

Animal Disease Control Branch
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Date 19 October 2007

**To all cattle and sheep owners in
Northern Ireland**

Dear Sir/Madam

BLUETONGUE DISEASE

I wish to remind all cattle and sheep owners of their responsibility in helping to protect Northern Ireland from Bluetongue. Whilst the risk to Northern Ireland remains low at present, in light of the on-going outbreak of Bluetongue in England it is more important than ever that you **remain vigilant** for the signs of Bluetongue.

Bluetongue can have significant economic impacts in terms of on farm losses due to death, sickness and reduced productivity. There are also losses to export revenue as live exports are banned from affected areas.

I am urging you to **inspect your livestock at least daily** for signs of the disease and report any suspicions to your local Divisional Veterinary Office (DVO) immediately. To help you do this, I am enclosing an information leaflet outlining the clinical signs and symptoms that you should look out for.

Anyone who is considering importing stock from affected countries should also seriously consider the advice given on the back of this letter. (A list of affected countries can be found on the DARD website.) It is your responsibility to ensure you do not bring Bluetongue into Northern Ireland.

Detailed information including the current preventive measures in place in Northern Ireland and the up-to-date position in England is available on the DARD website www.dardni.gov.uk/bluetongue.

We will continue to update our website with further information as it becomes available and I would encourage you to view it regularly.

Thank you for continued co-operation in helping to keep Bluetongue out of Northern Ireland.

Yours faithfully



R M Houston
Chief Veterinary Officer

Bluetongue - Advice for Importers

To help protect the industry in Northern Ireland, anyone considering sourcing stock from countries where Bluetongue is present is strongly advised to:

- Think very carefully before importing, i.e. do you **really** need to import?
- Remember all ruminants imported from affected countries* must be tested for Bluetongue. Imported animals are restricted and isolated on their first holding of destination until post-import tests have been completed and negative results received
- Get the vendor to test for Bluetongue before you buy, as a further precaution
- Notify your local DVO **in advance** of your plans to import
- Ensure all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risk of infection during transit
- Notify your local DVO, within the next working day that an animal has been imported into Northern Ireland.
- Keep the animals isolated for at least 30 days
- Check animals at least daily for signs of disease or distress
- Introduce animals gradually to the rest of the herd/flock when you are satisfied they are healthy

REMEMBER: There will be **no compensation paid** for imported infected animals that are slaughtered as a disease risk.

* A list of affected countries can be found on the DARD website



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If you have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the textphone on 028 9052 4420

An Roinn Talmhaíochta agus Forbartha Tuaithe
Máinnystrie o Fairms an Kintra Fordèrin