

BLUETONGUE



agriculture,
forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

What is bluetongue and what causes it?

- Bluetongue is a non-contagious, viral disease spread by biting insects.
- It affects species of ruminants, particularly sheep.
- Bluetongue causes many different symptoms in affected animals, including ulcers, sores, painful hooves, lameness and reproductive problems.
- Affected animals can have a slight to severe blue discolouration of the gums and tongue hence the name of the
- The disease occurs worldwide.

Which animals get bluetongue?

- Bluetongue virus affects many domestic and wild ruminants.
- The disease is seen most often in sheep, occasionally in goats, and rarely in cattle.

How can my animal get bluetongue?

- Bluetongue virus is spread by insects called biting midges (*Culicoides* spp.)
Biting Flies may also play a role in mechanically transmitting the virus
- Bluetongue is not contagious and is not spread by contact between animals; there must be midge (vector) to spread the disease. .
- The virus may also be spread from an infected animal to an uninfected animal by using the same needle to inject these animals

How can you tell if your animal have bluetongue?

- Signs of bluetongue include fever, excessive salivation, depression, and difficulty breathing.
- Animals may have nasal discharge and reddened and ulcerated muzzle, lips, and ears.
- The lips and tongue may be very swollen, causing the tongue to stick out from the mouth; the tongue is often bluish in colour, giving the disease its name.
- Abortion or birth of malformed lambs
- The hooves are often very painful, making animals reluctant to move, and in some cases the hooves may actually slough off.
- Sheep that do survive can lose some or all of their wool.

Can I get bluetongue?

- No, humans are not susceptible to bluetongue virus

Who should I contact if I suspect bluetongue?

- Contact your state/private veterinarian or animal health technician immediately if you suspect your animal has bluetongue.

How can I protect my animals from bluetongue?

Regular vaccination with a registered vaccine according to the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No 36 of 1947) and according to the manufacturer's instructions. .

- Dip, spray or apply pour-on with an insecticide to protect animals from midges
- Moving animals into barns during the vector's peak activity time (dusk until dawn).

Feel free to contact your nearest state/private veterinarian/animal health technician for further information

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