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Bluetongue (BTV-1) in Spain

Note: Defra's International Trade Core Function (ITCF) monitors outbreaks of high impact diseases around the world. Bluetongue (BT) is among those diseases of major concern.

1 Disease Report

The Spanish authorities have reported an outbreak of bluetongue (BTV-1) in sheep on a farm in Tarifa, Cadiz province in the autonomous region of Andalucia in the extreme south of the Iberian peninsula. The outbreak was first suspected on 18 July 2007 and was detected on clinical investigation under the Spanish national surveillance programme (European Commission, 2007). This is the first recorded outbreak of BTV-1 in Spain.

2 Situation assessment

This strain of BTV-1 was first reported to be widespread in North Africa during 2006 with

outbreaks affecting Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. It also spread to Sicily and Sardinia most likely via wind-borne dispersal of infected vector midges (mainly *Culicoides imicola*). Morocco recently advised the Spanish authorities that BTV-1 had spread to many areas of Morocco over the past month and it is likely that this outbreak in Spain is the result of similar wind-borne dispersal of infected midges.



A number of serotypes of BTV (1,2,4,9 and 16) have circulated in the Mediterranean basin in recent years. Since 2004, Spain and Portugal have

been affected by BTV-4 and have used live and inactivated vaccines to reduce the economic impact of the disease. Spain has immediately imposed a 150 km radius zone around the outbreak which is within the current bluetongue restriction zone for BTV 4.

3 Conclusions

This development was foreseen by the Spanish authorities. It is potentially serious for Spain and Portugal because the vaccine currently deployed against BTV-4 does not protect against BTV-1. The movement restrictions already in place should, however, minimise any direct risk to the U K. We will continue to monitor and review developments.

4 References

European Commission (2007). Bluetongue in Spain – further information on the finding of BTV serotype 1. Urgent Fax 151 (25/07/2007 17:30). Brussels D BVG (07) D/411769.