

Schmallenberg virus: Infection through food unlikely

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In the summer of 2011, the Schmallenberg virus was detected in cattle in Germany for the first time. The virus can lead to febrile disease in the animals. Infection of pregnant cows, sheep or goats with the virus often results in miscarriage and malformations of the fetuses.

The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has looked into the question whether consumers are at risk of infection with the virus via the consumption of meat or milk of affected animals.

A conclusive risk assessment is not possible at present, because only scant data are available on the Schmallenberg virus. However, no cases of human disease associated with this virus have been reported so far. In view of data on other viruses which are closely related to the Schmallenberg virus, it is not to be expected that the virus, either directly from animals or through foods such as meat or milk, is transmitted to humans.

The full version of this BfR Opinion is available in German on <http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/schmallenberg-virus-infektion-ueber-lebensmittel-unwahrscheinlich.pdf>