



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Bluetongue in sheep

Know the signs

Bluetongue is a vector-borne disease caused by infection with bluetongue virus. The virus is mainly spread by biting midges which are active between the spring and early winter. Onward transmission of the virus via midges is temperature dependent and is greatest during early summer and the autumn. Peak cases usually occur in September. There are many strains of the bluetongue virus, with BTV-3 and BTV-8 being confirmed in the United Kingdom. Vaccination is available – please talk to your vet.

Bluetongue is a notifiable disease and must be reported by law. You are not permitted to move any animal showing these clinical signs and if you see any of these signs you must report it to APHA.

Clinical signs to look out for in sheep

- ulcers or sores in the mouth and nose
- discharge from the eyes or nose and drooling from the mouth
- swelling of the lips, tongue, head and neck
- heat and tenderness at the coronary band (where the skin of the leg meets the horn of the foot)

Other clinical signs include:

- inappetence and weight loss
- red skin as a result of blood collecting beneath the surface
- fever
- lameness and reluctance to move
- breathing problems
- abortion, foetal deformities and stillbirths
- death

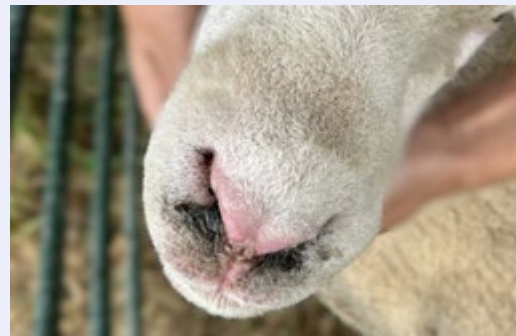
In lambs

Lambs can become infected with bluetongue virus before birth if the dam is infected while pregnant. Signs of infection include:

- lambs born small, weak, deformed or blind
- death of lambs within a few days of birth
- stillbirths



Ulcers and lesions in the mouth



Nasal redness



Nasal discharge



Recumbent animal

Find out more information and how to report bluetongue by visiting www.gov.uk/bluetongue

