



Sheep

The clinical signs of Bluetongue, which vary depending upon viral strain and sheep breed, follow an incubation period of four to 12 days. Usually, only a small percentage of sheep develop clinical signs, however deaths in some flocks can be as high as 70%. In extensively managed flocks, unexplained sudden deaths may be the first evidence of disease. Animals that survive the disease can lose condition with a reduction in meat and wool production.

Affected sheep have a fever (up to 42.0°C) and appear stiff and reluctant to move. They often adopt an arched back stance with the neck extended and the head held lowered. There is swelling of the face and ears, and also pulmonary oedema which may cause breathing difficulties. Erosions may appear on the lips progressing to ulcers. There is often profuse salivation, and a serous to mucopurulent nasal discharge. There may be reddening of the coronary band, and around the muzzle and mouth. The tongue may become swollen and lack of oxygen may make the tongue and mucous membranes appear blue (hence the name of the disease). Though this does not always occur. Bluetongue can also cause pregnant sheep to abort and infection during the breeding season may result in a large percentage of early embryonic losses with sheep returning to oestrus at irregular intervals. Foetal deformities similar to those seen with Schmallenberg virus can also sometimes occur.

Cattle



Affected cattle are febrile (up to 40.0°C) and appear stiff due to swelling of the coronary band at the top of the hooves (coronary band) and are very reluctant to move. There is a serous to mucopurulent nasal discharge and erosions on the muzzle with sloughing of the mucosa. There is lacrimation but no obvious eye lesions. Mortality rates are usually much lower in cattle than in sheep





Should you require any further information please email animal.health@argyll-bute.gov.uk or telephone 01546 605519.