

Updated Outbreak Assessment #3

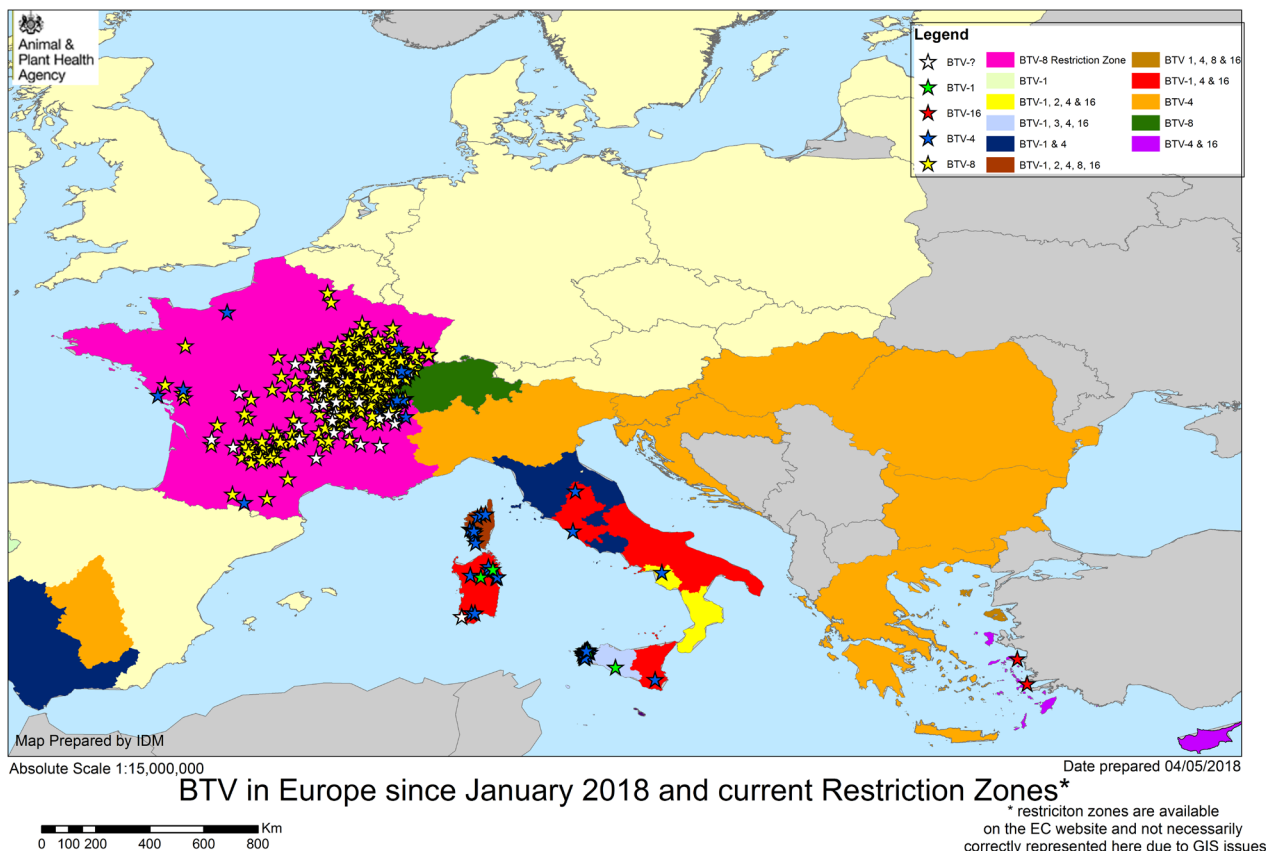
Bluetongue virus (BTV-4) in France

9th May 2018

Ref: VITT/1200 BTV-4 in France

Disease Report

Since our last report on the 4th January 2018, France has recently reported 23 new cases of BTV-4 in various regions (see map). We have also been notified of more than 500 cases of BTV-8 in various departments. Of note is a new case of BTV-4 in the Eure region, on the northern French coast. According to the disease report in ADNS, one out of the 124 cattle tested on the 27th March 2018 was positive for BTV-4 RNA. It is not clear if the test was undertaken as part of the monthly sentinel surveillance programme or under international trade pre-movement testing requirements. Whilst this is the nearest known case of BTV-4 to the UK, it is still over 150 km away and therefore there are no restriction zones in the UK for bluetongue.



Situation Assessment

Little is known about the 23 new reported cases of BTV-4 in mainland France. The most northern of these cases has been reported in Normandy (see map).

Clinical signs were reported in sheep and goats infected by BTV-4 in Corsica, the most common signs being weakness, facial oedema, nasal discharge, low appetite and hyperthermia. However, to date, no outbreaks of BTV-4 with clinical signs have been detected in mainland France (Pandolfi, *et al*).

The majority of these new cases were reported in cattle (22/23) with 1/23 cases being reported in sheep. Moreover, for one of these new reported cases where 2/106 cattle were infected, both BTV-4 and BTV-8 were detected at this location.

Over the winter, France declared low vector activity seasons in several regions, but the majority of the country was not reported as having a low vector activity season. The UK vector season, particularly in the South of England has recently started (end of April, The Pirbright Institute). Average temperatures of the last fortnight in Northern France and Southern England have been below or on the threshold for vector transmission (12°C).

Other changes to restriction zones have been reported in Europe. Switzerland is now under a BTV-8 restriction zone.

Trade in susceptible species may continue to other Member States, provided the animals are vaccinated or naturally immune against both BTV-4 and BTV-8 and transport has been treated with insecticide. Some countries may agree under a bilateral arrangement to accept animals which have not been vaccinated or are not naturally immune but are moved during the low vector activity season. The UK has no such arrangement with France and therefore these animals are not accepted by the UK for trade purposes.

Conclusion

The risk level remains at low for the time being, as it is still early in the vector season although the level of virus circulation in the area is not known, but is likely to be low. We will continue to keep this under review.

We would like to remind all livestock owners that they should source animals responsibly by working with their private veterinarians and livestock dealers to make sure animals are correctly vaccinated and protected prior to travel. **This now means that animals must be correctly vaccinated against BTV-4 and BTV-8 or be naturally immune to both virus serotypes, prior to leaving the Restriction Zone.**

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

We would also like to remind keepers that if they wish to take animals for show purposes to a restriction zone and then return to a free area, they will need to make sure the animals are vaccinated *against both virus serotypes* prior to travelling into the Restriction Zone.

We will continue to monitor the current situation in France and disseminate any further updates from the French Authorities, particularly with regards to the most recent cases and the BTV-4 situation.

Authors

Dr Helen Roberts

Dr Francesca Gauntlett.

References

Pandolfi et al., 2018. http://bulletinepidemiologique.mag.anses.fr/sites/default/files/O-008_2018-03-12_FCO4-France_Pandolfi_VF.pdf



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at iadm@apha.gsi.gov.uk