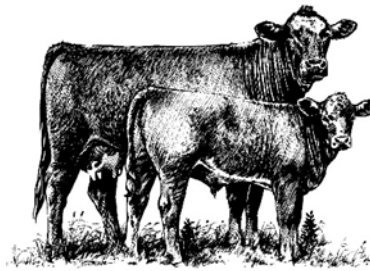




Animal &
Plant Health
Agency



Great Britain cattle quarterly report, disease surveillance and emerging threats

Volume 30: Quarter 2 (April to June) 2026

Highlights

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Introduction and overview

This quarterly report reviews disease trends and threats for the second quarter of 2026 (Q2), April to June. 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.

AHDB Sector Market Update: Q2 2026

Dairy sector update

Read the full review here: [July 2026 dairy market review](#)

The [latest published farmgate price](#) was for June 2026 and was announced by Defra as being 34.38ppl, up 0.02 pence on the previous month. Latest announced [farmgate prices](#) saw some uplifts in the period.

[GB milk deliveries](#) in July reduced by an estimated 3.2% year-on-year with milk supplies now falling further as [heat stress and drought](#) continue.

[Daily deliveries in July averaged 33.28m litres and totalled an estimated 1,032m litres, a reduction of 34m litres \(-3.2%\) compared to the previous year.](#) This brings milk year to date (April–July) supplies for GB to 2% below 2025 levels.

Dairy economics, including the [Milk to Feed Price Ratio \(MFPR\)](#), have been worsening since autumn.

There are a number of further factors that point towards [further reductions in milk supplies](#): These include the ongoing threat of bluetongue virus in parts of England, which can affect milk production in infected herds, alongside persistently high input costs and milk prices that are not increasing sufficiently to compensate.

Additionally, questions have been raised about [future availability of heifer replacements](#) as the milking herd continues to shrink by 2% year on year and more beef semen is used to capitalise on strong beef prices. Annual registrations of dairy females to a dairy sire have been reducing since 2021. The 2025 total was 463,373 head, a 3.1% decline year-on-year and the lowest total on record.

- Cheese export volumes continued to grow, and are now at an all-time high
- Milk powders also saw the biggest export growth in volume terms
- Total UK dairy export volume for Q2 2026 declined 25% year-on-year to 277,800 tonnes, primarily due to lower exports of milk and cream, yogurt, whey and butter
- The EU drove export decline
- Total UK dairy export value stood at £487 million, down 17% year-on-year amid decline in volumes
- Total import volumes were also down, driven by milk and cream and butter

[During the 12 weeks ending 11 July 2026](#), cows' dairy continued to be in volume growth, increasing by 0.5% year-on-year, while spend grew by 3.2%. High spend was driven by average prices increasing by 2.7%. (NIQ Homescan POD, Total GB, 12 w/e 11 July 2026)

Beef Sector update

[GB deadweight cattle prices](#) weakened through the second quarter before returning to a gentle upwards trajectory through June. The average R4L steer price stood at just under 618p/kg in the week ending 15 August, up 2p from the week before but down 37p year-on-year. Slaughter levels remained lower year-on-year through the period, but heavier weights have supported overall beef production levels. Meanwhile, demand has remained subdued amid cost-of-living concerns. Pressure has been felt in higher-value cuts such as steaks, which have a disproportionate impact on carcass values.

[UK production resilient despite lower slaughter: Beef market update](#)

For the first half of 2026 (H1), the UK produced 444,000 tonnes of beef and veal, according to Defra. This was almost identical to the amount produced during the same period a year ago. Despite this headline stability, the detail reveals more. Between January and June (inclusive), 1.31 million cattle and calves were slaughtered, 34,000 fewer (-2.5%) than the same period a year ago.

UK beef production so far in 2026 has been ahead of our forecasts from earlier in the year. This has been driven by heavier carcasses, while cattle throughput has been more in-line with expectations. Cow slaughter has increased in recent weeks, owing likely to forage pressure and weakness in milk markets. Cow slaughter / retention levels and knock-on impacts on future breeding capacity are watchpoints going into the pre-housing period before winter.

During this time, the UK's international beef trade picture has continued to shift. Between Jan-Jun (inclusive) the UK imported 142,300 tonnes of beef (incl. fresh, frozen and processed), up 0.8% year-on-year. Irish product has lost market share to competitive non-EU suppliers, namely New Zealand, Australia and Brazil. Irish beef production and thus

exportable supply has been constrained due to lower stock inventories. 59% of total UK imported beef volume was Irish, down from 68% in 2025. Import pressure is particularly acute in the out-of-home and manufacturing sectors. Elsewhere, watchpoints remain around the [EU-Brazil beef ban and potential implications for the UK market](#), and further afield at the [fallout from the filling of Chinese beef safeguard quotas](#). Globally, cattle prices remain supported generally by the tight US market and strong import requirement. Meanwhile, UK export performance has been positive. Shipped volume of the same categories grew by 8% year-on-year to 58,400 tonnes (Jan-Jun), but volumes fell away in the month of June. Most volume growth has been into the EU during this time. [Over the past 12 weeks](#), beef spend increased 6.3% year-on-year, driven by average price rises of 7.4%, resulting in volume declines of 0.9%. Although remaining in volume decline, the rate of decline has softened versus previous periods. Primary beef volumes saw a 1.0% decrease. Mince saw the greatest actual decline (-1,340 tonnes), a volume reduction of 4.5% year-on-year. This was driven by a decrease in volumes purchased per trip and number of buyers, due to the 11.9% average price increase. In contrast, beef steaks (+9.1%) and diced beef (+10.5%) were both in volume growth. Beef steak growth was driven by more buyers and more volume per trip. Diced beef benefited from more shoppers, more volume per trip and shoppers buying it more often.

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 bluetongue (BTV) cases between 1 August 2024 and 17 April 2026. These interactive maps can be found here: [Bluetongue Cases and Zones](#).

The most common clinical sign reported for BTV was 'dummy' calves. The presenting signs for these include blindness, stargazing, passive demeanour, difficulty standing, and a wide-based stance. Twelve of the 44 herds (27%) reported abortions. Further detail on these cases can be found on this webinar: [Bluetongue virus Vet webinar - 29 April - Ruminant Health & Welfare](#). The brain lesions are described in this letter in the Veterinary Record: [Brain lesions in BTV-3-positive calves in England : The Veterinary Record](#) and this recent focus article: [Congenital brain lesions in calves caused by bluetongue virus serotype 3 infection](#). Images of the clinical signs can be found here: [Clinical signs of bluetongue | AHDB](#). Guidance on reproductive and gestational impact can be found here: [Gestational-impact-of-BTV-3_final-15.07.pdf](#)

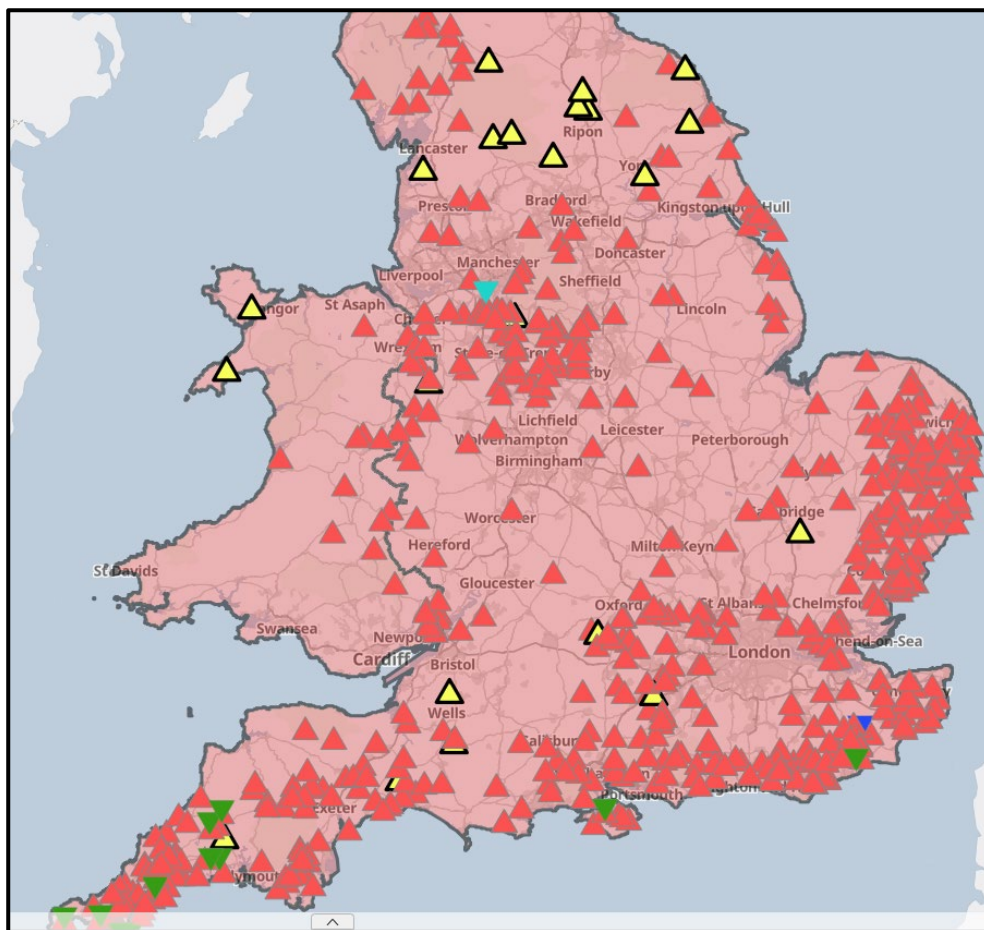


Figure 1: Map of England and Wales showing the confirmed bluetongue cases for 1 August 2024 to 15 June 2026

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 Q2 of 2026, compared to Q2 in 2025, and Q2 for 2015 to 2026 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: [APHA animal surveillance reports, publications and dashboards - GOV.UK](#). 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 Q2 of 2026, Q2 of 2025, and Q2 for 2015-2026

10 most frequent carcase diagnoses Q2 2026	10 most frequent carcase diagnoses Q2 2025	10 most frequent carcase diagnoses Q2 2015-2026
1. Cryptosporidiosis	1. Navel ill +/- joint ill	1. Navel ill +/- joint ill
2. Pneumonia due to <i>Pasteurella multocida</i>	2. Pneumonia due to <i>Pasteurella multocida</i>	2. Hypogammaglobulinaemia
3. Abomasal ulceration	3. Colisepticaemia	3. Pneumonia due to <i>Mannheimia haemolytica</i>
4. Pneumonia due to <i>Mycoplasma bovis</i>	4. Coccidiosis	4. Cryptosporidiosis
5. Colisepticaemia	5. Pneumonia due to <i>Mannheimia haemolytica</i>	5. Pneumonia – not otherwise specified
6. Coccidiosis	6. Cryptosporidiosis	6. Colisepticaemia
7. Pneumonia due to <i>Mannheimia haemolytica</i>	7. Pneumonia – not otherwise specified	7. Pneumonia due to <i>Pasteurella multocida</i>
8. Pneumonia – not otherwise specified	8. Pneumonia due to <i>Mycoplasma bovis</i>	8. Digestive disease due to other causes (not listed)
9. Navel ill (with or without joint ill)	9. Abomasal ulceration	9. Pneumonia due to <i>Mycoplasma bovis</i>
10. Digestive disease due to other causes (not listed)	10. Congenital abnormality Pneumonia due to <i>Histophilus somni</i>	10. Coccidiosis

New and re-emerging diseases and threats

Changes in disease patterns and unusual diagnoses

Systemic disease

***Salmonella* update**

Reports of [salmonella in livestock, dogs, birds and wildlife in Great Britain](#) can be found on GOV.UK.

Nutritional and metabolic disorders

Two two-month-old Limousin cross suckled calves from a group of 12 housed with their dams developed neurological signs and died. Pyrexia was not a feature. A third case was euthanased after being found recumbent and hyperaesthetic. The carcass was in good body condition and postmortem examination plus histopathology failed to detect any disease process to explain the clinical signs. Analysis of kidney ruled out the possibility of lead poisoning. The rib calcium:magnesium ratio of 111.2 was diagnostic for hypomagnesaemia (reference range <70). Hypomagnesaemia in calves is most common in well-grown animals on a milk-only diet. Provision of mineralised creep feed will reduce the risk.

Generalised and systemic conditions

Death due to electrocution in a dairy herd

An Aberdeen Angus stock bull was submitted for postmortem examination after being observed to collapse and die over the course of a few minutes. No prior ill health had been noted. It was the 12th animal to die in a 400-cow Holstein herd over the course of four months with all deaths occurring in the dry cow section of the cubicle shed. Four cows had previously been submitted with no significant findings on postmortem examination or extensive follow up testing to account for their sudden deaths. There was no evidence of infectious disease, a nutritional issue or a toxic cause, and histopathology was unrewarding. CCTV was installed in the shed and captured the deaths of two cows and the bull, with acute cardiac events and electrocution remaining the main differential diagnoses. Electrocution was considered to be the most likely cause and is often a diagnosis of exclusion. The dry cows were relocated, and no further deaths have occurred. Voltage monitoring devices were installed and investigations are ongoing.

Septicaemia due to *Listeria monocytogenes* in a calf

A six-day-old Charolais cross bull calf was found dead four days after being turned out to grass. It was the only loss from the group and had appeared healthy the previous day. The carcass was pale with yellow-tinged subcutaneous oedema and petechial haemorrhages on the heart and kidneys. The spleen was enlarged and haemorrhagic and there was

evidence of a mild abomasitis. The zinc sulphate turbidity test result of 19 units (reference range >20 units) indicated reasonable transfer of colostral antibodies. Septicaemia was suspected and *Listeria monocytogenes* was isolated in pure growth from the spleen and mixed growth from the liver. Histopathology detected Gram-positive bacterial colonies consistent with *L. monocytogenes* in the liver in association with tissue necrosis and inflammatory cell infiltration. *L. monocytogenes* is present in soil and contamination of the cow's teats would be a possible source of infection in this case resulting in bacteraemia secondary to abomasitis.

Digestive system disease

Abomasal impaction in a dairy cow

Abomasal sand impaction is an uncommon diagnosis. In this case, the carcass of an adult dairy cow was submitted to investigate colic-type signs in four adult cows over the previous 3-4 weeks. Affected cows showed acute milk drop and abdominal pain prior to becoming recumbent, which was followed by rapid deterioration and death, or euthanasia. Dilated intestines were palpated per-rectum in affected cows. They were all mid-lactation, housed and fed a total mixed ration (TMR). There had been a recent change onto a different maize silage clamp. *Salmonella* Mbandaka had been recently diagnosed in the herd.

The submitted cow was euthanised prior to submission. Gross examination found the abomasum to be massively dilated, and the pyloric serosa was tightly adhered to the internal body wall. Incision into the abomasum revealed a large quantity of impacted sand / grit / small stones which was covered by a thin outer layer of well macerated fibrous material (Figure 2). The duodenum was distended and contained a large quantity of small stones. The remaining small and large intestines were contracted down and contained a small amount of green mucus.

These gross findings were consistent with severe impaction of the abomasum with sand / grit leading to atony of the gastrointestinal tract, which explained the colic-type signs reported clinically. Cultures for *Salmonella* were negative in this cow.

Several possible causes were considered:

- Significant sand contamination of the silage, if the cows are housed on sand cubicles, perhaps any accumulated sand from the slurry lagoon had recently been dug out and spread on silage ground.
- Pica, which is still a poorly understood condition. We typically receive reports of pica more often in low input grazing herds during the spring and dry weather. Both phosphorus and sodium deficiencies have been reported as potential underlying causes, as well as low dietary fibre. High dietary potassium may also play a role by reducing the bioavailability of sodium and magnesium. A review of trace element / mineral levels in the water and feed (forage and concentrates) was suggested. Blood sampling of the cows to monitor trace elements / mineral status was also

suggested. Salt licks were suggested as a good way to improve sodium intakes, if not already provided.

- Metabolic disturbances. Melendez et al (2007) described multiple cases of sand impaction in a Canadian herd. In this case, all the affected cows had recently calved and metabolic disturbances were thought to be the driver for sand ingestion. However, all the cows affected in the submitted case were mid-lactation so this would seem an unlikely cause here. Acid base disturbances associated with ruminal acidosis can also alter normal feeding behaviour but again the rumen pH in the submitted cow was not indicative of ruminal acidosis.



Figure 2: Distended abomasum of a dairy cow containing large quantity of impacted sand and grit, and covered by a thin layer of macerated fibrous material

Reference

Melendez P, Krueger T, Benzaquen M, Risco C. An outbreak of sand impaction in postpartum dairy cows. *Can Vet J.* 2007 Oct;48(10):1067-70.
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1978295/>

Ruminal acidosis in fattening cattle

As in Q2 of 2025, several cases of ruminal acidosis were detected across the surveillance network during Q2 of 2026, most cases occurring in April. Ruminal acidosis is associated with high or rapidly increasing dietary starch, and changes to forage and fibre content of rations. In GB, ruminal acidosis is more commonly diagnosed from autumn to spring (see figure 3).

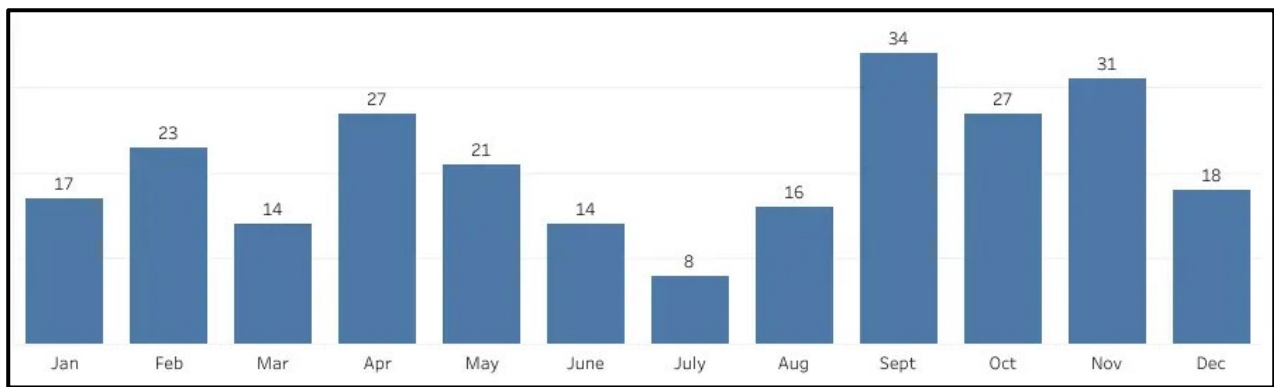


Figure 3: Monthly distribution of ruminal acidosis cases in the 5-year period from 1/7/2021 to 30/6/2026

Cases of ruminal acidosis detected in April 2026 occurred both in housed cattle and following turn-out to lush spring grass:

- Acute recumbency and scour were reported in two 18-month-old fattening steers from a group of 10, with one death. At post-mortem examination (PME), the rumen content had an acrid smell and contained a large quantity of cereal grains mixed with straw-like fibre; the ruminal pH was 4.0.
- A fattening heifer was submitted to investigate three sudden deaths that had coincided with addition of potatoes to the TMR. Affected animals were found dead with severe bloat and extensive subcutaneous emphysema. At PME, the cervical oesophagus was dark purple in colour with a clear delineation between the cervical and thoracic portions; a composite ruminal pH was 4.70.
- Two fattening steers were submitted having been found dead at grass. Feeding of 2kg/head of concentrate had been stopped 1-2 weeks previously. At PME, there was subcutaneous emphysema, distension of the abdomen with acrid smelling gas, congestion of oesophageal and tracheal mucosa, and compression of caudal lung lobes, consistent with terminal bloat. The rumens contained extremely wet, green forage with ruminal pHs of 4.9 and 5.1. Histological examination of brain found no changes indicative of cerebrocortical necrosis (CCN) or encephalitis, and aqueous humour magnesium was within normal limits.

Forage shortages resulting from the dry summer of 2025 may have increased the risk of ruminal acidosis in the late 2025-26 housed period, due to increased inclusion of concentrate feeds in rations as forage stocks ran low. Wet conditions in spring 2026 may also have increased availability of lush grazing (high in protein and sugar, but low in fibre and dry matter) in some regions, while impacting ability to turn out in others.

As even more severe forage shortages are predicted this year, due to the ongoing exceptionally hot and dry conditions, careful forage budgeting and forward planning will be vital in avoiding ruminal acidosis during the 2026-27 housed period.

Sequelae of ruminal acidosis in dairy cows

Diagnoses of several conditions in which consumption of a high concentrate, low fibre diet is a likely risk factor were detected in dairy cows during Q2 of 2026. These included portocaval thromboembolism, jejunal haemorrhage syndrome, abomasal ulceration and right sided abomasal displacement with volvulus.

Portocaval thromboembolism

A milking cow was submitted to investigate pyrexia, milk drop, and variable respiratory signs affecting around 20 cows in the herd over the previous three months. The cows were fed a TMR with concentrates in the parlour and via out of parlour feeders. PME revealed a large, thick-walled abscess within the liver which had eroded into the posterior vena cava. Multiple randomly distributed, consolidated lobules were present throughout all lung lobes with associated enlargement of the mediastinal and bronchial lymph nodes. The findings were consistent with thromboembolism caused by the erosion of the abscess into the posterior vena cava. The likely origin of the liver abscess was previous ruminal acidosis, with release of bacteria into the portal circulation.

Jejunal haemorrhage syndrome and abomasal ulceration in dairy cows

A TMR-fed dairy herd with an increase in sudden deaths of milkers submitted two cows for PME. Affected cattle showed signs of abdominal discomfort with reduction in feed intake, rumination, and milk production, and were found dead hours later. Melaena was seen in some animals. In one cow, a perforated abomasal ulcer was found, with consequential peritonitis, pleurisy and thromboembolic renal infarcts. In the second cow, a 2.5 metre segment of small intestine was expanded with clotted blood (Figure 4), consistent with jejunal haemorrhage syndrome (JHS). Both conditions remain poorly understood, but risk factors in dairy cows are thought to include high milk production and feeding of high starch, high energy, low fibre rations.

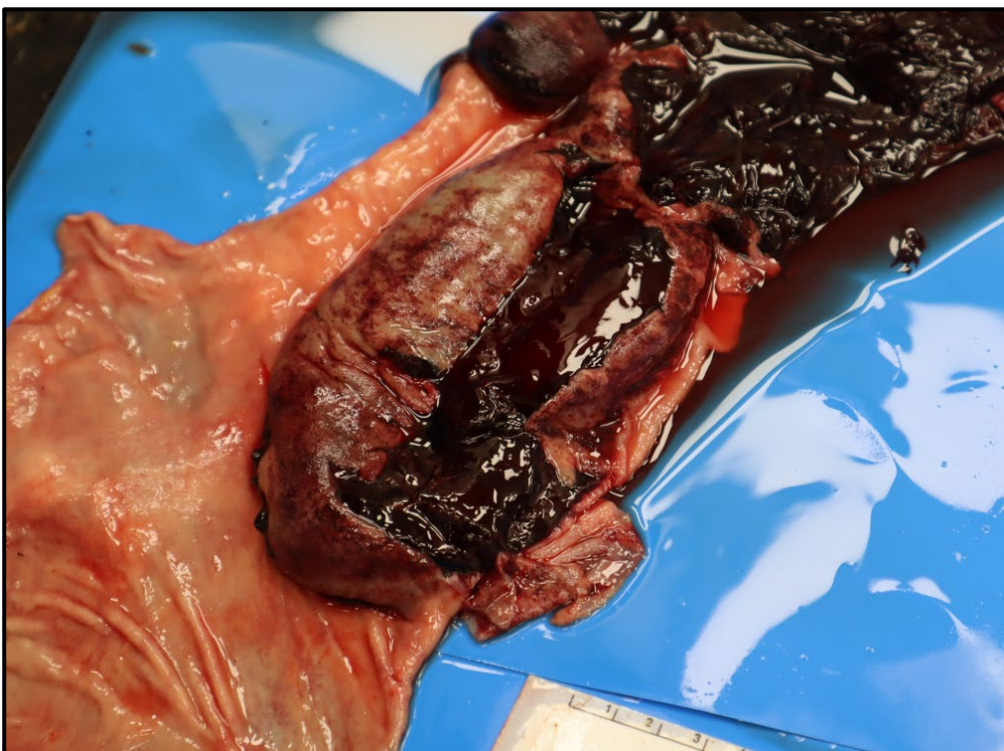


Figure 4: Incised intramural haemorrhage typical of jejunal haemorrhage syndrome in a dairy cow

Liver fluke bulk milk serology

Figure 5 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 Q2 2026 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 6 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 5. 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.

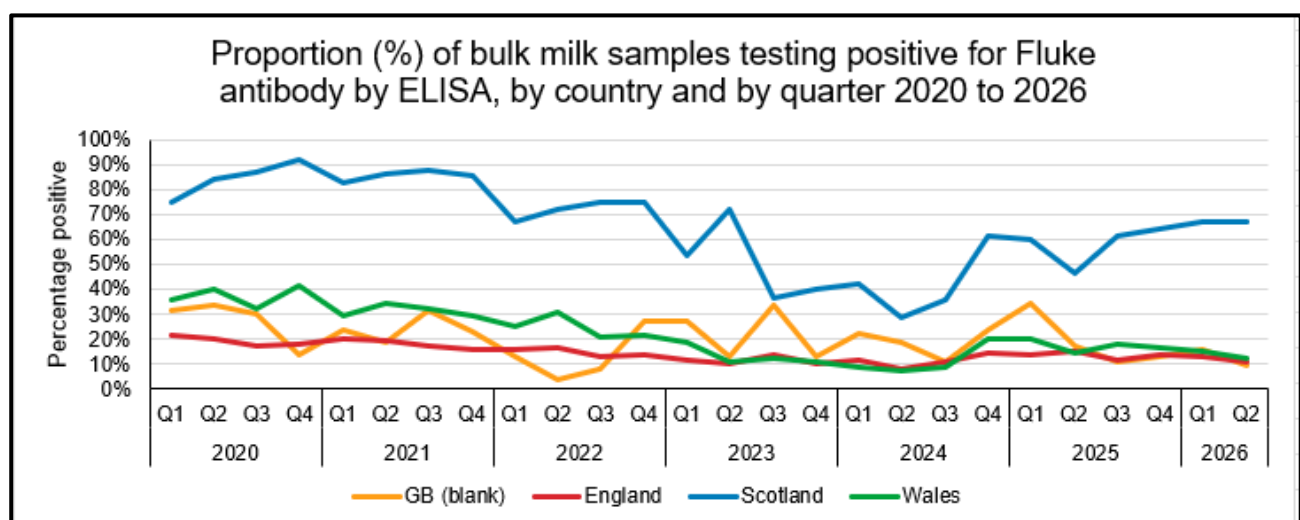


Figure 5: Proportion (%) of bulk milk samples testing positive for liver fluke antibody by ELISA, by country, and by quarter Q1 2020 to Q2 2026* (*to date)

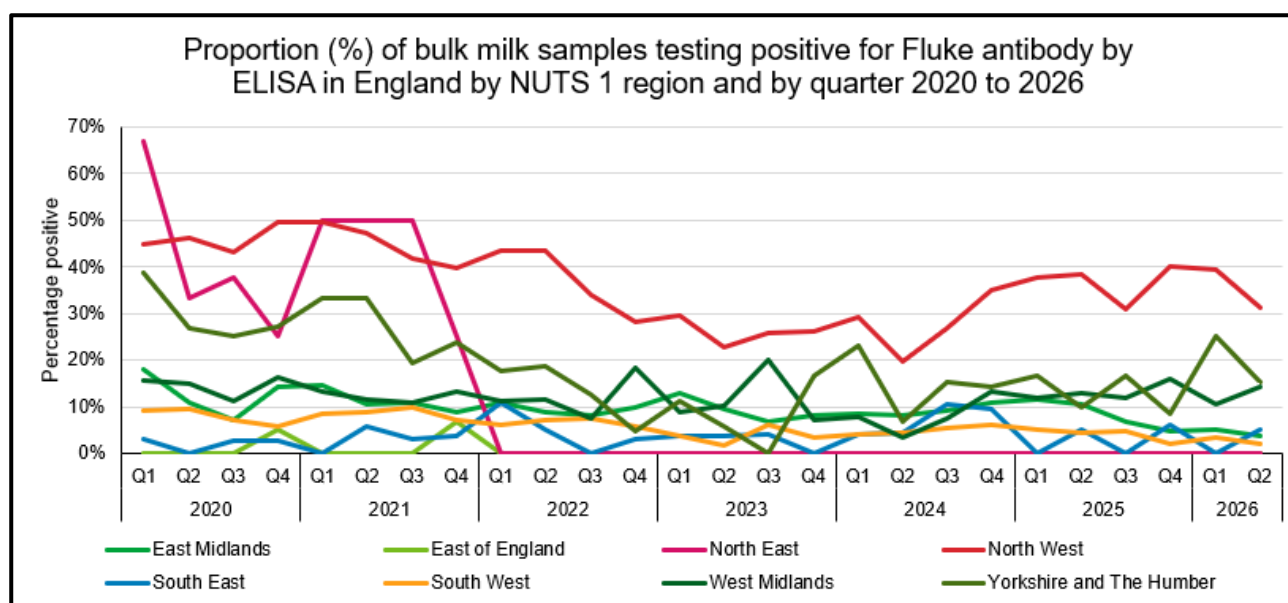


Figure 6: Proportion (%) of bulk milk samples testing positive for liver fluke antibody by ELISA, by NUTS 1 region in England, and by quarter Q1 2020 to Q2 2026* (*to date)

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

Respiratory system

Infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR) gE bulk milk serology

Figure 7 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 Q2 2026 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 7. 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@nmrp.com.

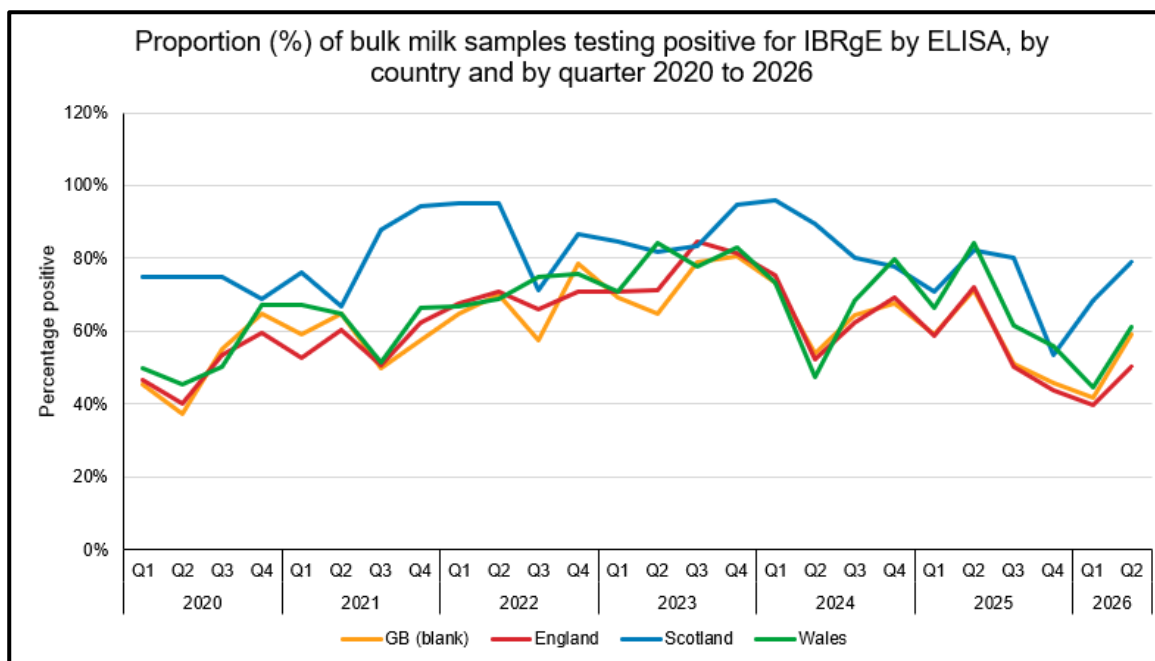


Figure 7: Proportion (%) of bulk milk samples testing positive for IBRgE antibody by ELISA by country and by quarter Q1 2020 to Q2 2026* (*to date)

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

Mycoplasma in youngstock on a dairy unit

Six calves were submitted in three submissions to investigate ongoing issues which included poor response to treatment for respiratory signs. The calves were from a herd of 1,700 milking cows, divided over multiple farms. The main unit calved all year round and was fully housed. Calves received vaccination against *Mycoplasma bovis* at 7-9 days of age and again three weeks later. An intranasal RSV vaccine was administered at 7-9 days of age, with a booster at nine weeks of age. The main unit had been having ongoing issues of scours and respiratory disease, with high morbidity and mortality in the calves.

Submission 1

Two 3–4-week-old calves were submitted due to scouring, and respiratory signs, with one calf born with swollen joints. Gross findings included an ulcerative oesophagitis, rumen drinking and ruminitis, evidence of scours, and dehydration. Cryptosporidia were detected. Severe extensive pneumonia with multifocal abscessation was present (Figure 8).

Mycoplasma bovis and *Mycoplasma arginini* were detected, and *Pasteurella multocida* was isolated. Histopathology supported the significance of these findings. PCR testing was negative for BVD, RSV, PI3, and BoHV-1.



Figure 8: Severe extensive pneumonia with multifocal abscessation

Submission 2

A 3-week-old Aberdeen Angus cross dairy calf was submitted to investigate the cause of malaise with rapid deterioration and death. Gross findings included a large discharging and abscessed umbilicus, with evidence of bacteraemic spread (fibrin in joints and a swollen yellow liver). The calf also had a severe extensive pneumonia. A very heavy growth of *Histophilus somni* was isolated, and *Mycoplasma bovis* and *Mycoplasma alkalescens* were both detected by DGGE-PCR. BRSV was also detected on lung PCR testing; however an intranasal RSV vaccine had been administered approximately two weeks previously, so the significance of this result was unclear. The calf was BVD PCR negative.

Submission 3

Three 5–10-week-old calves were submitted to investigate scour, poor condition, respiratory signs, corneal opacity and rupture, and seizures in one calf. All were in poor body condition, with weights consistent with much younger calves. Severe pneumonia, with multifocal abscessation and anterior uveitis was present in all three calves, with a rupture of one affected eye. Necrotic laryngitis (Figure 9), an umbilical abscess, and a swollen brain were detected in the calf with seizures. *Mycoplasma bovis* and *Mycoplasma arginini* were detected in the lungs of all three calves and in one affected eye. *Mycoplasma arginini* was also detected in the calf with neurological signs. *Pasteurella multocida* and *Trueperella pyogenes* were isolated from the lungs. No BVD, RSV, PI3 or BoHV-1 were detected on PCR testing.

These submissions highlight the multifactorial nature of respiratory disease in youngstock, with *Mycoplasma bovis* consistently detected alongside other bacterial and enteric pathogens, and associated with severe pneumonia, polyarthritis, uveitis and poor growth.



Figure 9: Necrotic laryngitis

Musculoskeletal system

No significant trends this quarter.

Urinary system

No significant trends this quarter.

Nervous system and organs of special sense

No significant trends this quarter.

Skin disease

Lymphoma in a Jersey cross cow

Two sections of a nodular mass from a Jersey cross cow were received. Histological examination confirmed that these were a cutaneous form of lymphoma, with pathology suggestive of an epitheliotrophic form, most likely of T cell origin. The possibility of EBL had been reported to the field service and restrictions were lifted in light of this result.

Udder cleft dermatitis in a peak lactation dairy cow

A 70 days-in-milk, four-year-old Holstein-Friesian cow was submitted from a housed, year-round calving dairy herd to investigate recumbency and death. The cow had a history of udder cleft dermatitis and four associated episodes of bleeding over the previous two

months, the last of which occurred a couple of days prior to death. Drops in milk production were seen with each bleed, where the cow was otherwise yielding 50L a day. The most recent treatment was with long-acting amoxicillin and NSAID at the beginning of April. Following an uncomplicated calving, the cow was being introduced to robot milkers. The system had also recently moved from sand to mattresses with sawdust, with several cases of digital dermatitis and udder cleft dermatitis subsequently seen. The cow was seen recumbent and then dead adjacent to the robot. The cow was in good body condition with good rumen fill at the time of death. An ulcerated lesion consistent with udder cleft dermatitis (UCD) was seen between the forequarters (Figure 10). Dissection of a necrosed area of skin revealed proximity to a large superficial mammary vein. This was likely the source of haemorrhage. The carcass was grossly pale, and the blood was thin and watery, indicating a severe anaemia. Haemorrhages were seen on the epi- and endocardium.

A cardiac event was suspected, linked to profound anaemia. Select tissues were assessed histopathologically and acute centrilobular necrosis was identified in the liver. This can have several causes including hypoxic/ischaemic injury, which would be consistent with the most recent bout of blood loss two days prior to death. Findings in the myocardium, kidney, and lung were unremarkable or associated with agonal change. On balance of the history, metabolic demands of peak lactation, gross findings, and histopathological results, death was likely associated with bleeding from the UCD site. UCD can also cause mortality through embolic pneumonia, secondary to 'showering' of septic bacterial emboli from the UCD site. The causes of UCD are not well understood, but individual risk factors include breed, increasing milk yield, increasing days in milk, udder forequarter size, udder conformation, and increasing parity. Monitoring and intervention of early cases is crucial. Prompt treatment and ensuring clean and dry housing with good ventilation are important control factors.



Figure 10: An ulcerated udder cleft dermatitis lesion between the forequarters of a dairy cow. Haemorrhage likely originated from the rounded region of necrotic skin cranially (arrow), which was overlying a large superficial mammary vein.

Circulatory disease

Babesiosis in dairy heifers

Thirty 18-month-old homebred dairy heifers were turned out onto rough grazing for the first time. Four weeks later, two had died, and four were dull and anaemic, with packed cell volumes ranging from 11–17 per cent (reference range 30–45 per cent). On-farm postmortem examination of one confirmed carcass pallor, with an orange liver and dark red urine. Histopathology identified liver necrosis consistent with prolonged hypoxia associated with anaemia. *Babesia* species were not seen on blood smears, but the spleen was PCR positive, with a final identification of *Babesia divergens*.

Reproductive system – abortion, stillbirth, and congenital deformities

The most frequent diagnoses from abortion and stillbirth submissions made in the second quarter (Q2) of 2026, compared to Q2 in 2025, and Q2 for 2015 to 2026 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 dashboard: [APHA animal surveillance reports, publications and dashboards - GOV.UK](#)

Table 2: Great Britain scanning surveillance 10 most frequent abortion and stillbirth submission diagnoses in Q2 of 2026, Q2 of 2025, and Q2 for 2015-2026

10 most frequent abortion diagnoses Q2 2026	10 most frequent abortion diagnoses Q2 2025	10 most frequent abortion diagnoses Q2 2015-2026
1. Fetopathy diagnosis not listed	1. Fetopathy diagnosis not listed	1. Fetopathy diagnosis not listed
2. Fetopathy due to <i>Salmonella</i> Dublin	2. Fetopathy due to Schmallerberg	2. Fetopathy due to <i>Neospora</i> infection
3. Fetopathy due to <i>Trueperella pyogenes</i>	3. Fetopathy due to <i>Trueperella pyogenes</i>	3. Fetopathy due to <i>Bacillus licheniformis</i>
4. Fetopathy due to <i>E. coli</i>	4. Fetopathy due to <i>Salmonella</i> Dublin	4. Fetopathy due to <i>Trueperella pyogenes</i>
5. Fetopathy due to fungi	5. Fetopathy due to <i>Neospora</i> infection	5. Fetopathy or stillbirth due to congenital abnormality
6. Stillbirth due to traumatocia	6. Fetopathy or stillbirth due to congenital abnormality	6. Stillbirth due to dystocia
7. Fetopathy due to <i>Bacillus licheniformis</i> Fetopathy due to <i>Neospora</i> infection Stillbirth due to bradytocia	7. Fetopathy due to <i>Bacillus licheniformis</i>	7. Fetopathy due to <i>Salmonella</i> Dublin
8. Fetopathy due to Q fever	8. Fetopathy due to fungi	8. Fetopathy due to Schmallerberg
9. Fetopathy due to Schmallerberg	9. Stillbirth due to thyroid hyperplasia	9. Fetopathy due to fungi
10. Fetopathy due to <i>Campylobacter</i>	10. Fetopathy due to <i>E. coli</i>	10. Fetopathy due to <i>Listeria</i>

Schmallenberg virus serology

Figure 11 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 Q2 2026 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 11. 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.

Notes about Figure 11:

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.

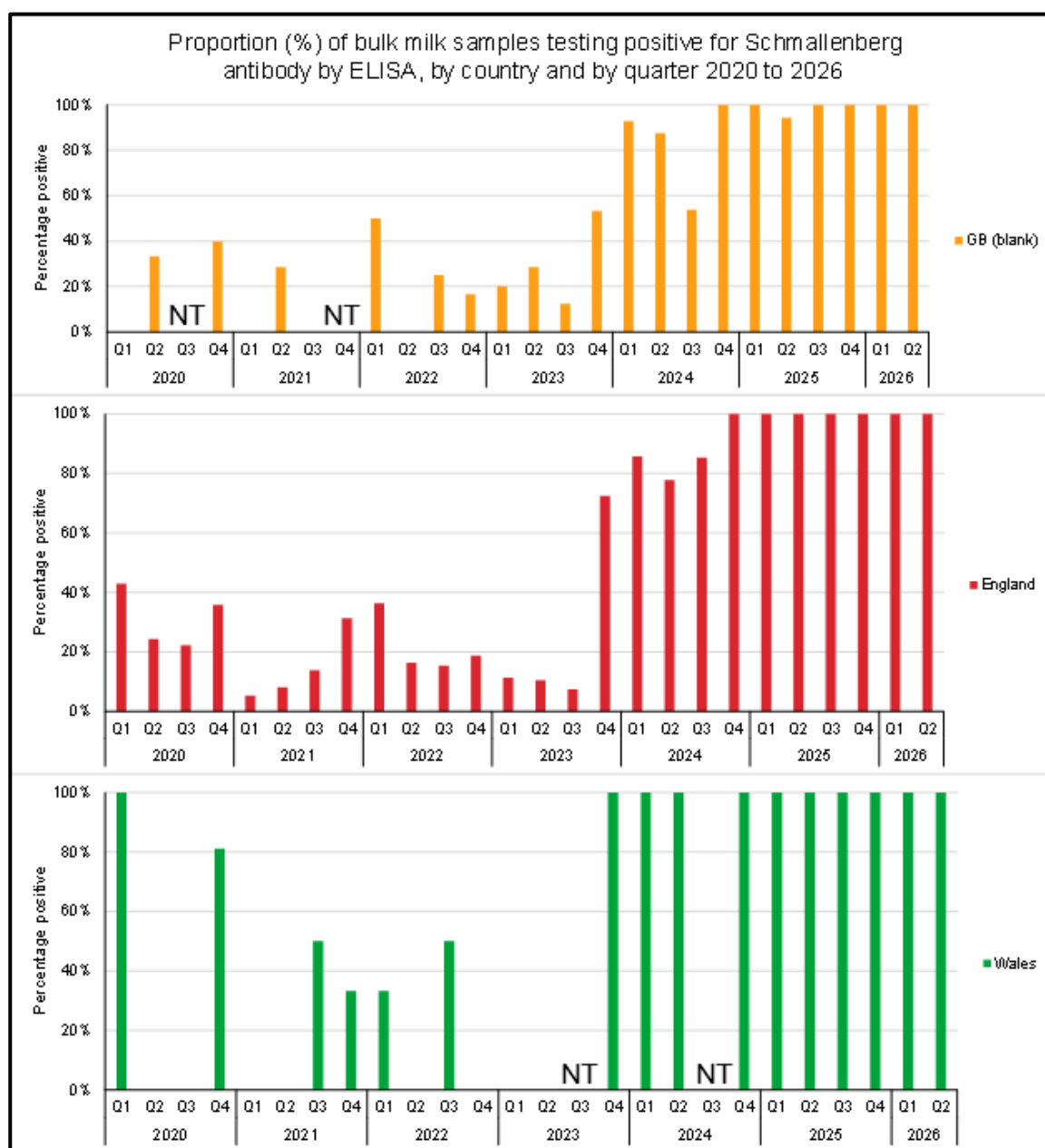


Figure 11: Proportion (%) of bulk milk samples testing positive for SBV antibody by ELISA, by country, and by quarter Q1 2020 to Q2 2026* (*to date)

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

Abortion due to *Coxiella burnetii*

A full-term fetus and placenta were submitted after three of four Jersey heifers gave birth to stillborn calves. The intercotyledonary membrane was noted to be oedematous, and the cotyledons had a yellow appearance. Microscopic examination of a modified Ziehl-Neelsen (ZN)-stained smear of placenta identified organisms suspicious of *Coxiella burnetii*, which was confirmed on PCR. Histopathology identified a suppurative placentitis, and a focal myocarditis, confirming an infectious aetiology.

A previous diagnosis of Q fever had been made in the herd a few years before, but a vaccination programme was not in place. In that instance, the affected heifers had been reared away from home with exposure to *C burnetii* thought to occur on their return before calving. The farmer and private vet were reminded of the zoonotic potential of this organism and the APHA was informed.

Congenital deformities due to Schmallerberg virus (SBV)

Schmallerberg virus (SBV) was confirmed as the cause of congenital deformities in calves from two holdings in the northeast of Scotland. In the first case, delivery of the affected calf required a partial embryotomy due to a breech presentation and arthrogryposis of all four legs. Postmortem examination identified cavitated brain lesions. Two calves with arthrogryposis were born in the second herd, with one submitted for investigation. This animal had severe scoliosis and an asymmetrical appearance to the cranium, with a corresponding discrepancy in the size of the right and left cerebral hemispheres. SBV was detected on PCR testing of brain tissue in the first calf and amniotic fluid in the second. Fetal fluids tested positive for antibodies to SBV in both.

Abortions due to bovine herpesvirus-1 and *Trueperella pyogenes*

Five abortions occurred in a herd of 150 beef cows over a three-day period. The cattle were housed in a cubicle shed with access to an outdoor feeding area where silage, straw and fodder beet were provided. Two fetuses were examined and crown–rump length measurements suggested a gestational age of six to seven months. A pure growth of *Trueperella pyogenes* was isolated from the fetal stomach contents of calf 1 and histopathology findings of a suppurative placentitis and pneumonia with intralesional bacteria supported a diagnosis of abortion due to *T. pyogenes*. Examination of fixed tissues from calf 2 identified multifocal hepatic necrosis suggestive of infection with bovine herpesvirus-1. PCR testing of liver tissue proved positive, confirming intrauterine infection with infectious bovine rhinotracheitis as the cause of abortion. The possibility of multiple pathogens being present should not be discounted and examination of more than one carcass is often valuable.

Hepatic lipodystrophy in an aborted fetus

A 120-head spring-calving beef herd reported an abortion in a purchased Salers cross cow, that was described as leaner than ideal. The crown–rump length of the fetus equated to approximately seven months gestation. Routine testing was unrewarding, but histopathology identified marked hepatic lipidosis, which is an unusual finding in a fetus. Hepatic lipodystrophy with a suspected genetic basis is recognised in Galloway cattle and toxic, infectious and metabolic aetiologies were also considered. With no other losses it was suggested that the current case was most likely a one-off.

Mastitis

A mid-lactation dairy cow was submitted after being the fourth in the permanently housed group to present with a few days' history of milk drop, reduced rumination and recumbency. It was treated with antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, and a caffeine and pro-rumen drench, however euthanasia was subsequently carried out due to a poor response. A severe mastitis affecting the front left quarter was present, with red discolouration of mammary tissue and congealed milk present in the gland cistern. Bacteriology isolated non-haemolytic *E. coli* (with resistance to Trimethoprim / Sulphamethoxazole and Tetracycline) in purity from the mastitic quarter and in heavy growth from the liver, confirming toxic mastitis with subsequent embolic spread. In addition, the rumen pH was low at 5.2, indicative of SARA, there was a large quantity of carcass fat, and the liver was friable. A negative energy balance was confirmed with raised blood NEFAs (938.5µmol/l, ref range 0-700). This may have reflected recent inappetence, although in view of the large amount of internal fat and friable liver it was suspected to reflect clinical disease and a review of the diet was warranted.

Chemical food safety and toxic conditions

Ragwort toxicity in a three-year-old cow

The carcass of a three-year-old Aberdeen Angus cross cow was submitted to investigate ill health and deaths in a group of 21 cows at grass. Two cows had become lethargic and diarrhoeic before dying 48 hours later while the submitted cow had a three-day history of tenesmus, lethargy and weakness leading to recumbency. It was suspected to be blind and knuckled on all limbs when it attempted to stand. External examination noted a rectal prolapse plus corneal oedema and hyphaema. The carcass was thin with serous atrophy of body fat and the liver parenchyma was pale orange/brown with a mottled appearance. A small number of adult *Fasciola hepatica* were present.

Histopathology confirmed chronic hepatic fibrosis affecting both portal and centrilobular areas with bile duct proliferation. The pathology was suggestive of chronic toxic hepatopathy caused by pyrrolizidine alkaloids. It was confirmed that ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) was present in the silage fields, which have since been sprayed with herbicide. Ragwort retains its toxicity in conserved forages and is more likely to be eaten in hay or silage than in its fresh state. Clinical disease is most often due to chronic exposure with small amounts eaten over a long period of time and may not develop until after ragwort ingestion has ceased. In this case a total of seven cows became ill, six of which died. Fifty per cent of a group of 25 store cattle were illthrive after being fed the same silage.

Lead poisoning

A six-week-old suckled calf was found dead with no preceding clinical signs. There had been six deaths in the group in the previous two weeks, but no investigation had been carried out. On-farm postmortem examination found all internal organs to be pale but the cause of death was not evident. Small intestinal contents tested negative for *Clostridium*

perfringens epsilon toxin and histopathology did not provide a diagnosis. *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* was detected on PCR testing of spleen and was considered potentially significant for the rest of the group. The kidney lead result of 41.6 mg/kg fresh tissue (FT) (reference range <0.5 mg/kg FT) was diagnostic for lead poisoning. Inspection of the field found an old tractor battery to be the source of lead.

A group of 40 youngstock on a different holding were turned out and two developed clinical signs typical of lead poisoning three and five days later. A 14-month-old Aberdeen Angus cross was blood sampled and a lead result of 2.6 µmol/l (reference range 0–0.15 µmol/l) confirmed the suspected diagnosis. A discarded battery was also found in this case. Food Standards Scotland was informed of both incidents. Cases of lead poisoning always peak in the weeks following turnout, and it is good practice to walk round pastures before cattle are introduced for the first time.

Antimicrobial use and resistance

The VMD has launched a new digital service for reporting adverse events: [New animal medicine adverse event reporting service launching May 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

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 [Brain lesions in BTV-3-positive calves in England : The Veterinary Record](#)

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>

Jacinto J; Gearing J; Capitan A; ZORLESCU AM; OTTER A; Drogemuller C (2026) LRP4-related lethal syndromic form of syndactyly in Limousin cattle. Animal Genetics 57 (2) e70090 <https://doi.org/10.1002/age.70090>

Melville LA; Mcgreggor C; JEWELL NJ; MITCHELL S; Watkins C; SWINSON V; Macleod E; Shaw DJ; Bartley DJ (2026). Prevalence and diversity of gastro-intestinal nematode infections in British cattle and implications for biosecurity. Veterinary Parasitology 344, 110749 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vetpar.2026.110749>

WIGHTON H; TWOMEY F; MAYERS J; Dewe T; Spalding S (2026). Sharpening our focus on AMR in livestock: the Private Laboratories Initiative. Veterinary Record 198 (5) 215-219. <https://doi.org/10.1002/vetr.70471>



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