

What is Bluetongue?

Bluetongue is a viral disease spread by insects which affects all ruminants, mainly sheep and cattle.

Bluetongue virus cannot be transmitted directly between animals. It is spread between animals only by midges (of *Culicoides* species), when a midge bites an infected animal and passes the infection to an uninfected animal.

Bluetongue does not affect humans so there are no human or public health implications.

Bluetongue can have significant economic impact in terms of on-farm losses due to death, and reduced productivity. There may also be effects on our ability to trade.

This leaflet provides:

- Information on symptoms of Bluetongue
- Advice to herd and flock owners on what you should do if you suspect your animals have the disease



Department of
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Rural Development**

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All herd and flock keepers should:

Be vigilant – especially in the case of sheep.

- Make yourself aware of the clinical signs of **Bluetongue**
- Monitor your animals carefully



Clinical signs in sheep can include:

- Fever
- Swelling of the head and neck
- Lameness
- Mouth ulcerations
- Drooling
- Haemorrhages in the skin and other tissues
- Respiratory problems
- High mortality rate
- Discoloration and swelling of the tongue (rare)



Clinical signs in cattle:

Although **Bluetongue** often causes no apparent illness in cattle or goats, cattle can display clinical signs including:

- Conjunctivitis (red and runny eyes)
- Swelling and ulceration of the mouth
- Swelling of head and neck
- Saliva drooling from the mouth
- Nasal discharge
- Swollen teats
- Tiredness
- Fever

Bluetongue is a notifiable disease, so if you suspect any signs of the disease you must report this immediately to your local Divisional Veterinary Office or PVP.

Pictures courtesy of: Institute of Animal Health (Pirbright, Surrey).