

KCC Generic Notifiable Animal Disease Contingency Plan

Developed by the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) in Partnership with Local Authorities

Annex E

Bluetongue

Bluetongue

1. What is Bluetongue?

Bluetongue is a disease that is caused by a virus that is transmitted by midges. Bluetongue virus naturally infects domestic and wild ruminants (such as, sheep, cattle, goats and deer) and camelids (such as, llama and alpaca). Sheep are most severely affected by bluetongue. Cattle, although infected more frequently than sheep, do not always show signs of the disease. Pigs are not susceptible to Bluetongue.

Bluetongue does not affect humans and there are no public health implications.

2. How is Bluetongue transmitted?

Bluetongue virus cannot naturally be transmitted directly between animals. Virus transmission between occurs via midges. However the likelihood of mechanical transmission of the virus between herds/flocks and within herds/flocks by unhygienic practices, such as the use of contaminated surgical equipment, cannot be ruled out.

There is no Bluetongue risk associated with carcasses or animal products. There is no Bluetongue risk associated with contamination of housing, equipment or fomites.

3. What are the main impacts of Bluetongue?

Although the impact varies between strains, Bluetongue can have significant economic impacts in terms of on farm losses due to death, sickness and reduced productivity, and losses to export revenue as live exports are banned from affected areas.

4. Bluetongue outbreak in Northern Europe

In the second half of 2006, Bluetongue was confirmed in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Western Germany and areas in Northern France. Bluetongue had not previously been seen at such northerly latitude. Over 2,100 outbreaks were confirmed.

Outbreaks of the same type of Bluetongue now in the UK were confirmed in Germany, Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in 2007. These outbreaks indicate that the bluetongue virus 'over wintered' successfully in Europe.

Since 1 June 2008 there have been approximately 15,000 outbreaks of BTV-8 reported in cattle and sheep in the previously affected areas of NW Europe. The majority of these outbreaks (13,856) were in France. Sweden and Hungary have also reported their first cases of Bluetongue.

5. Bluetongue outbreak in UK

In September 2007 Defra confirmed that Bluetongue disease was circulating between the local animal and midge population in East Anglia. Since then further cases of Bluetongue have been

confirmed elsewhere in England and Wales. By the end of 2008, Protection Zones covered the whole of England and Wales.

In 2008 Bluetongue vaccine (for BTV8) was made available for keepers in England and Wales to purchase, in order to help control the spread of this strain of Bluetongue in the UK.

6. What is the current situation in the UK?

Details of the current situation, including any declarations, are available on the Defra website. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/bluetongue/latest/index.htm>

The number of confirmed premises affected by Bluetongue will normally be updated on Defra's website, when necessary, on a weekly basis.

7. The restrictions in relation to Bluetongue in GB

Please check the Defra website for full details of restrictions and up to date information as the situation continues to change.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/bluetongue/movements/index.htm>

8. Legislation and restrictions

Bluetongue is a very different infection to Foot and Mouth Disease and the strategy to control it is therefore also different.

8.1 Legislation

The EU legislation relating to Bluetongue is the Bluetongue Directive 2000/75 and Commission Decision 2005/393. Controls relating to Bluetongue are implemented through The Bluetongue Order 2007, which is made under the Animal Health Act 1981.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20073154_en_1

The Bluetongue Regulation 2008 is available at

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/pdf/uksi_20080962_en.pdf

8.2 Suspicion

- Bluetongue is a notifiable disease.
- The owner / keeper must refrain from moving any animals or carcasses on or off their premises at this time.
- If disease is suspected then all animals should be kept indoors where practicable.
- Insecticide treatment on premises if directed by authorities.

8.3 Measures on confirmation of Bluetongue

NB It is not a confirmed outbreak unless further investigation demonstrates that disease is circulating, and this could take days or weeks to assess.

Rigorous controls would be applied in the very early stages to maximise the chances of eradication. Less restrictive measures may be applied very soon afterwards. Animal Health

Divisional Offices should inform local authorities on a regular basis of newly confirmed cases of Bluetongue in their area.

8.4 Infected premises

Slaughter of infected animals is not the default control policy, but may be considered in the early stages of the disease.

- On infected premises, the same restrictions apply as during the suspect phase

8.5 Bluetongue restricted zones

- On Confirmation that bluetongue virus is circulating, a 20km zone and a Protection Zone of at least 100km to be established around the infected premises.
- In addition, a Surveillance Zone (SZ) at least 50km in radius beyond the PZ); or a single PZ of at least 150km will be established.
- IP restrictions for premises with susceptible animals extended to a 20km zone. Derogations to these movement restrictions are possible.
- No movement of animals out of the PZ. Some derogations available.
- Surveillance required in the 20km zone.
- Movement of susceptible animals out of these zones would be banned (although animals can move freely within those zones)

Possible exemptions to movement controls that could be utilised by the Secretary of State in consideration of veterinary risk assessment include –

- Moves entirely within the 20km zone
- Moves from the 20km zone to slaughter within the PZ
- Moves from the 20km zone to PZ, SZ or free area (subject to approval or testing)
- Moves from the PZ or SZ to free area (subject to conditions, mainly testing)
- Direct moves from the PZ and SZ to free area for slaughter
- Transit through zones
- Possibility of a range of individual movements to be licensed by vets.

Defra do not recommend the treatment of the general environment with insecticides, as this will have little effect on midge populations and have serious environmental implications.

8.6 UK Bluetongue Control Strategy

This is available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/pdf/bluetongue-contplan.pdf>

The UK control strategy includes details of strategic objectives, free country and status for EU purposes, vaccination, criteria for confirming disease, restrictions on suspicion and confirmation, declaration of zones, measures within the PZ and SZ, removal of restrictions, surveillance, vector monitoring, tracings, compensation and veterinary investigation.

9. Role of local authorities

Local authorities are responsible for enforcing the Animal Health Act 1981 (as amended) and the Bluetongue Order 2007/Bluetongue Regulations 2008.

Local authorities will be predominantly focused on ensuring movement restrictions are under this legislation are understood and complied with.

Local authorities will also ensure aim to ensure that appropriate advice is provided / information is made available to their local communities.

10. Role of LACORS

LACORS will attend the National Disease Control Centre in London and will represent authorities in Wales in co-ordination with the LGA or Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) as necessary. We will closely liaise with the WLGA, local authorities involved, Animal Health and Defra as required.

11. Additional information on Defra website

Defra bluetongue homepage

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/bluetongue/index.htm>

Defra Bluetongue Contingency Plan for GB

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/pdf/bluetongue-contplan.pdf>

UK Bluetongue Control Strategy

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/pdf/bluetongue-control-strategy0807.pdf>