

# Bluetongue jumps from cattle to sheep

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Britain's bluetongue outbreak has jumped species, having been found in sheep after first infecting cattle this summer.

The virus has infected 60 sheep and cattle, spreading to 36 farms in Suffolk and neighboring Essex, The Telegraph reported Sunday.

Disease experts fear the insects that carried the virus from mainland Europe will survive the winter in sheds and barns, and may continue spreading the virus into December, which could decimate nation's sheep industry, the British newspaper reported.

Restrictions on moving livestock have caused chaos as autumn is one of the busiest times for farmers to send animals for slaughter and to prepare for the breeding season.

The restrictions are to be eased this week on animals not in the bluetongue zone that are being sent directly to slaughter. But Frank Langrish, who owns 10,000 sheep in Suffolk, said it is too little, too late.

"The backlog of animals that need to go to slaughter is frightening," he said. "As these lambs are grazing far later than they normally would, it is leaving less food for the breeding ewes over the winter."

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