



Veterinary Group Limited

Equine and Farm Animal

Isle Veterinary Group Ltd

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BLUETONGUE 8 – WHERE ARE WE NOW?

2015 saw the re-emergence of Bluetongue 8 in central France, last seen in the UK in 2008. Although the outbreak currently appears to be contained and mild, Met Office predictions have suggested the risk of virus incursion into Great Britain is 80% by this September. Those of us who remember the last outbreak will recall severe clinical signs in cattle and sheep, affecting productivity and fertility, the effects of which lasted for many months. Following several regional meetings, we have put together our summary of Bluetongue, and our recommendations for control, based on current evidence and available control methods. Please contact the practice if you need more specific advice for your farm.

Cause: A virus.

Transmission: Spread by midges and across the placenta from dam to calf. NOT spread by direct contact between livestock.

Clinical signs: Remember 'BLUE Tongue'. Not all clinical signs present in all cases.

Body - Skin may become reddened, high temperature, depression, lethargy.

Lameness – Coronet swelling leads to lameness.

Udder - Teats swollen and reddened, appear sunburnt. Milk drop.

Eyes – Watery eyes and pinpoint bloodspots.

Tongue – May swell, in extreme cases may appear dark. Discharge and sores around nose and mouth. Blisters on mouth, nose and tongue, progressing to ulcers. Likely to cause drooling. Facial swelling.

Treatment: No specific treatment, but supportive therapy required (especially pain relief).

Control:

BLUETONGUE IS NOTIFIABLE – YOU MUST CONTACT US OR APHA IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR LIVESTOCK ARE AFFECTED WITH BLUETONGUE

Vaccination – this is the mainstay of control and is what halted the last bluetongue outbreak in 2008. Vaccination will protect your livestock for 12 months (starting 3-4 weeks after the second injection) by preventing viraemia, thereby minimising clinical signs and preventing the spread of Bluetongue. We recommend vaccinating all eligible stock.

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Directors: David Scott *MA VetMB Cert EP MRCVS* - Rosanne Smith *BVMS (Hons) MRCVS*

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There are 2 vaccines licensed, we have been informed these should be available at the end of July:

1. **Zulvac 8:**

Zulvac 8 Bovis (for cattle) – 2 x 2ml dose IM, separated by a 3 week interval. Safe for use in pregnant and lactating cows (use in late pregnancy should be done on a risk/benefit analysis). Use in breeding bulls should be discussed on an individual basis with us. Use in calves from 3 months old upwards. 10 dose and 50 dose bottles available.

Zulvac 8 Ovis (for sheep) – 2 x 2ml dose SC, separated by a 3 week interval. Safe for use in pregnant and lactating ewes (use in late pregnancy should be done on a risk/benefit analysis). Use in breeding rams should be discussed on an individual basis with us. Use in lambs from six weeks old upwards. 50 dose bottles available.

2. **Bluevac BTV8** (for sheep and cattle) –

Sheep - 2 x 2ml dose SC, separated by a 3 week interval. Safe for use in pregnant and lactating ewes (use in late pregnancy should be done on a risk/benefit analysis). Use in breeding rams should be discussed on an individual basis with us. Use in lambs from 10 weeks old upwards. 50 dose bottles available. Cost £0.89/dose + VAT (based on 50 doses).

Cattle – 2 x 4ml dose SC, separated by a 3 week interval. Safe for use in pregnant and lactating cows (use in late pregnancy should be done on a risk/benefit analysis). Use in breeding bulls should be discussed on an individual basis with us. Use in calves from 10 weeks old upwards. 25 dose bottles available.

We recommend vaccinating all cattle over 2 ½ months and all sheep over 1 ½ months old.

Once broached, all vaccine in a vial must be used on the same day. Vaccine must be stored in the fridge until required.

There is limited information on the use of these vaccines in species other than sheep and cattle. Clients with other species (eg. goats, alpacas, llamas) should discuss their individual situation with us.

Please contact the practice to order vaccine – we are taking orders now. Please note that enough vaccine for first and second doses must be ordered outright to guarantee supply. As we believe that vaccination is important, both for individual herd and regional security, we are offering the vaccine at the lowest available price we can. We therefore kindly ask that vaccine is paid for on collection.

Midge control – is difficult! The only practical way of controlling midges is to use a pour-on product which contains deltamethrin or permethrin – this may help in the reduction of active midge numbers. 'Butox Swish' and 'Flypor' are examples of suitable products licensed for fly control in cattle, and 'Fly and Lice Spot On' and 'Dectospot' are licensed for fly control in cattle and tick control in sheep. Please note any pour-on products must be applied directly to the skin (rather than on the fleece) of sheep to maximise their

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effect. Withdrawal periods must be adhered to; all are safe for use during pregnancy and lactation.

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