

# Schmallenberg Virus

## Background:

Schmallenberg virus (SBV) was first identified in 2011 and the disease has spread throughout Europe to Finland in the North, Spain in the South and Turkey in the East.

The majority of cases of Schmallenberg reported within the UK to date have been diagnosed in sheep.

The disease often abbreviated to SBV, is not notifiable and there are currently no implications to trade or movement barriers.

The virus appears to belong to a group of viruses spread by insect vectors, principally midges and mosquitoes.

The first positive SBV case in GB diagnosed in recent months by APHA was in a calf in Cornwall in October 2016. This was followed by four confirmed cases in deformed lambs in the South West of England during December 2016.

County	Dec 2016	Jan 2017	Total
Cheshire		2	2
Co Durham		2	2
Cornwall		4	4
Cumbria		1	1
Devon	4	5	9
Dorset	1	1	2
Herefordshire		1	1
Lancashire		4	4
Norfolk		1	1
Northumberland		2	2
North Yorkshire		6	6
Shropshire		6	6
Somerset	2		2
Suffolk		1	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>43</b>

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## Clinical Signs:

Schmallenberg is a viral disease affecting cattle, sheep and goats. In adult cattle the disease has been associated with symptoms including:

- Milk drop
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhoea
- Late abortion or Stillbirths
- Birth defects in calves, lambs and kids: including limb deformities, malformations of brain and spinal cord.

## Diagnosis:

Post-mortem investigation is the most accurate form of diagnosis.

PCR on EDTA serum taken from cattle within 3 days of the first showing of clinical signs.

Or paired serology with a second serum sample taken 3 weeks after the first.

## Treatment/Prevention:

Unfortunately there is currently no treatment or vaccine for animals infected with the Schmallenberg virus but farmers can help the situation by:

- Being extra vigilant and supporting the gathering of information by reporting newborn limb and brain defects to your veterinary practice. It is important that cases are reported so that the true number of cases can be monitored.
- Consider post-mortem testing. Once a case has been confirmed there is no need to send further samples from that farm.
- Any imports of live animals from EU regions affected by Schmallenberg virus should be undertaken in strict consultation with your vet.
- Although the virus can be transmitted during periods of insect activity clinical signs may not be evident until later in the season. Always assess the risks of bringing stock onto your farm with your vet.
- Be extra vigilant. Remember to practice highest possible levels of biosecurity and quarantine/separation whenever bringing new animals on site. Discuss bio-security measures with your vet.
- There is no Schmallenberg virus vaccine. To improve the ability of animals to counter attack the disease farmers should promote general stock health and vitality by:
  - providing good nutrition
  - optimising mineral and trace element levels
  - controlling internal and external parasites

**Please contact the practice if you suspect Schmallenberg on 01373 451115**