



- Blue tongue virus

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Torch farm and Equine vets
24th July 2026

1. What is bluetongue
2. What do we need to look out for
3. How does it affect animal movements
4. What should we do if we are worried about an animal
5. How can we protect our animals
6. Questions and answers

Why is a disease notifiable?

- International trade
- Animal welfare
- Public health
- Wider society

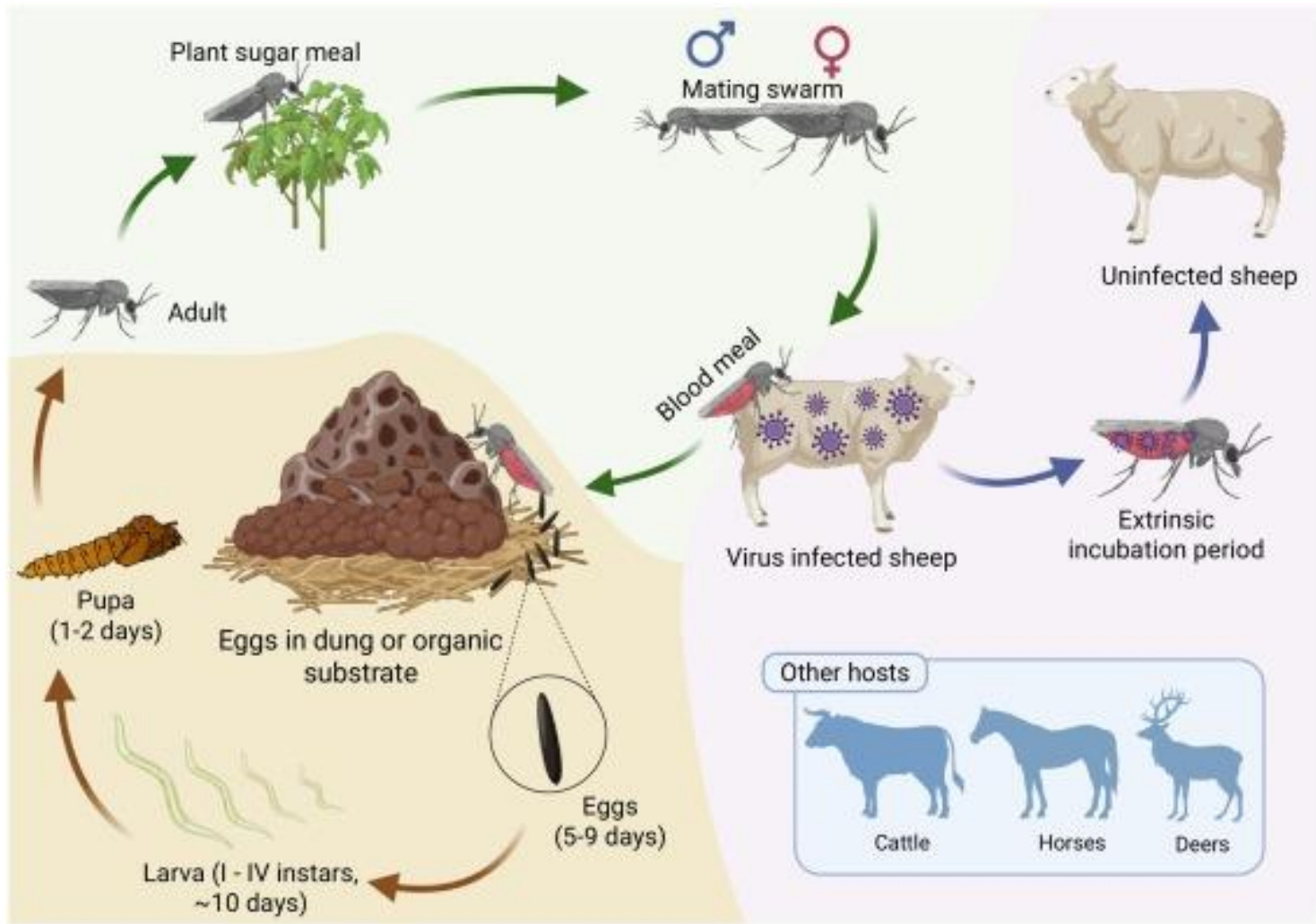
What is it, where did it come from
how is it spread and the different variants
(serotypes)

- Ribovirus
- Affects cattle, sheep, deer and camelids
- Historically in equatorial regions but with warmer temperatures it has migrated north to Europe and now in UK
- BTV 8 in 2008
- BTV 3 – 126 cases in 73 premises across 4 counties
- 2024 – 262 btv3 cases and 1 btv12 case
- Spread by midges
- Cannot be spread animal to animal – important with control measures,
- Different serotypes – 27 identified at present. UK previously BTV 8 but the 2024-2026 outbreak is BTV 3 on the whole

The Midge – *Culicoides obsoletus*



- Like to breed in warm moist soil with high organic matter e.g. muck heap!!
- No particular evidence that insecticidal pour ons help but some anecdote that dipping helps
- Acts as a vector so just passes straight from one animal to another.
- They are weak flyers – so can't spread far without wind!
- The only live for between 2-6 weeks in their breeding season but in cooler conditions can live longer.
- Requires a humid environment – reduction in development in a heatwave!!



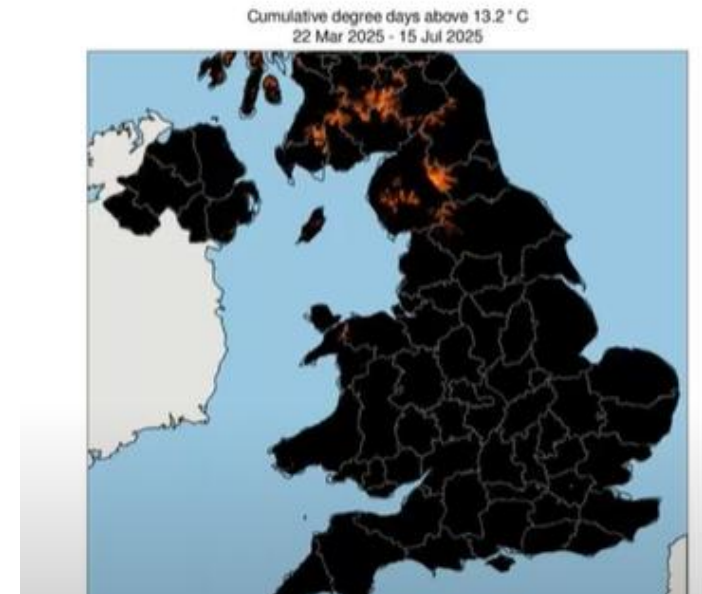
Trends in Parasitology

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BTV risk of transmission

- Need consistent temperature of over 13.2 to allow active transmission
- Generally active risk from April to November
- Peak activity is dawn and dusk
- Once bitten a ruminant is affected for up to 4 days



What does it look like – in sheep



Ulcers and lesions in the mouth



Nasal discharge

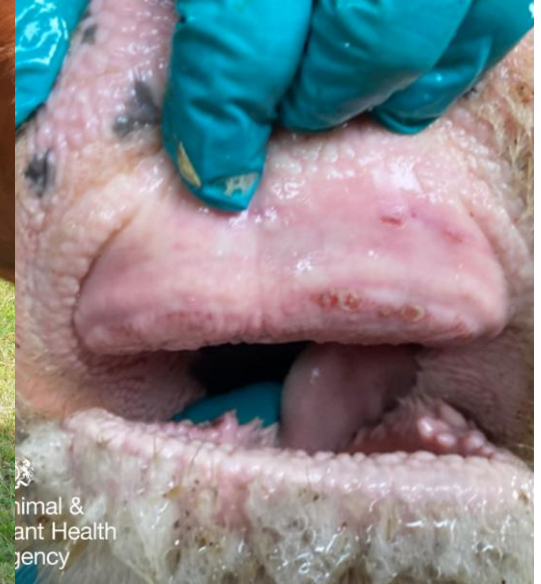


Nasal redness

- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Depressed
- Fever
- Off legs
- Drooling
- Death

Fertility effects on rams -
60 day cycle for semen
regeneration

What does it look like – in cattle



- Fever
- Sore teats
- Ulcers on mouth / dental pad
- Swollen feet / lameness
- Abortions
- Small / weak calves born – dummy calves

Fertility effects on bulls and cows
60 day cycle for semen
regeneration

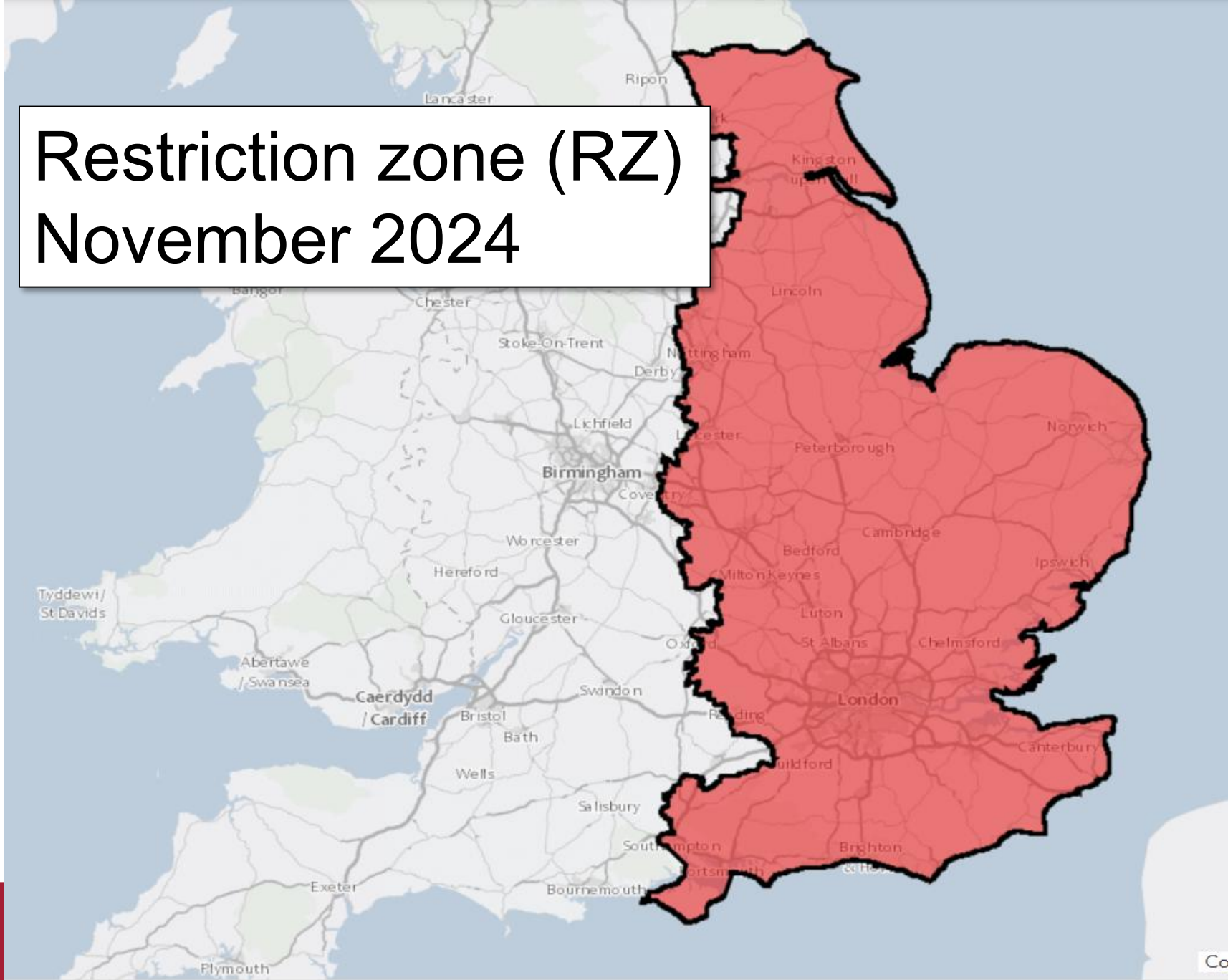
What else could it be??

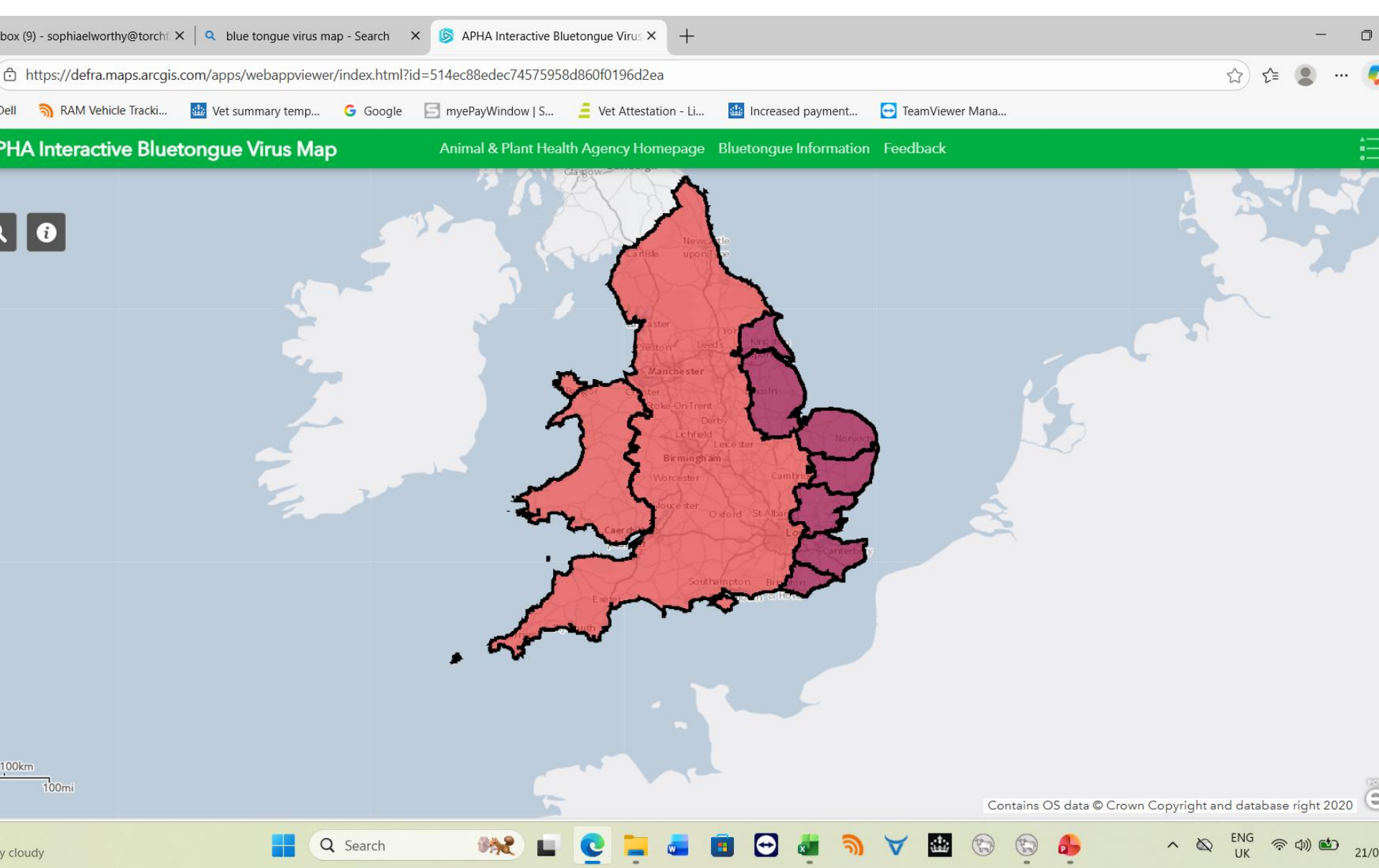
- Foot and mouth disease
- IBR
- BVD
- Plant poisoning –
photosensitisation
- Orf
- Malignant catarrhal fever
- Sunburn



How has the geography of disease changed since 2024.

Restriction zone (RZ) November 2024





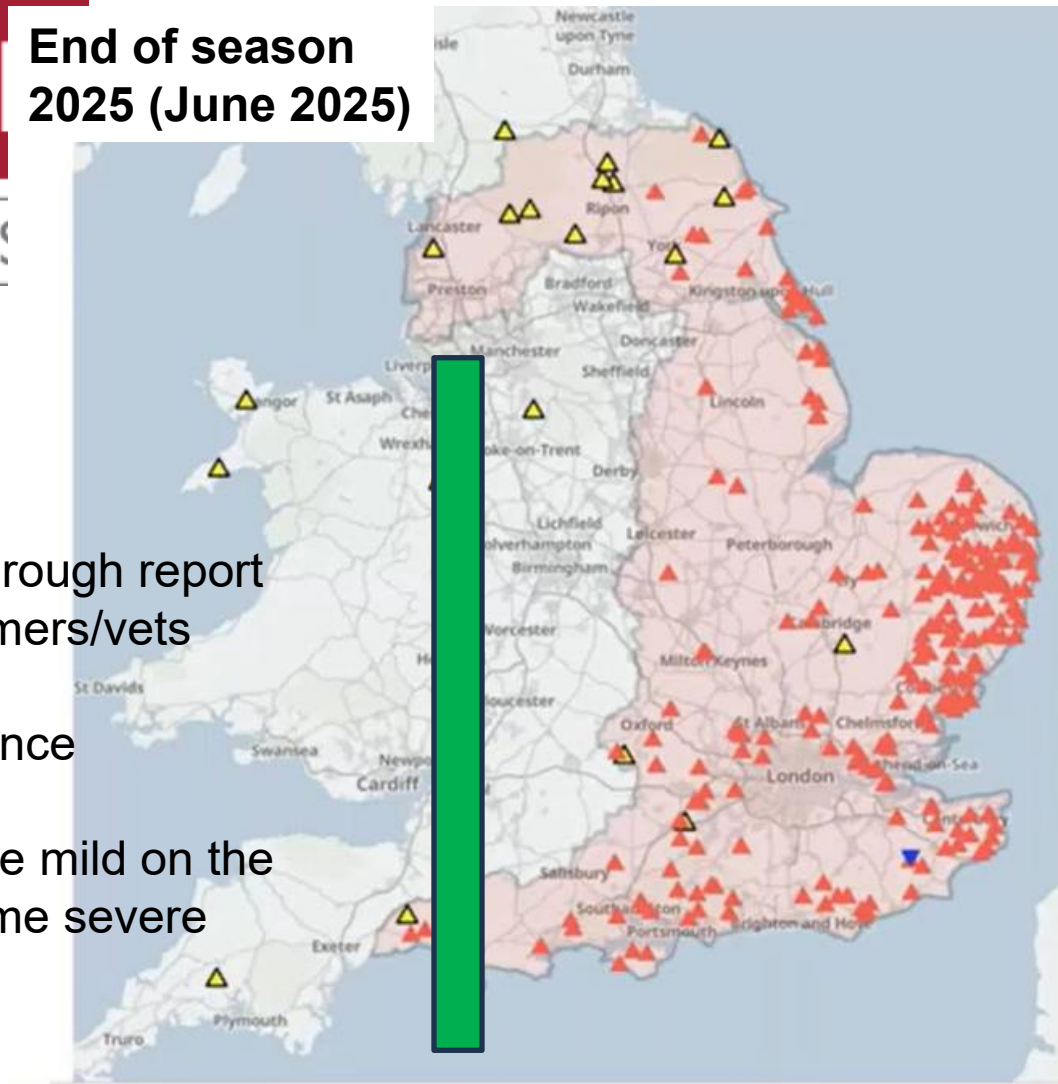
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**End of season
2025 (June 2025)**

262 BTV 3
1 BTV 12

- 50% cases through report cases via farmers/vets
- 50% surveillance
- Clinical picture mild on the whole but some severe



Confirmed Bluetongue Cases since August 2024

Case Type

- ▲ BTV3 Report cases, surveillance and movement testing
- ▼ BTV12 Report cases, surveillance and movement testing
- ▲ BTV3 Tracings from the RZ

Bluetongue Control Zones

- Restricted Zone & Infected Area

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- 
- Cases in July thought to be overwintered more than active transmission from midge

- 1st July 2025 whole England restriction zone on assumption of vaccination control
- Restrictions on germinal products so semen/embryos need authorisation/testing before freezing
- Need licencing to move out of RZ – need to have negative pre movement test to move out of RZ. Licence takes at least 10 working days. Test completed by private vet.
- Cattle vaccinated fully with Bultavo 3 and 21d after second vaccine and licence can move without pre movement test

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Google Charter and Torch Vets Mail blue tongue gov latest situation Bluetongue Cases and Zones

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Animal & Plant Health Agency Overview of Bluetongue Cases & Zones since August 2024 Animal and Plant Health Agency

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News for you Tesco boss issue...

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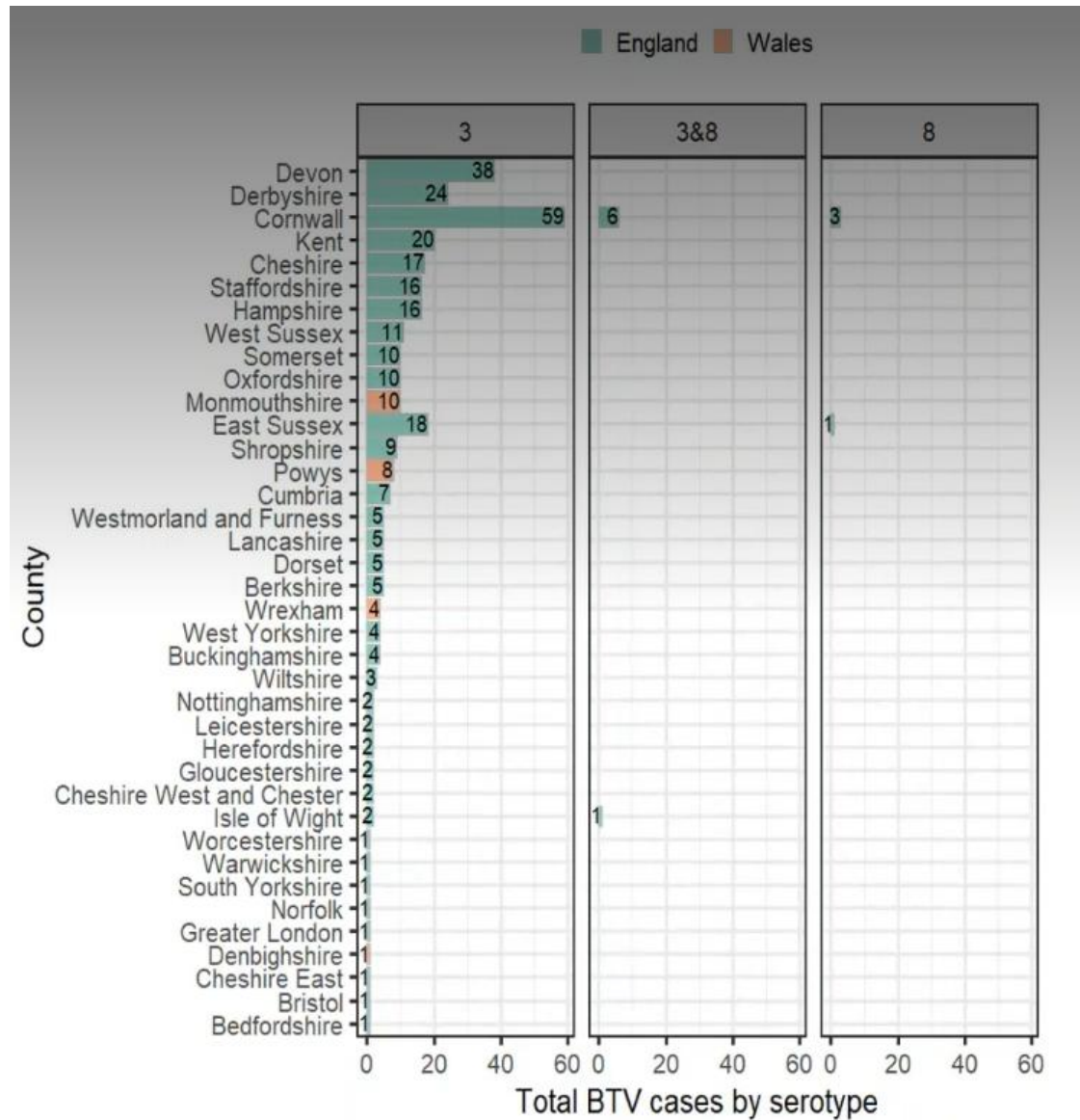
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2025-2026 season

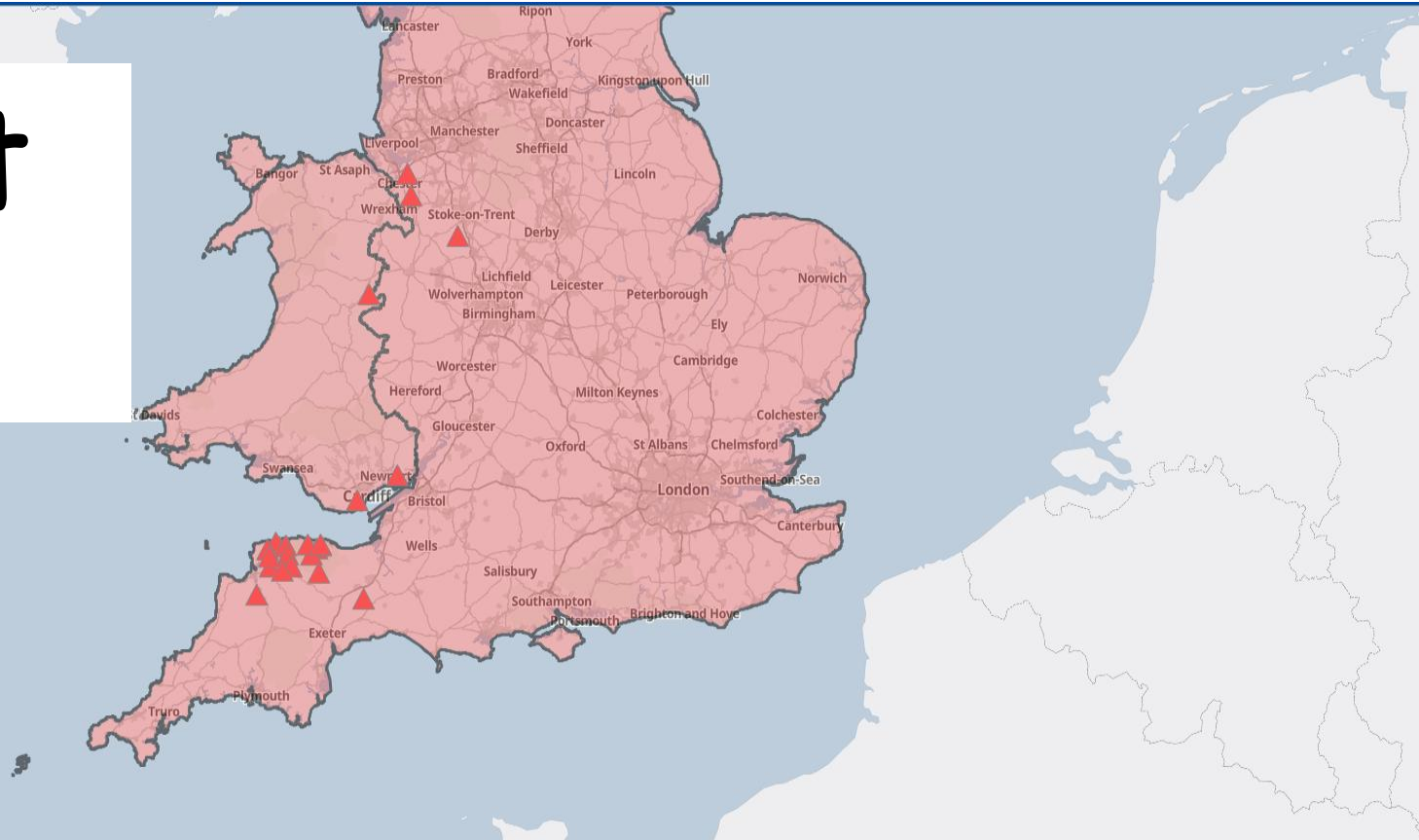
Mostly England
93% in cattle
7% in sheep
A few in deer



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Latest map



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Movements

- Animals must be vaccinated for Bultavo 3 at least 3 weeks pre movement
- Cattle vaccinated don't need testing
- Movement to Scotland is under a general licence which shows evidence of vaccination and test results for sheep
- Can move from Scotland to England and back again as long as stay is not more than 4 days.



Bluetongue Movements Checker - Ruminant Health & Welfare

Movement checker

ASSESS YOUR RISK
PROTECT YOUR FLOCK
DEFEND YOUR FARM

#BattleBluetongue

Movement rules for livestock in GB on holdings that are not under restrictions following confirmation or suspicion of bluetongue

1. Are you in

☒ England

☐ Wales

☐ Scotland

2. Where do you want to go from England?

☐ To a farm in England

☐ To a show in England

☒ To a market in England

☐ To an abattoir in England

☐ To Wales

☐ To Scotland

Prev Next

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12 January 2026

One new case of BTV-3 in England was confirmed on 12 January 2026 following non-negative results from a private test:

- 5 cattle in Kent

9 January 2026

One new case of BTV-3 in England was confirmed on 9 January 2026 following non-negative results from a private test:

- 1 cow in Devon tested as part of screening prior to collection of embryos

7 January 2026

One new case of BTV-3 in England was confirmed on 7 January 2026 following a report of suspicious clinical signs:

- 1 cow in Cheshire which had aborted and 1 aborted calf from a different cow.

6 January 2026

Two new cases of BTV-3 in England were confirmed on 6 January 2026 following a report of suspicious clinical signs:

- 1 cow in Devon with diarrhoea, milk drop, drooling and swollen head
- 2 cows in Cornwall both of which aborted

5 January 2026

One new case of BTV-3 in England was confirmed on 5 January 2026 following a report of suspicious clinical signs:

- 1 cow in Devon with clinical signs including abortion

What happens if I am worried I have a case?

- You have a legal obligation to report as it is notifiable
- Once you have notified APHA they give an authorization number for the local private vet to test (or just contact your vet)
- Ensure rule out FMD EHVD
- Blue tongue 8 is restricted on an animal basis until they are test negative but blue tongue 3 has no restrictions. A pregnant BTV 8 animal will be under restriction until it has given birth and test offspring.
- Up to 3 samples to be tested but farmer pays for sampling process but APHA will pay for lab fees – all serotypes are tested for at Pirbright
- Farmer informed of results and if positive no obligation to cull and no surveillance testing completed.
- No restriction on your holding within restriction zone
- No compensation as no culling



APHA
03000200301

Bluetongue hotline
024 7771 0386

NFU support line
0370 845 8458

Your vet!!

Control

The midge

- Very difficult to control
- Midge proof buildings
- Reduce risk from dung piles
- Insecticides – limited use

Culling

- Only useful if disease isn't actively circulating in midge population
- Once disease is circulating in the midge population, culling becomes ineffective
- Only compensated for healthy animals

The animal

- Movement restrictions
- Sometimes the animal will take the midge with them!!

3. The human

- Biosecurity

Vaccination

Vaccination

– do I or don't I??



- Net vacc rate was dropping in May 2026
- BTV 3 vs BTV 8
- Concerns over fertility in rams/bulls

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Questions to ask yourself!!

1. Do I have Bluetongue susceptible stock
2. What value do I put on my stock
3. Where do I live in relation to outbreaks
4. Am I in a midge population
5. How many susceptible stock are in my area
6. Am I planning to make any movements (especially abroad or into Scotland?)
7. How easy are my animals to get vaccinated
8. What are my current weather conditions like?

- Don't use any other treatments at same time
- Ensure regular needle changes or sterimatic use
- Vaccine currently readily available
- Need to wait 7 days after vaccination before a pre movement test
- Needs to be reported within 48 hours on APHA website (they aren't giving sanctions if you are over the 48 hours)
- Any excess doses need to be returned to the vet for disposal
- Leave at least 2 weeks between blue tongue and other vaccines

Bultavo vaccine:

- Protects against BTV 3
- – in sheep it reduces viral load and prevents clinical signs
- - In cattle it prevents viral load and clinical signs
- Sheep 1 dose of 1ml under the skin
- Cattle 2 doses of 1ml in the muscle
- Onset of immunity is 3 weeks after the primary course

ONLY VACCINATE HEALTHY ANIMALS

No data for when a 'booster' should be given but anticipated to be annual
Only available at present in 50 dose packs but they can be split down in an organized manner by a vet.

Is the vaccine going to do more harm than good

Is it going to destroy my breeding males fertility

- Semen testing has been completed post vaccination with no difference in sample quality
- Two big bull studs use Bultavo with no negative impact reported – they have regular testing completed
- Vaccinate as far outside of the breeding season as practically possible
- Blue tongue can spread via semen so your breeding males are a greater risk for spread

IF YOU DECIDE AGAINST VACCINATION YOU HAVE TO BE PREPARED THAT YOU COULD END UP WITH DISEASE



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[Bluetongue Virus - Ruminant Health & Welfare](#)

[Bluetongue FAQs | AHDB](#)

[NADIS - National Animal Disease Information Service](#)

[Bluetongue: GB disease control strategy – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

ANY
QUESTIONS???