

Questions for vets to ask clients to help decision of whether to vaccinate against BTV3 (Dec 24)	Answers						Comments
	5 More answers in this column indicates increased reasons for you to vaccinate	4	3	2	1 More answers in this column suggests lower reasons to vaccinate	0	
1. Do you have cattle or sheep &/or other ruminants or camelids?	Yes					No	Clinical signs and severe symptoms are much more likely in sheep than other ruminants but there is logic in vaccination of cattle as they play a very important role in spreading the disease.
2. What is the expected value of the lambs/calves/kids/cria of this flock/herd?	High, valuable breeding animals, rare breed, pedigree.		Average value stock, commercial finishing animals.				
3. Where are you in the UK?	High risk, coastal area in south/east England.				Remote peninsula off the north-west coast of England, no other ruminants on the peninsula & no imports.		If you are not currently vaccinating due to your location, be prepared to keep a watching brief on the location of cases of BTV3 through the 2025 season.
4. What was the prevalence of disease in 2024 in the geographical location of your farm?	There were cases of BTV3 in farms local to me in 2024.		There were no cases of BTV3 in our area in 2024.				It is expected that BTV3 will be more widespread in the UK in 2025 than 2024.
5. What is the density of ruminants in your immediate location?	There are lots of ruminant farms in this area.				My farm is remote from other ruminant farms.		Bear in mind that BTV3 is spread by midges which can fly several miles (~20 miles over land and further over water).
6. Do you plan to move animals from other parts of the country into your flock/herd?	I want to buy in animals &/or I plan to travel animals back home from distant sales or shows.				I will not be moving animals back to my holding from elsewhere in the country.		Midges can be carried in vehicles and BTV3 will also spread the movement of infected animals. Note there is a lag period between animals becoming infected but before clinical signs are apparent.



7. What is the topography of your farm?	There is a restricted area for ruminants on my farm and I don't have options of low-midge areas to move them to.			Either I have an area of the farm which is windy and exposed or I have buildings with midge-proof netting & ventilation and it is realistic for me to keep my ruminants there all summer.	Note that housing ruminants in poorly ventilated buildings may increase their risk of midge bites.
8. How does the vaccination regimen fit in with your handling and management calendars.	Easy to vaccinate and it fits well with existing management.			Difficult to vaccinate due to lack of facilities or ability to handle stock.	Note that in low risk BTV3 period, the risks of using the same needle for more than one animal is the same as for any other product.
9. Consider stage of pregnancy of female animals.	The animals are not pregnant or are in mid pregnancy.			The animals are very early pregnancy or near to giving birth.	In early pregnancy, vaccination stress could impact implantation of the early foetus. Near to giving birth, immune response may be compromised.
10. How many breeding males do you have on your holding?	I only have a few breeding males and I expect them each to serve lots of females.			I have lots of male animals that would be capable of breeding even if some became ill to work.	Each breeding male is valuable and should be a priority to protect.
11. Consider stage of breeding for males.	The reproductive cycle is at a stage where males are not required for at least 2 months.			The males are to be used for breeding within the next 2 months.	Note that BTV3 disease will impact breeding success and semen quality (more than vaccination will) as well as transmit the virus.
12. Consider your herd/flock objectives and future plans to export.	I do not intend selling either animals or germplasm for export out of the UK.			I would like to sell breeding stock and germplasm to other countries.	There may be ongoing impacts of having seropositive animals on future export of either live animals or germplasm.
13. Consider the effectiveness of each	I am keen to reduce the severity of BTV3 disease in my animals.			I will only vaccinate if it guarantees prevention of infection.	The available vaccines are different from each other though there is limited information currently available.



vaccine and the claims they each make.						
14. What have the weather conditions been?	It has been unseasonably warm.		It has been unseasonably cold and windy.			The temperature has to be above 12 <sup>o</sup> celsius for the virus to multiply in the midges. Below this is the transmission free period, though there is a lag after the temperature drops when infected midges are still flying and can still transmit disease.
<b>Other considerations to make re BTV3</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good farm biosecurity practices can help reduce the risk of disease outbreaks. Specifically, with BTV3, this means take care moving animals large distances. Moving an infected animal into a currently free area will risk infecting the local midge population and starting a new outbreak.</li> </ul>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BTV3 is spread by midges so all farms are at risk. Housed animals may be at a reduced risk especially if ventilation rates in the buildings are high. Ensure that ventilation does not compromise welfare. Midge activity varies during the day and is high at dusk.</li> </ul>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concurrent disease in a flock or herd (eg BVDv, parasitism, poor nutrition) may influence the immune status of the animals and their ability to respond to vaccination.</li> </ul>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BTV can be spread by needles at injection. When vaccinating, consider the frequency of needle changes &amp; ideally it should be between every animal. This is particularly important to consider if vaccinating within an area where there is active disease present and during the vector period.</li> </ul>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are currently three unauthorised vaccines available in the UK (Bluevac 3 distributed by Ceva Animal Health; Syvazul BTV distributed by Virbac UK &amp; Bultavo-3 distributed by Boehringer Ingelheim).</li> </ul>					<a href="#">For detailed information about these vaccines then go to the BTV Vaccine Comparison table made for UK vets.</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All three vaccines have been used in goats and camelids in Europe &amp; each of the companies may have more information that they can share with individual veterinary surgeons on a one-to-one basis. The British Veterinary Camelid Society and the Goat Veterinary Society have issued specific recommendations for their members.</li> </ul>					<a href="#">Recommendations can be accessed at BTV3 - information for vets - Ruminant Health &amp; Welfare (ruminanthw.org.uk).</a>	

Vaccination Decision Maker compiled early December 2024 with input from each of the following organisations -

