Be vigilant for signs of Schmallenberg in ruminants

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The British Veterinary Association is recommending farm vets and farmers make sure they are aware of the clinical signs of Schmallenberg virus – a new and emerging disease in Europe – particularly if the farm has imported animals from affected countries (Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium).

Commenting Carl Padgett, President of the BVA, said:

“Farmers and vets should be extra vigilant where ruminants have been imported from the affected areas. The symptoms described in adults are quite generic but this disease seems to affect a few animals, not just one.

“Clinical symptoms initially reported in the affected areas include fever, reduced milk yield, loss of appetite, loss of condition and in some cases diarrhoea, with clinical signs disappearing after a few days.

“AHVLA is now looking for reports of signs in newborn ruminants and aborted foetuses of limb or brain defects such as arthrogryposis, jaw deformations and torticollis, and ataxia, paralysis and blindness. They are particularly interested if these offspring were born to animals where there is a history of importation from the infected areas in northern Europe.

“Any suspect signs should be reported to the local AHVLA or SAC laboratory.

“As information and knowledge about this disease is accruing all the time vets and farmers are strongly advised to keep up to date via the Defra website.

“Although the risk of transmission to humans is considered very low it cannot be excluded and we recommend farmers and vets take all sensible precautions to prevent infection.”