

WENSUM VALLEY VETS NEWSLETTER

Blue Tongue Virus Update

This newsletter contains information correct at the time of writing. A restricted area has been put in place across Norfolk, along with other counties, due to the presence of Bluetongue Virus BTV-3 in a number of premises with the aim of stopping the spread.

What is Bluetongue?

Bluetongue virus (BTV) is a notifiable disease, transmitted by midges, that affects cows, goats, sheep and camelids (see transmission diagram on overleaf). The midges are most active between the months of April and November and greater numbers are present in wet or wooded areas. Luckily, Bluetongue does not affect people or food safety.

Signs of Bluetongue

In sheep:

Sheep are more likely to show obvious clinical signs of Bluetongue than cattle if they become infected.

- Ulcers or sores in the mouth and nose
- Discharge from the eyes or nose and drooling
- Swelling of the lips, tongue, head and neck or coronary band (where the skin of the leg meets the
 - horn of the foot)
- Red skin
- Fever
- Lameness
- Abortion
- Death



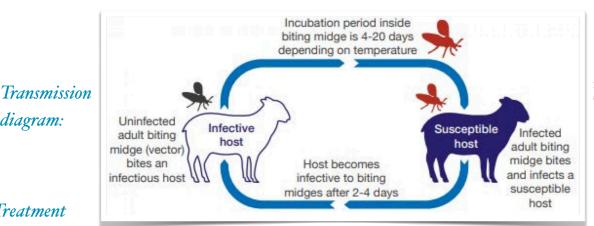
In cattle:

- Lethargy and reduced appetite
- Crusty erosions on muzzle or teats
- Redness of the mouth, eyes, nose, teats or coronary
- Nasal discharge
- Fever
- Milk drop
- Abortion



Adult cattle may serve as a source of virus for several weeks while displaying little or no clinical signs of disease and are often the preferred host for insect vectors.

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Figure 1: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/ articles/bluetongue

Treatment

diagram:

There is no specific treatment for animals with Bluetongue, but symptomatic treatment or culling may be advised by APHA depending on circumstances.

What to do

If your animals also show any of the signs above, or you suspect Bluetongue Virus to be present, you must report it immediately by calling: 03000 200 301

Transport Restrictions

- You are asked to only move animals within the restricted zone when it is absolutely necessary, as any movement carries risk of disease spread.
- Farmers are also advised to take precautions prior to transport, checking stock for any signs of disease and spraying the inside of trailers/vehicles with an insecticide before loading.
- These movement restrictions apply to all ruminants and camelids moving out of the zone and to the movement of their germinal products (semen, oocytes and embryos) within the zone.
- However, animals within the restricted zone are allowed to move under a 'general licence' to a designated abattoir within the restricted zone (a full list of these abattoirs is available here - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bluetonguemovement-licences-and-designated-slaughterhouses#designated-slaughterhouses).
- Animals cannot move out of the restricted zone without a specific licence and negative pre-movement test, followed by quarantine and post-movement test, unless moving to a designated abattoir for slaughter.
- Markets are allowed to operate in the restricted zone if animals moving from the market go only to destinations with the restricted zone. However animals from a restricted zone cannot go to a designated abattoir via a market outside of the restricted zone.
- Animals from outside of the restricted zone can move into it and move within the restricted zone without a licence, however cannot then exit it and this is discouraged as everyone is asked to reduce movement within the restricted zone.

Vaccination

Three vaccinations have been permitted for use within the restricted zone, these are currently in production and available for purchase through us. For details on the vaccine protocol, please call the office.

Prevention

Topical use of insecticides has not been shown to reduce the risk of Bluetongue infection, however prioritising the grazing of exposed fields where wind levels are highest and midges are unable to fly would significantly reduce the risk of infection for both sheep and cattle.



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