Updated Outbreak Assessment #13

Bluetongue Virus in Europe

12 August 2025

Disease report

The start of the 2025 to 2026 Bluetongue virus (BTV) season has been declared, with England reporting 12 cases of BTV-3 from 11 July 2025 through to 11 August. These have been in cattle and sheep all over the country (Figure 1). Germany has been reporting data for the 2025 season since 1 May, so data in this assessment is reported from this date even if individual countries declared the start of their new seasons later in the summer. BTV-3 has been reported in Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland and Spain. France reported a large increase in BTV-3, with 1,104 confirmed reports in July compared to only 13 in June. BTV-8 has been reported for the first time in Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia. BTV-8 continues to be reported in Greece, France, Italy, North Macedonia and Spain. Again, France has reported a large increase in the number of BTV-8 cases, with 985 reported in July compared to 75 in June. Italy has also reported an increase in BTV-8 cases with 468 in July, up from 101 in June.

Given the increase in the number of cases in Europe and the increased temperatures suitable for onward transmission, the risk of incursion of **BTV from all routes** has now been increased to **medium** (occurs often). This is increased from low (rare but does occur) in our December 2024 preliminary outbreak assessment (POA).

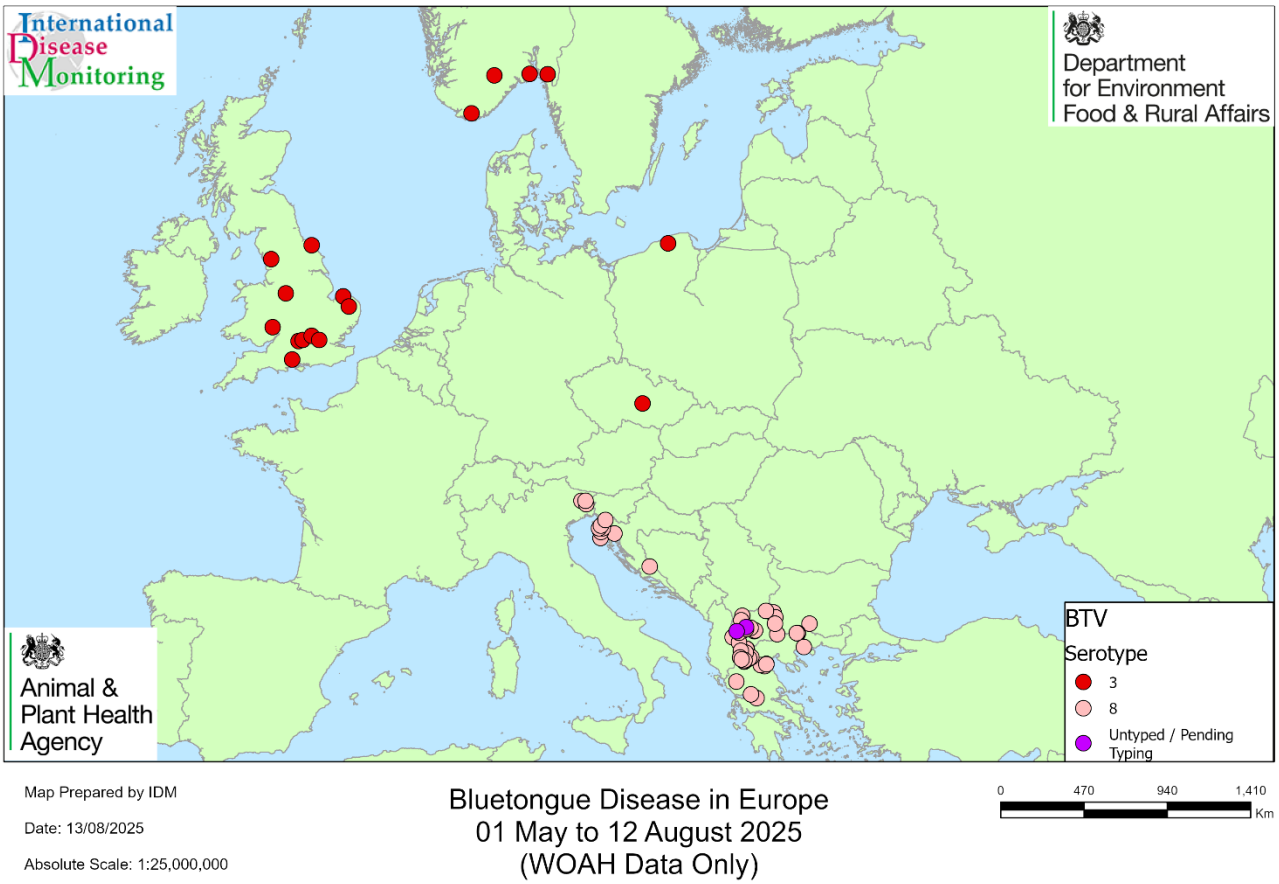

Figure 1: Bluetongue outbreaks in Europe reported to WAHIS from 1 May to 12 August 2025. Please note that the above map only includes BTV outbreaks reported to WOAH. Many European countries now only provide updates on BTV on country-specific websites. When available, these are provided later in the document. The two untyped and pending outbreaks in North Macedonia were reported as BTV-8 on ADIS.

Situation assessment

Great Britain

The first cases of the 2025-2026 vector season in Great Britain were confirmed on 11 July 2025 (Bluetongue: latest situation - GOV.UK). This included a case of BTV-3 in a sheep in Oxfordshire which was tested after displaying clinical signs. Two cases in cattle were also identified in Hertfordshire following pre-movement testing. Since then, nine additional detections of BTV-3 have occurred through to 11 August. On 12 July, a sheep in Buckinghamshire was confirmed after clinical signs were reported. On the 19 July, two cattle in Norfolk were confirmed after non-negative pre-movement testing. On 24 July, a cow in Cumbria was reported following non-negative pre-movement testing and a sheep in Oxfordshire after clinical signs were reported. On 25 July, a ram was confirmed after clinical signs were reported. On 3 August, a ram in Staffordshire was confirmed after clinical signs were reported. On 6 August 2 sheep in Oxfordshire were confirmed positive after clinical signs were reported. On 7 August, a lamb in Hampshire and a sheep in Dorset were both confirmed positive after clinical signs were reported. On 11 August, a sheep in Buckinghamshire was confirmed positive after clinical signs were reported. All the cases occurred in England.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

On 1 July 2025, the bluetongue restricted zone (RZ) was extended to cover the whole of England, meaning keepers can move susceptible animals within England without bluetongue licenses or pre-movement testing. The three available BTV-3 vaccines (Bluevac-3, Bultavo 3, and Syvazul 3) are all available for use in Great Britian as long as conditions of the country-specific licenses or declarations are followed. As moving animals from England to Scotland or Wales is moving them out of the RZ, licenses are required with current conditions including pre-movement testing and vaccination. More information on the current UK situation, movement rules and vaccination, please see the gov.uk website Bluetongue: latest situation.

Austria

Austria undertakes active surveillance for BTV. The country is divided into 28 regions and 60 unvaccinated cattle are tested quarterly. Given the current epidemic, Austria adapted their surveillance program, increasing the number of samples per region.

Austria is updating BTV data through their Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES). Both BTV-3 and BTV-4 have been detected in the country. Since week 18 of the year, which includes 1 May, 82 outbreaks of BTV-3 have been reported. There was a spike of BTV-3 cases in June, with 62 outbreaks detected in calendar week 25 of 2025. There have been nine outbreaks of BTV-4 in this same period. As of week 32 of the year, up to 10 August, Austria reported its first case of BTV-8. This occurred in the south of the country near the border with Italy.

While inactivated vaccines against BTV-1, -3, -4 and -8 are available for use in Europe (European Medicines Agency), there is not an official vaccination programme in Austria. Use of the vaccines are officially permitted but are carried out on a voluntary basis and paid for by the livestock owner.

Belgium

Belgium has not provided bluetongue updates on their Sciensano website since December 2024.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria reported an outbreak of BTV-8 to WAHIS on 1 August 2025. Two cases were identified in a flock of 25 backyard sheep. According to the epidemiological comment, the premises is isolated in a mountainous area and difficult to access. Vector controls have been implemented to limit the spread of disease. Epidemiological investigations will be carried out to determine the source of the infection. The outbreak occurred in the east of the country near the border with North Macedonia. This was the first report of BTV-8 in the country (WAHIS event 6686). On 11 August, Bulgaria reported a second BTV-8 outbreak, in a flock of 323 sheep (WAHIS event 6713). This outbreak occurred in the south of the country. BTV-4 was last reported in the country in January 2022, although the outbreaks started in October 2020 (WAHIS event 3324).

Croatia

Croatia reported one outbreak of BTV-8 to WAHIS on 27 July 2025. Two out of the 16 cattle on the farm were positive for BTV-8. The farm also held 12 goats and 900 sheep. The report indicated two cattle died from anthrax and BTV was identified following additional lab

investigations. According to media reports, the cattle were not displaying clinical signs (dnevnik.hr) This was the first report of BTV-8 in the country (WAHIS event 6680). To 12 August, 10 additional outbreaks of BTV-8 have been reported. Seven of the outbreaks were in sheep flocks, one outbreak was in cattle, one in a mixed herd of sheep and goats, and the last on a farm with sheep, goats, and cattle.

Croatia also experienced some outbreaks of BTV-4 in late 2024 (WAHIS event 6081). Prior to that, the last reports of BTV-4 in the country occurred between October 2020 and January 2021 (WAHIS event 3336).

Denmark

On the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration website, Denmark reported 8 outbreaks of BTV in May, one in June, one in July and one on 9 August. The data was last updated on 11 August. The serotype associated with these outbreaks is not given but based on historic cases it is assumed to BTV-3.

France

Between 1 June and 7 August 2025, France reported 2,096 outbreaks of BTV-3 and 1,377 outbreaks of BTV-8 (See Figures 2 and 3). The outbreaks are largely clustered in the northwest and west of the country, although 338 outbreaks of BTV-8 have occurred in the South along the border with Spain. BTV-4 has not been detected in mainland France since 2018. While outbreaks of BTV-4 occurred in Corsica last year, they have not been reported there yet in the current bluetongue season.

France's National Agency for Veterinary Medicines has issued marketing authorisations for BTV-4 and BTV-8, granting approval for the vaccine producers to market these vaccines in France (National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products (ANSM)). In July 2024, they issued temporary authorisations for vaccines against BTV-3 as well. France has ordered 7 million doses of the BTV-8 vaccine to help protect sheep over the entirety of the country. Given the presence of BTV-1 in northern Spain, France has also ordered vaccines against BTV-1 to use in sheep and cattle the departments bordering Spain to create a protection zone from further incursion into France. These vaccines are being provided free of charge through veterinarians (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty 2025).

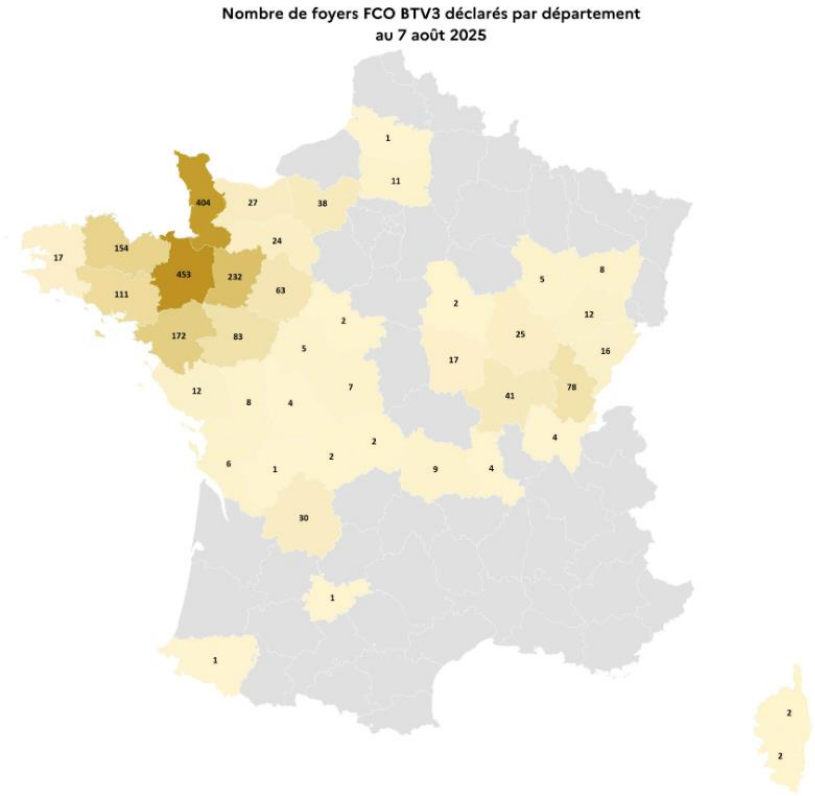

Figure 2: Number of cases of BTV-3 in French departments from 1 June to 7 August. Figure from [La situation de la fièvre catarrhale ovine (FCO) en France | Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire].

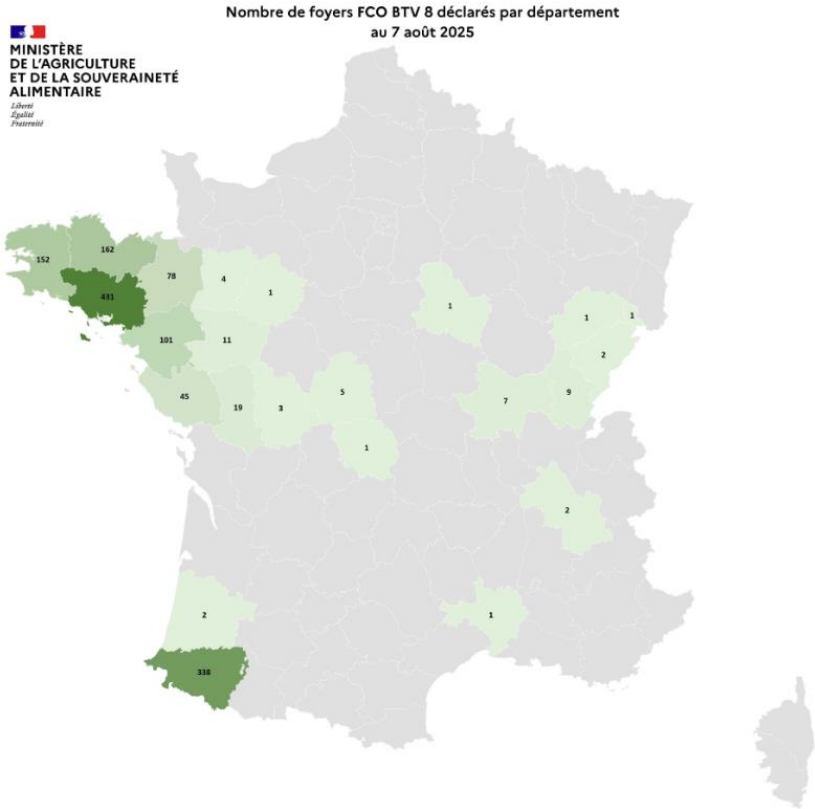

Figure 3: Number of cases of BTV-8 in French departments from 1 June to 7 August. Figure from [La situation de la fièvre catarrhale ovine (FCO) en France | Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire].

Germany

While other serotypes of BTV are circulating in countries bordering it, so far only BTV-3 has been detected in Germany. Germany began reporting on the current year from 1 May 2025. Since then, 80 BTV-3 outbreaks occurred in May, 45 in June, 43 in July and 7 in August (up to 11 August) (TSIS Animal Disease Information System). Figure 4 illustrates the locations of these outbreaks through July.

On 27 November 2024, Germany approved the authorization for use for the Syvazul 3, Blutavo 3 and Bluevac 3 BTV-3 vaccines for an indefinite period of time. Working with their National Reference Lab for BTV, Germany's Friedrich-Loeffler Institute is performing studies to characterize the differences in the level of protection provided by the different BTV-3 vaccines available (FLI Bluetongue disease).

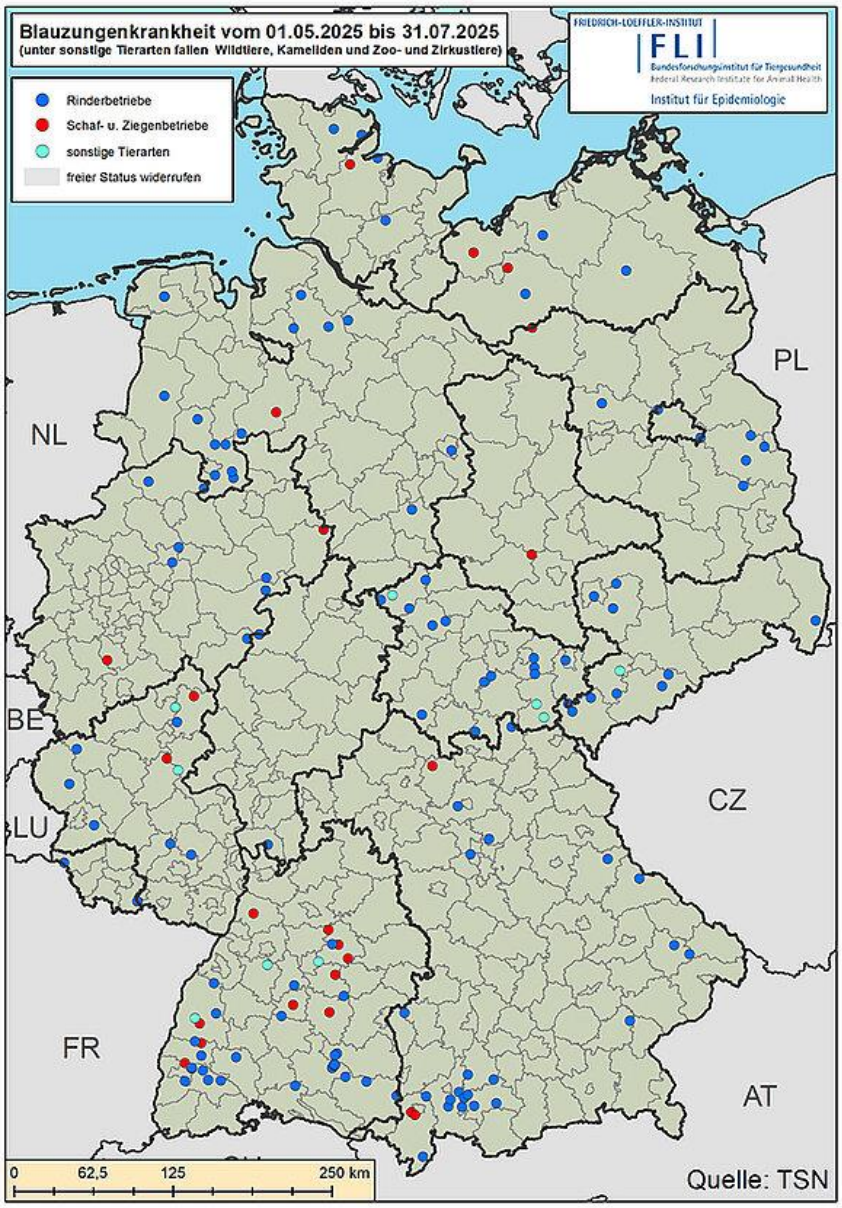

Figure 4: Overview of bluetongue disease in Germany from 1 May to 31 July. Blue dots are cattle farms, red dots sheep and/or goat farms, and teal are other animal species (alpaca and deer are recorded in the TSIS data set). Map is from Bluetongue Disease | Friedrich Loeffler Institute.

Greece

Since 1 May Greece has reported 27 outbreaks of BTV-8 to WAHIS, 18 of these occurred in July and nine additional outbreaks in August, up to 8 August. Of these,14 of the outbreaks were in sheep herds, with sizes ranging from 33 to 350 animals. The remaining outbreaks were in mixed sheep and goat herds (WAHIS event 6605). Last season, outbreaks of BTV-8 were reported from Greece from November 2024 through to January 2025 with 73 outbreaks reported in total last year (WAHIS event 5960).

Italy

BTV data from Italy is published on the National Veterinary Epidemiological Bulletin site. Since 1 May 2025, BTV-1, BTV-3, BTV-4 and BTV-8 have been reported in Italy. Compared to the other serotypes, the outbreaks of BTV-8 appear to be increasing dramatically. In June, there were 101 outbreaks that involved BTV-8 and this increased further to 468 in July. To 11 August, 47 BTV-8 outbreaks have already occurred in August. Figure 5 illustrates the locations of all BTV outbreaks in Italy.

From 1 May to 12 August, the majority of the outbreaks have been in sheep (669), 72 outbreaks have been in cattle, and 19 outbreaks in goats. Two outbreaks were also reported in alpacas and one in a yak.

Figure 5: Map of BTV outbreaks in Italy from 1 May to 11 August. Gray dots represent outbreaks that have been resolved while red dots are confirmed outbreaks. Map from BENV | Bollettino Epidemiologico Nazionale Veterinario.

Netherlands

The Netherlands have so far not reported any cases of BTV in 2025. The webpage has been updated to reflect the 2025 season, but as of 6 August, the map illustrating positive cases has not been updated since 26 June 2025 as the country has moved to a new surveillance strategy.

The Royal GD reported that, as of 1 July, monitoring of BTV in the Netherlands is carried out

by a new system. Instead of testing blood samples from animals with clinical signs, regional veterinary practices (20 across the country) may send in every month three blood samples collected from 14 registered ruminants (cattle, sheep and or goats). Reporting from the first month of this new surveillance strategy did not detect any bluetongue in the country in July 2025. With the new monitoring system, the free testing of individual animals with clinical signs is being discontinued. Animals can however still be tested at the owner's expense. The Royal GD highlighted the importance of still reporting suspicions of bluetongue to the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority.

North Macedonia

According to ADIS summaries, North Macedonia reported 2 outbreaks of BTV-8 in June and 13 outbreaks in July. Two of the outbreaks were on cattle farms that also held either sheep or goats. Of the remaining outbreaks, three were in mixed sheep and goat herds and the rest in sheep flocks (WAHIS event 6572). The last occurrence of BTV-8 in the country was October 2024 (WAHIS event 5968). Prior to that, BTV-4 was last reported in the country in late 2020 (WAHIS event 3243).

Norway

According to the Norwegian Veterinary Institute, the first case of bluetongue for the summer 2025 season was reported on 1 August. It was BTV-3. This was picked up as part of pre-movement testing and the cow did not show any clinical signs.

Norway reported 2 outbreaks of BTV-3 in May and 1 in June to WAHIS. All these outbreaks involved cattle, although one of the farms identified in May also had a flock of sheep. The other case in May was a dummy calf, so infection would have occurred last season.

While vaccination against bluetongue is not usually permitted in Norway, the Norwegian Food Safety Authority has allowed ruminants to be vaccinated against all BTV serotypes in certain areas in the south of the country where the risk is considered the greatest. As of May 2025, only the Syvazul BTV-3 vaccine for sheep had market authorisation in Norway. The other 2 BTV-3 vaccines (Bluevac 3 and Bultavo 3) can be approved by exemption for use.

Poland

According to Poland's Chief Veterinary Inspectorate, four outbreaks of BTV-3 have occurred in the country in 2025, with the fourth being confirmed on 10 July. The first three were confirmed in January 2025. These outbreaks affected cattle herds ranging from 28 to 76 animals, and occurred in the north of the country. This fourth outbreak, which affected a herd of 646 cattle and also occurred in the north, was reported to WAHIS (Event 6699). According to media reports, the samples were collected as part of routine surveillance. Two animals tested positive but no animals were showing clinical signs (farmer.pl). Poland confirmed its first outbreaks of BTV-3 in November 2024. Five outbreaks occurred in the Lower Silesian region between November and December 2024, all in cattle (WAHIS event 6078).

Slovenia

On 21 July, Slovenia reported an outbreak of BTV-8 on a farm with 49 sheep. This is the first occurrence of BTV-8 in the country (WAHIS event 6662). BTV-4 was last reported in February 2025 (WAHIS event 6262).

Spain

On 23 June 2025, Spain reported their first bluetongue outbreak of the 2025-2026 season. It occurred on a sheep farm in Malaga where the animals displayed clinical signs. It was confirmed as BTV-3.

As of the last update on 12 August issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, BTV outbreaks have now occurred in 25 different provinces. These outbreaks are due to BTV-1, BTV-3, a combination of BTV-3 and BTV-8, and BTV-8. See Figure 6 for a map of the provinces in Spain that have experienced BTV outbreaks in the 2025 season.

Spain has introduced a national monitoring program for 2025,which includes active serological surveillance, passive clinical surveillance and surveillance and monitoring of vectors.

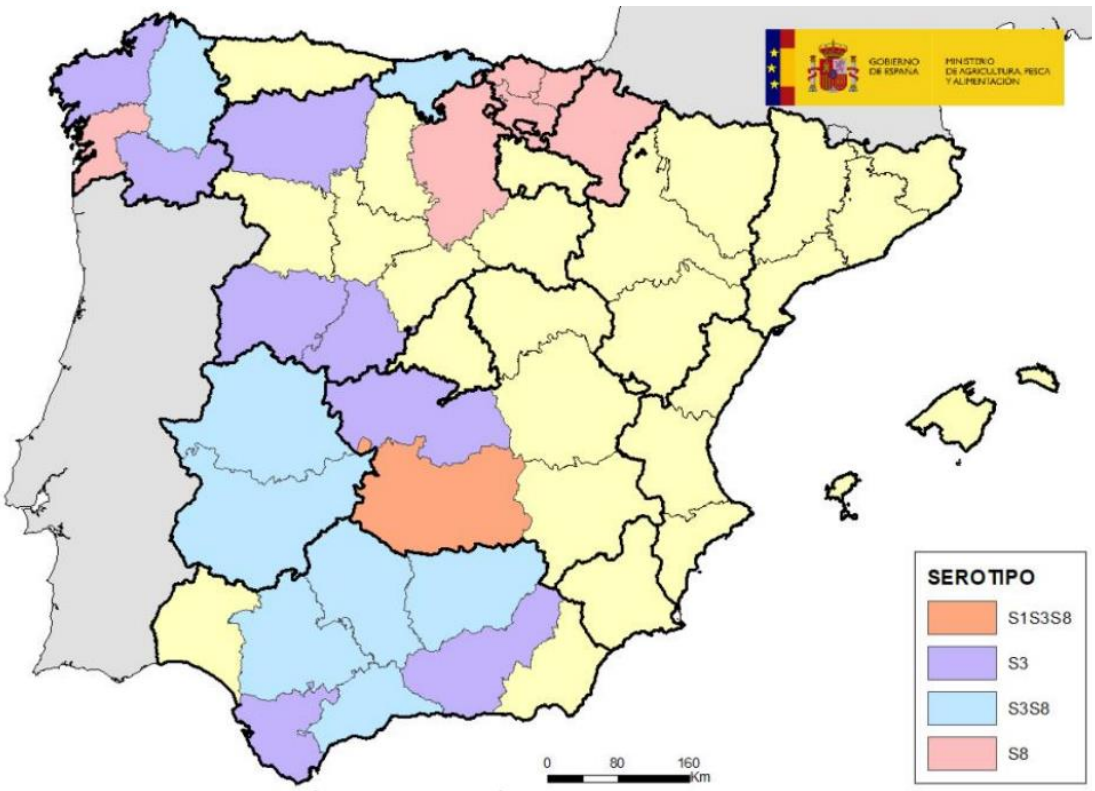

Figure 6: Map of provinces in Spain with confirmed BTV outbreaks in the 2025/2026 season as of 12 August 2025. Map from MAPA: Bluetongue disease.

Implications for Great Britain

BTV-3 is already present in Great Britain, with 12 cases detected in the new 2025 to 2026 season through 5 August 2025. With BTV-8 circulating in northwest France, there is the possibility of infected midges entering Great Britain and infecting livestock. The risk of airborne introduction of BTV from midges infected on continental Europe is considered every two weeks during vector active periods and published at Risk assessment: airborne introduction of bluetongue virus - GOV.UK. The estimated risk for the time period of 9 July to 22 July was considered medium from French regions. These risk assessments do not differentiate risk for different serotypes of BTV.

When importing susceptible animals (ruminants such as cattle, sheep, goats and cervids (deer), and camelids such as alpacas and llamas) into the UK, the country must comply with

the health certificate requirements, including the appropriate vaccination. Susceptible animals cannot be imported from countries with BTV-3 as there is no fully approved vaccine for BTV-3 with a guaranteed period of immunity. Further details on how bluetongue in Europe is affecting imports is published on GOV.UK: Imports, exports and EU trade of animals and animal products: topical issues. These trade restrictions will help limit the incursion of BTV from import of infected live animals into Great Britain.

Conclusions

The bluetongue 2025 to 2026 season has started both in England and continental Europe, with thirteen different European countries reporting outbreaks. Through 11 August, 12 cases of BTV-3 have been detected in England. Reports of BTV-8 have increased dramatically in Italy and France in July and this serotype has spread to new countries, being reported for the first time in Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia.

The surge in the number of reports in recent weeks is likely a consequence of the suitable temperatures for transmission. Temperatures in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark are considered in our airborne BTV introduction risk assessments. The temperatures in most of these countries have either been known or suspected to be high enough for vectors infected with BTV to become infectious since 25 June.

The overall risk of incursion of BTV into Great Britain is now **medium (occurs regularly).** This is increased from the low (rare, but does occur) risk from our December 2024 POA. However, the nuance of airborne incursion of BTV infected vectors is captured elsewhere in the bi-weekly reports and risk levels for that specific pathway will likely fluctuate with meteorological conditions and disease circulation on the near continent.

There is guidance available for livestock owners within TCZs and RZs. As of 1 July 2025, the restricted zone was extended to cover all of England. This means licenses and pre-movement testing are no longer required to move animals within England. If you keep livestock, you must continue to keep a close watch for, and report, any suspicion of bluetongue disease in your animals.

Sheep are more likely to show obvious clinical signs of bluetongue than cattle if they become infected. Signs of bluetongue in sheep include ulcers or sores in the mouth and nose, discharge from the eyes or nose, drooling from mouth, swelling of the lips, tongue, head and neck and the coronary band, red skin as a result of blood collecting beneath the surface, fever, lameness, breathing problems, abortion, foetal deformities and stillbirths, death.

Lambs can become infected with bluetongue before birth if the dam is infected while pregnant. Signs of infection include born small, weak, deformed, or blind, death of lambs within a few days of birth, stillbirths.

Cattle clinical signs include lethargy, crusty erosions around the nostrils and muzzle, redness of the mouth, eyes or nose, reddening of the skin above the hoof, nasal discharge, reddening and erosions on the teats, fever, milk drop, not eating, abortion, foetal deformities, and stillbirths. 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.

Calves can become infected with bluetongue before birth if the mother is infected while pregnant. Signs of infection include born small, weak, deformed, or blind, death of calves within a few days of birth, stillbirths.

For more information and photos of clinical signs of bluetongue virus visit Bluetongue: how to spot and report it. If livestock keepers or vets, consider bluetongue as a possibility they must report the suspicion to APHA immediately.

We will continue to monitor the current situation.

Authors

Dr Erica Kintz

Adam Solomon

Megan Arter-Hazzard

Dr Paul Gale

Dr Sonny Bacigalupo

Dr Lauren Perrin

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