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Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease

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Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease (EHD)

France:

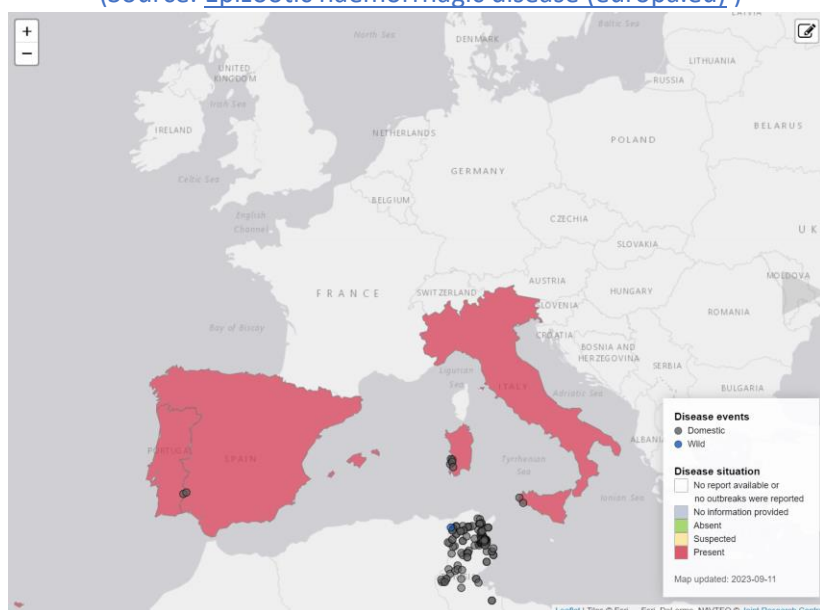
- On 19th Sept 2023, **Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease (EHD)** was confirmed in cattle, on three farms in the Hautes-Pyrénées and Pyrénées-Atlantiques, close to the border with Spain.
- The export of live cattle has been completely banned in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, Hautes-Pyrénées, Landes, Gers, Haute-Garonne and Ariège, and partly in six neighboring departments (Gironde, Lot- et-Garonne, Tarn-et-Garonne, Tarn, Aude and the Pyrénées-Orientales).

Rest of Europe:

- EHD was reported for the first time in Europe, in Sardinia, Italy in November 2022. Since then there have been 11 outbreaks affecting cattle, sheep and red deer. There have also been 2 outbreaks reported in Sicily, Italy affecting cattle. The strain has been confirmed as EHD virus 8 (EHDV-8)
- In November 2022, Spain reported its first outbreak of EHD in cattle. Since then there have been over 140 outbreaks affecting cattle and deer.
- Portugal confirmed its first outbreak of EHD on 19th July 2023. 57 outbreaks have been reported since then, in cattle and deer.
- EHD is present in neighbouring countries to Europe, across the Middle East and North Africa. The serotype of EHDV responsible for the ongoing outbreaks in Italy has been confirmed to be the same EHDV-8 strain detected in Tunisia.

The map below shows the distribution of EHD in Europe as of 11th Sept 2023

(Source: [Epizootic haemorrhagic disease \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/epizootic-haemorrhagic-disease))



Information on EHD

- **Ireland is currently free of EHD**
- EHD is an infectious viral disease that affects primarily deer and cattle. Sheep, goats and camelids are also susceptible although the disease in these species is often subclinical.
- EHD is transmitted between animals by **infected midges of the Culicoides species** (including Culicoides obsoletus which is known to be present in Ireland).
- A wide range of clinical signs are associated with EHD, such as:
 - Fever
 - Anorexia (loss or lack of appetite)
 - Respiratory distress
 - Lesions on the muzzle and lips
 - Swelling of the head and neck
 - Breathing difficulties if the tongue swells
 - Difficulty swallowing
 - Discharge from the eyes and/or nose
 - Lameness
 - Haemorrhages in many tissues including the skin and heart
 - In severe cases, death can result.
- Due to the clinical presentation, bluetongue is a key differential diagnosis, along with foot and mouth disease (FMD) in deer and cattle. Additional differential diagnoses in cattle are bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD), infectious bovine rhinotracheitis, vesicular stomatitis, malignant catarrhal fever, and bovine ephemeral fever (WOAH, 2019).
- There are **currently no vaccines** authorised for use in the European Union for EHD.
- Potential routes of entry into Ireland include:
 - Import of an infected animal
 - Weather conditions allowing for infected biting midges to be carried on the wind to Ireland from EHD affected countries.
- Farmers, veterinary practitioners and other relevant stakeholders should remain vigilant during the high risk period for transmission of vector borne disease including EHD and Bluetongue.
- EHD is a notifiable disease, therefore, any suspicion of disease must be reported to the local [Regional Veterinary Office \(RVO\)](#) without delay.

Importers of EHD susceptible species: Key messages to prevent EHD entering Ireland.

1. Instead of importing EHD-susceptible animals from mainland Europe, consider if there is another way you can achieve the breed /genetic changes you seek (e.g., via artificial insemination)
2. If you must import live animals, only do so during times when midges are less active (Dec – Mar)
3. Only import animals, germinal or biological products from reputable sources.
4. Ensure the animals are EHD virus-free before they leave the exporting country by requesting a pre-export PCR test for the virus.
5. Isolate imported animals indoors as soon as they arrive onto your holding, and monitor them closely for any signs of illness. Biosecurity advice for farmers importing livestock can be found [here](#)
6. Ensure all imported animals from mainland Europe are visited by an RVO vet within 5 days of arrival into Ireland.

Contact your [local RVO](#) for more information before deciding to import.

Further information on EHD

Please consult the following resources for further information on EHD virus:

- [World Organisation for Animal Health \(WOAH\)](#)
- [Epizootic haemorrhagic disease \(europa.eu\)](#)

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