering these factors alongside others within the wider epidemiological context, the risk to Great Britain is therefore not considered to have increased. We are not receiving live cattle from the affected areas, and LSD has not been reported in the north of France or surrounding territories where vector incursion to Great Britain may be possible. However, vector incursion is impossible to fully mitigate against, particularly as vector activity increases due to warmer weather, and keepers and veterinarians should familiarise themselves with LSD clinical signs and report suspicion appropriately.

Conclusion

Since our last report, 6 outbreaks of LSD have been reported in south-eastern Sardinia, Italy. This gives a total of 9 confirmed outbreaks in the region (with 2 being identified as epidemiologically linked). The source of these outbreaks is unknown, although the sequence similarity between viruses in Sardinia in 2025 and 2026 suggest the recent outbreaks are a continuation from last year's circulation (June PAFF presentations). A large amount of these disease reports can be attributed to naïve or unvaccinated cattle, especially with young calves, whom are more severely affected than their adult counterparts. Currently, the outbreaks have been contained to farms within a radius of less than 30km. However, wind assisted transmission via insect vectors still poses a possible risk for unvaccinated animals across the region. Italy has increased its biosecurity measures in response to these new outbreaks in order to help manage the transmission effectively. Reports are still emerging from the island, with the latest received 29 May 2026. No outbreaks have been reported in the rest of Europe since our last update.

Since 1 June 2024 there has been no trade in live bovine animals from Italy, France or Spain nor bovine germplasm collected in these countries. Restrictions have been placed on specific bovine products from these countries, in light of the LSD outbreaks mentioned above. The lifting or maintaining of restrictions are under constant review depending on information that is received about the outbreaks.

Considering the location of current outbreaks and the fact outbreaks have not been reported case within transmission distance to the borders of Great Britain, the current risk level of incursion of LSD remains **low (rare but can occur)**. We are currently mitigating against disease incursion by the restricted trade in cattle and bovine germplasm from these countries, as well as restrictions on personal imports.

We will continue to monitor the ongoing situation.

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