



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 47/24

Update to bluetongue laboratory services during the Christmas period

Date issued: 18th December 2024

Purpose

To outline the extension to the current pre and post movement testing window for bluetongue (BTV) samples over the festive period.

Background

As part of the BTV control measures currently in place in GB to minimise the potential disease spread, most movements of live animals out of the Restricted Zone are subject to the collection and testing of blood samples pre and post movement, to demonstrate freedom from disease.

Due to a combination of reduced resource availability and the closure of laboratories for routine essential maintenance over the 2024 festive period, there will be delays in the testing of the samples and reporting of the results to keepers. Therefore, the window in which these samples can be collected pre and/or post movement have been extended to account for these delays.

Action

Please inform keepers that they need to allow extra time for APHA to process licence applications over the Christmas period.

Any movement licence that currently requires samples to be taken within 5 days of the movement will, between 16 December 2024 to 2 January 2025, have the following extended validity period:

- Samples taken between 16-18 December will be valid until 30 December
- Samples taken between 19-22 December will be valid until 2 January
- Samples taken between 23-29 December will be valid until 6 January
- Samples taken between 30 December and 1 January will be valid until 8 January
- Samples taken on 2 January 2025 or later will be valid for 7 days after sampling, until further notice.

Any samples must arrive at the lab by 9:00am to be included in that day's testing. After 24 December, bluetongue samples will be tested on 30 December and 2 January after which the normal weekday testing service resumes. Consider using a delivery service that can guarantee delivery by your required time. Late samples will be stored in temperature-controlled facilities and tested in the next scheduled batch. Licences will be issued the next working day after test results are reported.

To obtain a licence for movements between:

- 25 and 27 December your samples must be received at the laboratory no later than 9am on 23 December
- 28-31 December your samples must be received at the laboratory no later than 9am 24 December
- 1-3 January your samples must be received at the laboratory no later than 9am 30 December

For any movements completed between 14 and 27 December, requiring a post-movement test, it is permissible to collect samples between 6 and 17 days after the movement (instead of the usual 6-10 days). Keepers and veterinarians should be aware that reporting results may be delayed during the Christmas period, which can delay the removal of restrictions for tested stock.

Further Information

If you have any queries regarding this briefing note, please contact:
Outbreak.Licensing@apha.gov.uk.