



## Food and Farming Group

### International Animal Health

International Disease Monitoring

## Preliminary Outbreak Assessment



Ref: VITT 1200/BT – Germany

Date: 13 July 2007

# Bluetongue in Germany (Nordrhein-Westfalen and Rheinland-Pfalz)

**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

BTV-8 has re-emerged in Germany with three reports on the European Commission Animal Disease Notification System (ADNS) on 13 July 2007. Two outbreaks were confirmed in Rhein-Sieg-Kreis (Nordrhein-Westfalen) on 6 and 9 July respectively. The other was confirmed in Westerwaldkreis (Rheinland-Pfalz) on 6 July 2007. These outbreaks are within the current BT restriction zones (see map).



## 2 Situation assessment

These outbreaks appear to confirm that the virus has successfully 'overwintered' and may be re-emerging in Germany. These events do not significantly alter our previous situation assessments with regard to reported sporadic cases of BT in western Europe.

## 3 Conclusions

On the basis of this disease report we consider that the conclusions of our previous risk assessment still remain valid ([http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/pdf/bt\\_germany040407.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/pdf/bt_germany040407.pdf)).

In summary, they are as follows:

- 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.
- 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 will continue to monitor and review developments.