



ASF Expert Mission to Croatia

EU VET Initiative

14 - 16 November 2023

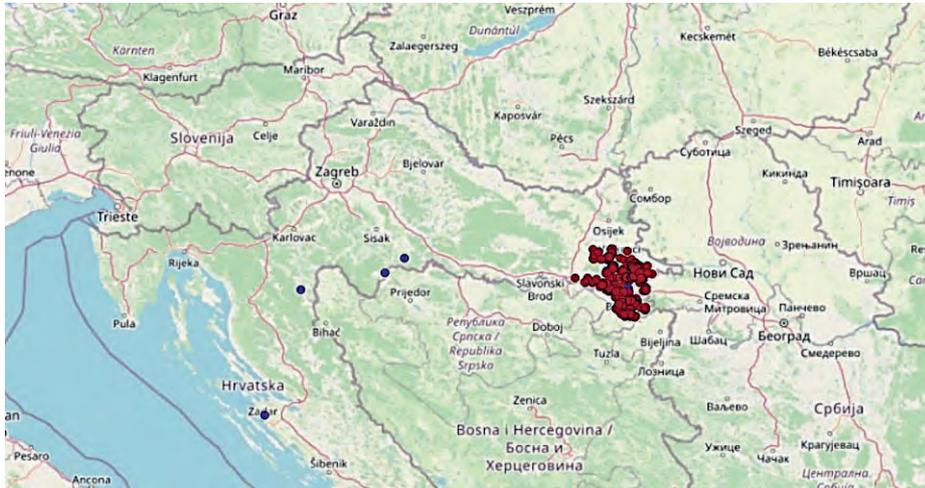


Terms of Reference

- 1. The experts should provide scientific, technical, managerial and practical assistance on the spot on the refinement of the most suitable control and eradication measures for African swine fever (ASF) under local conditions, especially as regards preparedness, surveillance, coordination efforts and eradication in domestic pigs, and surveillance and control in wild boar.*
- 2. The experts should report exclusively to the Commission services and the authorities of Croatia. Continuous contact should be guaranteed between the team, the Commission services and authorities of Croatia.*
- 3. The experts should provide a written report with conclusions and recommendations aimed to the competent authority. A report to the Commission and the Member States in the framework of the Standing Committee on Plant, Animal, Food and Feed should be delivered.*
- 4. The experts shall operate under the provisions laid down in Commission Decision 2007/142/EC and based on the standard rules of procedure for groups of experts.*

Gunda Lubek (Germany), Marius Masiulis (Lithuania), Tsviatko Alexandrov (Bulgaria)

Background



June - 13th November 2023:

- 1113 ASF outbreaks in domestic pigs, all in small establishments in 28 municipalities in three counties in the Eastern part of the country
- 9 cases in wild boar



Places visited during the mission:

Day 1

Veterinary and Food
Safety Directorate
General (Ministry of
Agriculture)

Day 2

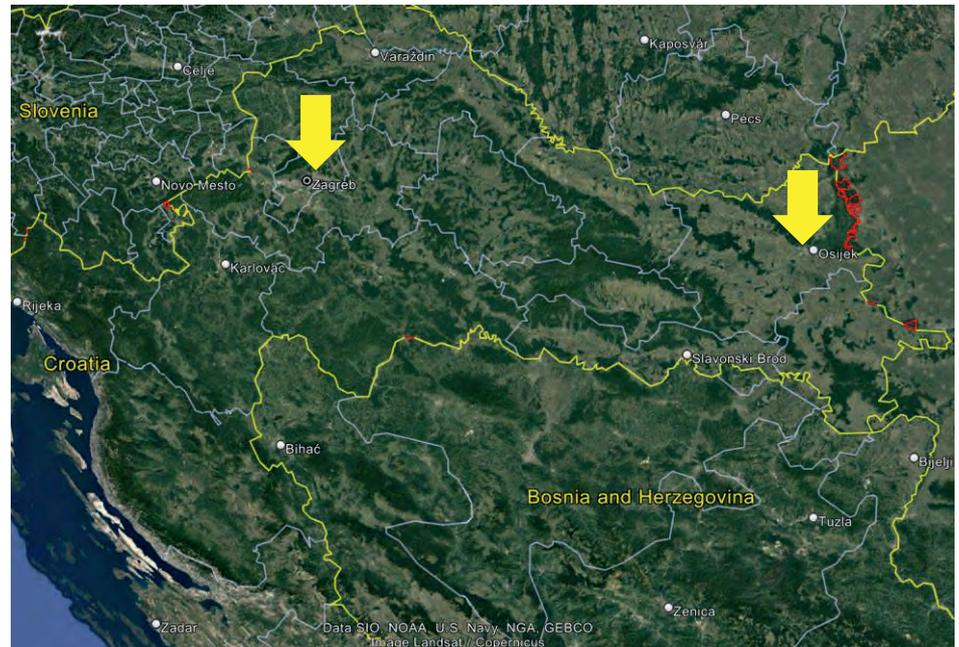
Osijek-Baranja County

- LCC

- Non-affected establishment
- ASF affected establishment

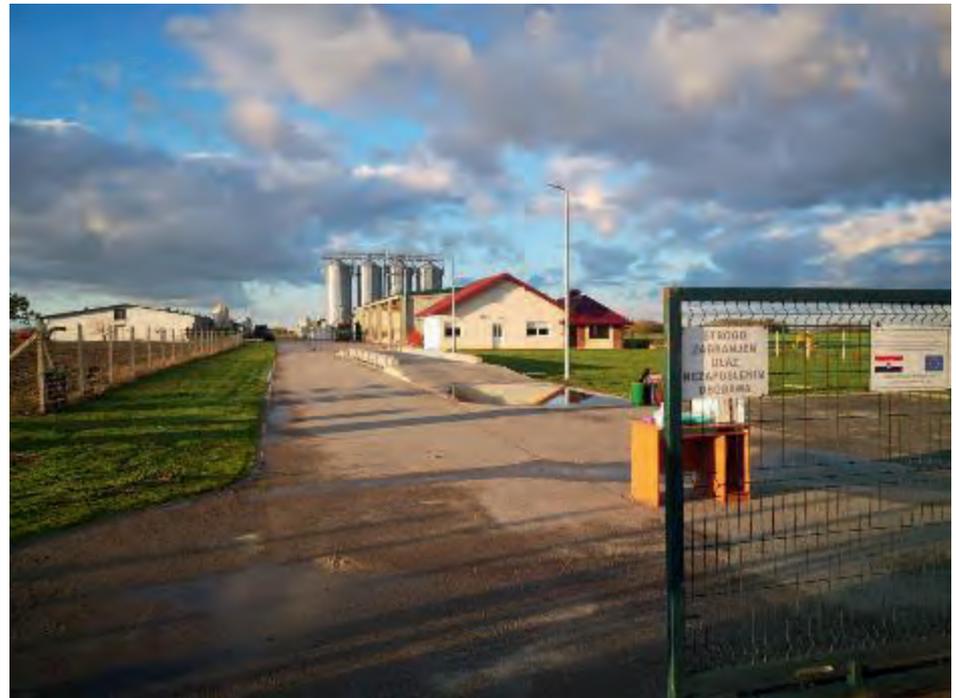
Day 3

Ministry of Agriculture



Non affected pig establishment

- *"Category 3" since 2019;*
- *600 sows;*
- *12000 piglets produced per year;*
- *In ASF restricted zone;*
- *Biosecurity plan in place;*
- *No other pig holdings around;*
- *No wild boar reported in the area.*



Affected domestic pig establishment

- *"Category 3" since 2019;*
- *21 pigs;*
- *ASF was confirmed on 18th October 2023;*
- *one pig died and ASF positive;*
- *All other pigs tested and ASF negative;*
- *9 establishments ASF positive in the same village.*



Two affected establishments on the other side of the road.



Overall conclusions

The competent veterinary authorities with the staff available put enormous efforts and dedication to impose and implement the most appropriate and feasible measures to prevent and control ASF in the current situation and local circumstances.

The high density and high number of small commercial pig establishments in the affected areas facilitated and contributed to the disease spread, complemented by the social factor and habits of the local population. At this point wild boar seems not to be involved and cause of the spread of the disease among the domestic pig

The high density of pig establishments and the traditional movement patterns are at high risk for ASF and its further spread.

There are numbers of non-registered farms identified in the areas under restriction due to the presence of ASF. The current policy needs to be more enforced, to improve the registration (including identification of pigs) of all holdings and traceability of pig movements



“Weak” points

The high density and high number of small commercial pig establishments in the affected areas.

Prolonged time for risk management of settlements or part of them that could be considered as epidemiological units.

Lack of up-to-date data in the database on the actual/real census of the pigs in the affected areas at the start of the epidemic

The different databases used by the veterinary authorities

Driven hunt of wild boar performed in already infected zones

Recommendations

- 1. The identification and registration system must be adapted to the needs for regular and timely update of the pig census, ensuring up-to-date information for the pigs in the animal holdings and proper traceability that is functionally available to all users in a timely manner.*
- 2. In case of detection of non-registered holdings, preventive slaughtering measures or culling of animals should be further enforced.*
- 3. There must be a clear definition established for non-commercial and commercial establishments. The system for categorization of pig holdings based on biosecurity needs to be revised to fit the purpose of ASF prevention, control and eradication.*
- 4. Risk mitigation measures must be at high priority for the large industrial establishments that represent 90% of the pig production of Croatia.*

5. *The epidemiological units in case of an ASF-detection need to be carefully defined based on risk assessment, proximity and direct or indirect link between the different establishments and the same likelihood of exposure to the disease agent.*
6. *Outside the areas under restriction due to ASF the home slaughtering of pigs should be notified; during the home slaughtering a private veterinarian should be present and in case of suspicion samples should be taken.*
7. *It is recommended to perform a pooling of samples for PCR testing from the same pig establishment or epidemiological unit based on the recommendations of the EU Reference Laboratory for ASF*

8. *The data for the public needs to be easily accessible and up to date, i.e. an interactive map or up-to-date table including the location of the outbreaks and the restriction zones on the website of the Ministry. The Ministry needs to further enhance regular and timely dissemination of information on the epidemiological developments and measures in place to all stakeholders including the local levels.*
9. *Passive surveillance in wild boar needs to be further enhanced all over the country.*
10. *It is highly recommended that driven hunting should be banned at least in the infected zone and surrounding those areas.*



The EU-VET team would like to thank all colleagues from Croatia for their support and help!

The working atmosphere during the mission was excellent. The colleagues gave us all their support and help to make the mission fruitful!

