

Bluetongue Vaccination

As of the 1st September 2008 Wales and England are within the Bluetongue Protection Zone - What does this mean?

There are many implications regarding the movements of stock and vaccination. The situation with stock movements is now a lot simpler. There are no Bluetongue restrictions on the movement of animals between premises within the Protection Zone (all of Wales and all of England). However this means that there is a much greater risk of Bluetongue infected animals carrying disease between areas.

Vaccination is now permitted in the whole of Wales and England.

Bearing in mind the dangers of buying in potentially infected stock our advice would be that you should, where possible, buy vaccinated stock.

Is the vaccine safe?

There have been many rumours about abortions following vaccination, these are so far untrue.

During discussions with Vets that have used the vaccine in England and others there have been no major adverse effects from using the vaccine. The data sheets state that safety of the vaccine has not been established in pregnant or lactating animals, however, anecdotally there seem to be no problems.

There may be an issue with the fertility of males. It is documented that the vaccine (as with many other vaccines) causes a slight increase in body temperature for a day or so following administration. Semen production and quality is closely related to body temperature so the vaccine may reduce the fertility of rams and bulls for 4 weeks following vaccination. It may be worth delaying the vaccination of rams until they are removed from the ewes. As with bulls, consider the work they may be required for following vaccination.

Note: abortion is associated with some of the live vaccines available in other countries. Don't be tempted by cheap internet or import prices, they are ineffective and at worst very dangerous.

There are two licensed vaccines in the UK:

Merial 's BTVPUR AIsap 8 available in 100 dose vials

Intervet's Bovilis BTV8 available in 20 & 50 dose vials

We are not sure about the availability of the vaccine so recommend ordering as soon as possible.

Sheep require one dose injected under the skin. Lambs can be vaccinated from 1 month of age with Intervet's or 3 months of age with Merial's. Cattle require two doses injected 3 weeks apart, calves can be vaccinated from 1 month of age with Intervet's or from 3 months of age with Merial's. The same brand of vaccine should be used for both injections in the primary course. Boosters next year can be with either vaccine.

It should not be administered at the same time as any other vaccine, it is recommended to leave 14 days between Enzovax and Toxovax and the Bluetongue vaccine.

You can administer the vaccines yourself but if the animal is to be exported beyond England and Wales then other rules apply (including movements to Scotland).

Bottles should be used within 8 hours of opening. Immunity is developed in 2 to 3 weeks. There is nil withdrawal (The vaccine can be used on Organic Farms but 7 days organic withdrawal).

Price of vaccine: 50ml and 100ml vials are 60p per dose; 20ml vials are 75p per dose.

Is it too late for 2008?

This is very difficult to answer and vaccination is not compulsory. Here are a few points to bear in mind following conversations with other Vets.

- No major side effects
- 80 to 90% take up of vaccine during July and August
- Last year cases in the UK occurred in September and October
- There have been over 5000 cases in France this year
- There have been positive animals imported in to the UK in Llandysul, Hertfordshire, Sussex and Devon
- Bluetongue movement restrictions have been lifted which makes the movement of animals and virus much easier
- Vaccinated breeding stock and stores may sell better

If you require vaccine contact the Office as soon as possible.