



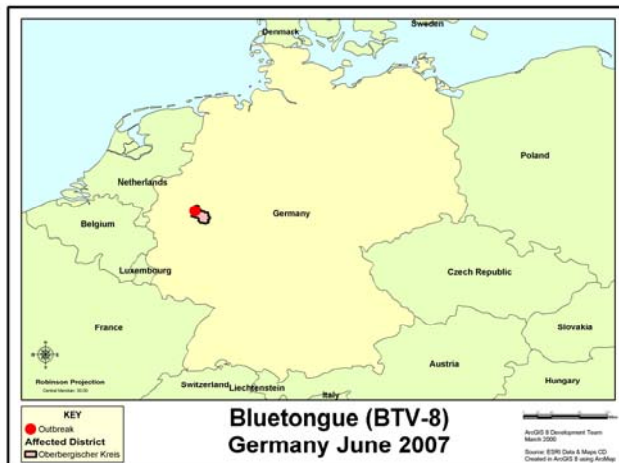
Ref: VITT 1200/BT – Germany
Date: 22 June 2007

Bluetongue in a sentinel animal in Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia)

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

1 Disease Report

On 6 June 2007, the German veterinary authorities reported that the BT virus was demonstrated in a sentinel animal. On this basis the German authorities concluded that BTV-8 has re-emerged in North Rhine-Westphalia (European Commission, 2007). This outbreak is within the BT restriction zones.



2 Situation assessment

No further cases have been reported since this single seroconversion. Further information on this case is expected. On the basis of this limited information it appears that the virus may have 'overwintered'.

3 Conclusions

On the basis of the report we consider that the conclusions of our previous risk assessment are still valid (http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/pdf/bt_germany040407.pdf).

In summary, they are as follows:

- a) There is a low but increased likelihood that BTV-8 virus may be present in the currently affected areas in the EU at the beginning of spring. This is likely to coincide with the time when the population of competent biological vectors is expected to rise. Should this be the case, sporadic cases of BTV-8 may be expected to occur in mid spring, probably leading to more cases by the end of spring and beginning of summer. A peak in outbreaks of BTV tends to occur in late summer but with a pool of infected animals that may be present in spring and early summer, the dynamics of an outbreak of bluetongue could be difficult to predict.
- b) The current developments still present a low but increased likelihood of the introduction of BTV-8 virus to the UK from the currently affected areas.

The likelihood of the introduction of the virus by legal trade in susceptible livestock from areas of the currently affected EU Member States that are allowed to trade would be low. This highlights importance of the continuing post-import testing.

The likelihood of windborne transmission of infected biological insect vectors would increase if new cases continue to be detected in susceptible animals, particularly on the western coast of some of the affected EU Member States. This highlights the importance of maintaining enhanced vigilance for even mild clinical signs indicative of bluetongue in areas identified as at risk on the basis of meteorological monitoring and monitoring of vectors in these areas.

We continue to monitor and review developments.

Reference:

European Commission, (2007). Bluetongue – Confirmation in Germany, Brussels, D1 BVG (07) D/411322, Directorate D – Animal Health and Welfare, 6 June 2007.