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Via email rural.committee@parliament.scot

23 September 2026

Dear Convener,

I wrote to you at the beginning of this month to update you on further Bluetongue serotype 3 (BTV-3) cases identified in South West Scotland and changes to the Bluetongue Disease Control Strategy.

Since then, unfortunately, further positive cases have been identified by the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), Scotland Sheila Voas. As of 22 September, there have been 33 holdings infected with BTV-3 with 19 affected sheep and 75 affected cattle. Links associated with livestock movements from affected premises in what is now the Scottish Restricted Zone have now been identified as part of the wider veterinary investigation. Infection was detected on two premises, one in south Aberdeenshire and one in Brechin, Angus following tracings carried out by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

On 11 September 2026 the CVO Scotland confirmed BTV-3 in 2 animals on a holding in South Aberdeenshire. These animals were tested on 8 September 2026 as part of a group of 45 traced from an infected premises in Dumfries and Galloway. The premises in Dumfries and Galloway was identified when a positive animal was detected in a premovement test on 2 September 2026. The movement of the batch with infected animals occurred legally on 7 July 2026 before there were any cases detected in Scotland.

On detection of BTV-3 on a premises in Dumfries and Galloway on 10 September, APHA took swift action and conducted tracing and testing of animals on a premises near Brechin which had recently moved from that premises in Dumfries. At that time the farm was in the Scottish Temporary Control Zone (TCZ). Test results confirmed that one clinically healthy cattle is positive for BTV-3, there are currently 414 cattle on the holding and no sheep.

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The Brechin premises remains under official movement controls preventing the movement of BTV susceptible species on and off the premises and sampling of other animals is being undertaken to establish if other animals are affected. Given external temperatures are decreasing, modelling of midge competence and the duration of likely infection, CVO Scotland has decided not to cull the affected animal, nor put in place any wider area based restrictions.

Both traced infected premises were placed under movement restrictions and further surveillance is being undertaken to establish if there is local circulation of the disease.

My officials have arranged to carry out further engagement with key Scottish industry stakeholders on 25 September 2026 to seek opinions on the best strategy for the high-risk season in 2027.

As with my previous letters, I have shared again below some suggested public messaging for you and committee members to promote on their own social media channels below. I welcome your support in circulating these key biosecurity messages. Regular updates are posted on the Scottish Government's social media channels, and you can find posts to share at the following link:

Facebook: [ScotGov Rural | Edinburgh | Facebook](#)

Public Messaging

Bluetongue is a notifiable insect-borne viral disease that affects sheep, cattle, other ruminants such as goats, and camelids such as llamas.

It is mostly spread by midges, although it can also be spread by natural or artificial breeding, and through the placenta from mother to offspring.

It does not affect people or food safety.

Outbreaks can result in prolonged animal movement and trade restrictions. The disease itself can be very serious, with high rates of death in infected sheep and significant fertility and productivity problems in infected cattle.

Animal keepers should be very vigilant for any signs of notifiable disease and immediately report any suspected cases to the [Animal Plant and Health Agency](#). **It is a legal requirement to do so.**

If thinking of bringing animals into Scotland, we call on animal keepers to observe responsible purchasing and ensure they consider the risks carefully, check the health status of the animals and make sure they meet all licence or import conditions.

We strongly recommend all keepers of ruminants consult their private vet on how best to protect themselves, in particular by vaccination against bluetongue.

To keep up to date with the latest information you can [sign up for animal disease alerts from APHA](#). If you have already subscribed to this service from APHA and no longer wish to receive these disease alerts, complete the information on the [subscriptions page](#). You will then have the option to update your subscription.

Further Information

I have also written in similar terms to John Cooper MP, David Mundell MP, Craig Hoy MSP, Finlay Carson MSP, all South Scotland regional MSPs, Dawn Black MSP, Andrew Bowie MP, Dave Doogan MP and all North East Scotland regional MSPs.

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Yours sincerely,



JIM FAIRLIE

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