On 2 April 2012 the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its second report on the Schmallenberg virus (SBV), to date identified in animals in eight European Union (EU) Member States (MS) [1]. In this report, EFSA compiled and analysed data on PCR or serologically confirmed cases in the MS and these data show that the proportion of infected ruminants is low even if the figures need to be looked at with caution. The report contains maps showing the distribution of the animal cases.

The Schmallenberg virus can affect both wild and domestic ruminants, but there is currently no evidence that it can cause illness in humans.

The SBV is a newly recognised Orthobunyavirus that was first detected in November 2011 in cattle in the Netherlands and Germany. Since then, the SBV has been reported in ruminants from Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

The disease causes transient clinical signs in adult cattle (fever, diarrhoea, reduced milk yield, etc.), abortions and congenital malformation in newborn animals. The virus is assumed to be primarily transmitted via biting midges.

References