

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

Bluetongue virus (BTV-8) in France

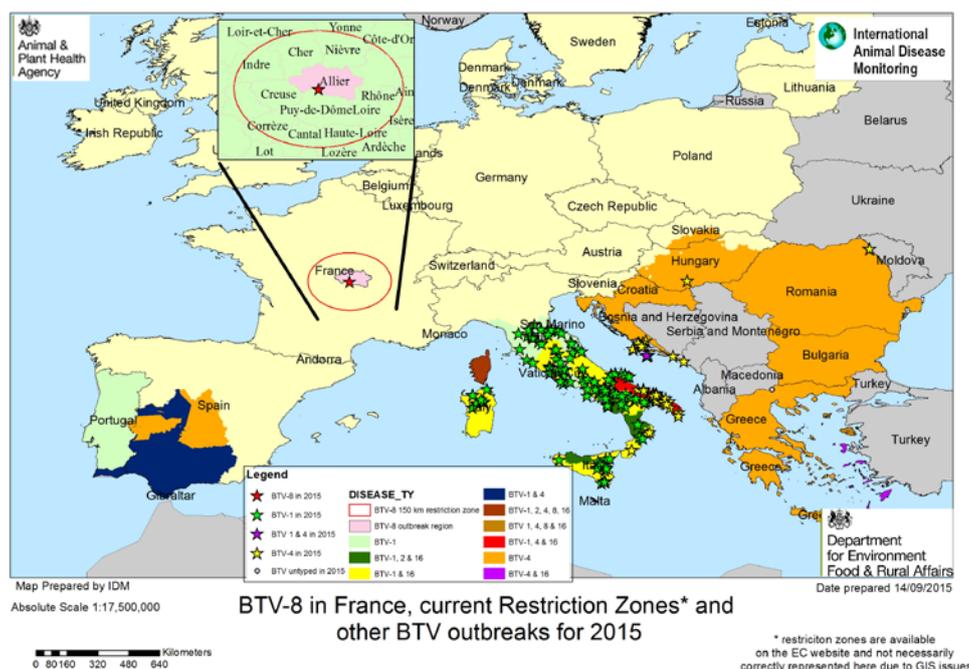
14 September 2015

Ref: VITT/1200 BTV in France

Disease Report

France has reported an outbreak of BTV-8 in Allier region, Central France (OIE, 2015; see map). Clinical signs (facial oedema, respiratory problems and increased temperature) in a single sheep present at the holding were first observed on 21st August. Samples tested positive from 5 out of 175 sheep and 27 out of 147 cattle. Disease control measures are in place: according to the

French Ministry of Agriculture, a 150 km zone has been put in place, where there is a restriction of animal movements, active surveillance and a ban on gatherings. In addition, the French government and livestock sectors have in place a vaccination strategy and 1.3 million doses of vaccine will be made available as soon as possible (Ministre d'Agriculture, 2015). Preliminary investigations suggest an additional 7 holdings in the 2km zone



BTV-8 in France, current Restriction Zones* and other BTV outbreaks for 2015

around the index case have PCR positive animals.

Situation Assessment

These are the first outbreaks of BTV-8 reported in the EU since 2011 and since 2010 in France. At present, the results of the epidemiological report suggest this is not a recent import of infected animals, but whether this is the result of unreported virus circulation (possibly in livestock or wildlife), a vaccine problem or imported infected midges is not known. More investigations will be carried out in the region and the neighbouring areas to determine the source of infection.

According to TRACES, the EU trade notification system, there have been no recent direct cattle or sheep / goat imports from this region or the neighbouring Puy de Dome region (since 1st August).

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Animal and Plant Health Agency
Veterinary & Science Policy Advice Team - International Disease Monitoring**

However, as many consignments come through assembly centres, it is not always obvious what the place of origin would be and therefore livestock keepers in the UK should be vigilant to possible clinical signs.

Although Bluetongue is generally considered a disease of sheep, in the previous BTV-8 epizootic, cattle, goats and new World camelids were also susceptible to infection and showed clinical signs.

The disease is not zoonotic and there are no food safety issues; milk and meat of infected animals are safe to eat. A vaccine is authorised and available in the UK for BTV-8.

Conclusion

Until the origin of disease is understood and the extent of spread, it is difficult to assess whether this outbreak signifies an increase in our risk level from low to medium. Meteorological modelling of recent weather conditions to assess whether the UK has been at risk of incursion in the past two months will be carried out.

Once more information is known, we will update this assessment.

Authors

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References

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