



Bluetongue Found in Ontario Beef Cattle

On a conference call yesterday with the Market Access Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the CFIA, ACFA learned three beef cattle in southwestern Ontario tested positive for Bluetongue. They are Canada's first cases of Bluetongue outside the Okanagan Valley and showed no clinical signs. The disease was discovered through regular testing being conducted every six months.

The type of Bluetongue found in Ontario was serotype 13. This serotype is **not** a *reportable* disease in Canada, but a *notifiable* disease (Bluetongue serotypes 2, 10, 11, 13, and 17 are *notifiable* and not *reportable* because they are types endemic in the U.S.).

What will CFIA do?

The CFIA notified the OIE yesterday afternoon, around 4:00 pm, that cases of Bluetongue were discovered in southwestern Ontario. CFIA will also be talking directly with Canada's trading partners to alleviate any potential impact and disruption to trade.

At this time, no mitigation, control, or eradication strategies are being declared. Unlike reportable diseases — which always involve the CFIA carrying out control and eradication measures — there are no response programs mandated for notifiable diseases. For notifiable diseases, Canadian laboratories are required to notify the CFIA of any confirmed cases so prevalence can be tracked. This supports our international reporting requirements.

The CFIA has advised they will increase their testing for Bluetongue, moving from tests every six months to every two months. They will consult with industry prior to taking any further steps.

Impact

Canada will likely lose its Bluetongue-free status under the OIE. When Bluetongue was discovered in the Okanagan Valley five or six years ago, the CFIA managed to secure a regional declaration from OIE where all of Canada — outside the Okanagan Valley — was still considered Bluetongue-free. Thus, any detection of the U.S. serotypes originating from the Okanagan Valley or the U.S. would not impact Canada's Bluetongue-free status. However, the disease has now spread in Canada, likely affecting this status.

At the same time, the CFIA does hope our trading partners will recognize the five ecologically distinct zones identified by the CFIA, so only the zone where the detection occurs may be subject to any possible trade restrictions. This may or may not be accepted.

ACFA heard the impact on trade is expected to be minimal for cattle feeders. Trade in live cattle exports and beef to the U.S. will continue, as Bluetongue is endemic there. ACFA also spoke with cattle feeders in the Okanagan Valley about their past experiences with Bluetongue. They reported no impact as long as the serotypes discovered in Canada are the same as the ones endemic to the US. (We heard that another positive had recently been found in the Okanagan this summer.)

All the same time, *some* exports of live cattle and embryos to *some* markets may be impacted. In future, some markets may require a herd be certified as being disease-free in order to meet import requirements.

ACFA will keep you abreast of any developments. For more information on Bluetongue, you can visit the CFIA website here:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/bluetongue/fact-sheet/eng/1306116803992/1306121522520>