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Distribution of Culicoides, bluetongue virus vectors, on Belgium farms

Bluetongue (BT) is a non-contagious vectorborne disease of domestic and wild ruminants that has caused considerable economic losses to the sheep and cattle in northern Europe. The biological vectors of BTV are biting midges of the genus Culicoides.

During this study, populations of biting midges were monitored on a cattle and a sheep farm in the province of Namur (Belgium). UV light traps were placed both indoors and in nearby meadows. Results of trappings showed that Culicoides are most abundant close to livestock buildings than in surrounding meadows; meadows had however a greater species diversity and therefore a lower percentage of species known as vectors of BTV. The statement of minimum and maximum temperatures, as well as observation of females' physiology completed this study.

