



Ref: VITT 1200/BT - MOROCCO

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## Bluetongue in Morocco

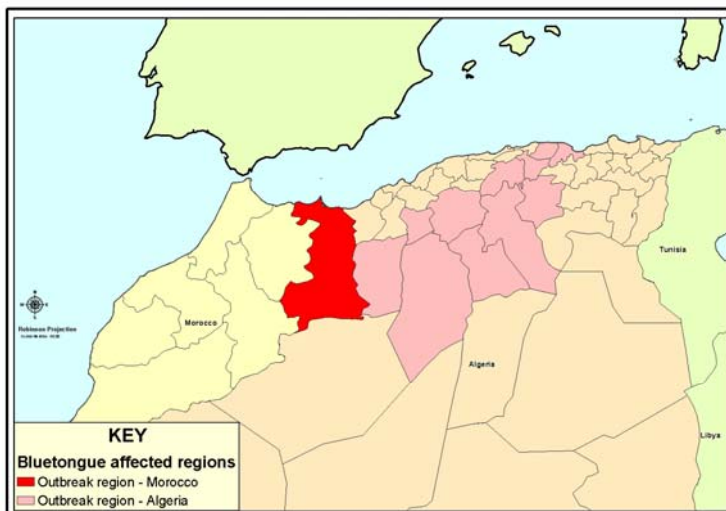
**Note:** Defra's International Animal Health Division (IAHD) monitors outbreaks of high impact diseases around the world. Bluetongue (BT) is among those diseases of major concern.

### Disease Report

Morocco has reported outbreaks of bluetongue in sheep in Jerada Province (also known as Oujda or Eastern province - see map). The outbreaks started on 10 September and were confirmed as bluetongue on 16 October (OIE, 2006). The last outbreaks of BT in Morocco (BTV-4) were in 2004.

### Situation Assessment

Bluetongue BTV-1 outbreaks in sheep recently occurred across a wide area of Algeria



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adjacent to the region in Morocco from where cases of BTV have been reported. At this stage the serotype of the Moroccan BTV outbreak has not been confirmed.

In addition to the outbreak in Morocco, BTV has recently been detected in sentinel animals in Bulgaria (Defra, 2006). Serotyping is still underway.

There have been 11 outbreaks of BT over the last 7 years within the Mediterranean region and Balkans. (serotypes BTV 1, 2, 4, 9 and 16). Most outbreaks are

sporadic. However, vaccination and surveillance programmes are undertaken in Spain, Portugal, Corsica, Cyprus and Italy.

Imports of live ruminants and genetic material are not currently allowed into the UK and EU from Morocco. Meat and other animal products are also not allowed to be imported but do not pose a risk of BT transmission.

**Note:** An outbreak of BTV-8 in Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands is currently ongoing (see <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/bluetongue.htm>). However, this is distinct from the outbreaks in the Mediterranean and Balkan regions.

### Conclusion

Based on the disease report and situation assessment, the likelihood of the introduction of this disease from Morocco into the UK before and after this outbreak is considered negligible. However, a likelihood of an incursion of BTV 1 into Spain and Portugal from Morocco is moderate if suitable weather conditions exist. (The outbreak of BTV 4 in the Iberian Peninsular in 2004 arose from wind transmission of infected midges from the

outbreak in Morocco.). As restrictions on the importation of ruminants from Spain and Portugal are already in place, and together with the presence of BTV surveillance in these countries, the likelihood of introduction of BTV 1 into the UK, should an incursion occur in the Iberian Peninsula, remains negligible.

Currently, IAHD does not intend to carry out and publish a full risk assessment on this outbreak but will continue to monitor developments and re-assess the situation.

## **References**

Defra, (2006). Bluetongue in sentinel goats in Bulgaria. Defra Preliminary Outbreak Assessment [http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/pdf/bt\\_bulgaria\\_oct06.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/pdf/bt_bulgaria_oct06.pdf).

OIE, (2006). Bluetongue in Morocco. OIE Alert message 061031MAR . Received by e-mail Tuesday 31/10/2006.