

News story: Bluetongue: UK farmers urged to be vigilant as cattle test positive in northern France

Farmers are being urged to be vigilant for signs of Bluetongue virus (BTV) and consider vaccinating their livestock after BTV-8 was detected in cattle in a previously disease-free area of northern France.

[Bluetongue virus](#) is transmitted by midges and can infect all ruminants, particularly sheep and cattle. It can reduce milk yield, cause sickness, reduce reproductive performance or, in the most severe cases, cause death in adult animals.

It does not affect people, and meat and milk from infected animals are safe to eat and drink.

Vaccination is the best way to protect livestock and a safe and effective vaccine is available in Great Britain. Livestock keepers—particularly those on the Kent and Sussex coastline—should discuss with their vet if vaccination is an option which would benefit their business.

The holding where the virus was detected in northern France is less than 150km from the south coast of England. Farmers across the south of England in particular should look out for clinical signs of disease, including mouth ulcers; drooling; swelling of the mouth, head and neck; fever; lameness and breathing problems. Any suspicion of disease must be reported immediately to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) on 03000 200 301.

The [latest expert assessment, published today by Defra](#), is that the risk of an outbreak of Bluetongue virus in the UK is currently low, but will change as we move into summer. The risk of incursion via infected midges later in the summer depends on the level of disease on the continent, proximity to the UK, the vaccination status of animals in the UK and weather conditions.

UK Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

Bluetongue does not pose a threat to human health or food safety, but can have a negative impact on farm incomes, for example by causing reduced milk yield in cows and infertility in sheep.

We have robust disease surveillance procedures and continue to carefully monitor the situation in France, where Bluetongue disease control measures are in place.

Our latest assessment shows the risk of outbreak in the UK is currently low, but the detection of the virus in northern France is a timely reminder for farmers to remain vigilant for disease and report any suspicions to the Animal and Plant Health Agency. I

would also encourage farmers to talk to their vet to consider if vaccination would benefit their business.

More information about Bluetongue—including veterinary advice and information on the vaccine—is available from the [Joint campaign Against Bluetongue \(JAB\)](#).

Regular risk assessments will be published on GOV.UK and all disease control measures are kept under review based on the latest scientific evidence and veterinary advice.

Read the [latest situation assessment of Bluetongue virus \(BTV-8\) in France](#).

[Notice: Emergency closure at Folly Bridge, Oxford: river closure notice](#)

River Thames restriction information from Thursday 25 May 2017 until further notice.

[National Statistics: Monthly sea fisheries statistics March 2017](#)

The monthly landings statistics will be released at 9.30am on the 4th Friday of each month, or the next working day if this is a bank holiday.

[Press release: More than 300 miles of roadworks will be lifted this Bank Holiday](#)

Almost 98 per cent of motorways and strategic A roads will be roadworks-free over the bank holiday.

Highways England is completing 184 and suspending 162 miles of roadworks by

6am on 26 May until 12.01am on 30 May.

And before they set off, to help ensure safe journeys, drivers are reminded to:

- check fuel: make sure you have enough to get to your destination
- check tyres: prior to setting off on a long/significant journey, check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres, including the spare – look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit
- check engine oil: use your dipstick to check oil before any long journey, and top up if needed – take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual
- check water: to ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screenwash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen
- check your lights: if your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT

[See a map showing the locations of lifted and completed schemes.](#)

Suspension or completion of roadworks means that more lanes will be open and many speed restrictions will be lifted.

[Find out more about driving on smart motorways.](#)

Drivers planning to use the Dartford Crossing are reminded to pay Dart Charge in advance or by midnight the day after crossing, and you can find us [online at Dartcharge.](#)

More information about conditions on our roads can be found on our website or by calling our information line (0300 123 5000).

For more detailed information on how to carry out your vehicle checks, [search Think!](#)

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Notice: BS34 9AU, GKN Aerospace Services Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: GKN Aerospace Services Limited
- Installation name: GKN Aerospace Services Limited – Filton
- Permit number: EPR/MP3132XB/V002