



# ANIMAL HEALTH THE EU'S FIGHT AGAINST AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

September 2023

Prevention, control and eradication of African swine fever (ASF) is a matter of high priority for the EU as it represents a serious risk for pig farming, the European eco-system and environment as a whole.

## WHAT IS AFRICAN SWINE FEVER?

- ▶ ASF is a devastating viral and infectious disease which, in Europe, affects both domestic pigs and wild boars.
- ▶ Once the virus infects them, the animals become sick and die within a few days.
- ▶ The disease is currently present in **fourteen Member States**: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden. **Three Member States** (Belgium, Czechia and Greece) had successfully eradicated the disease but it recurred in Czechia and Greece because of the natural movement of wild boar. Belgium is still ASF-free.
- ▶ **Vaccination is not available yet** but research is ongoing, supported by the **HORIZON 2020** and Horizon Europe programmes.



## HOW IS ASF TRANSMITTED?

ASF is a very persistent virus and can be transmitted through:

- ▶ direct animal contact between sick and healthy animals
- ▶ infected material (vehicles, clothes, boots etc.)
- ▶ contaminated food (e.g. sausages or uncooked meat)

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO FIGHT ASF?

- ▶ The persistence of ASF in the **wild boar population**, which has developed in an uncontrolled manner, together with the **potential contamination of pig farms**, presents challenges for animal welfare and a serious economic threat.
- ▶ The EU is a **leading global exporter** of pig products, with a trade balance which remains hugely positive.
- ▶ **Measures to fight the disease in wildlife** are compatible with EU environmental legislation, including nature protection requirements, impact and effectiveness.

## IS IT SAFE TO EAT PORK ?

Whilst it is **safe for humans to eat pork**, the meat and other pork products (i.e. sausages) derived from infected animals remain **infectious for pigs and wild boar over a long time**.

## KEY FIGURES



**250 million pigs** are **slaughtered** each year in the EU.



There are **1.5 million pig producers** in the EU, but with production very heavily concentrated.



**2%** of producers account for **75%** of production with **Spain, Germany and France** representing

more than **50%** of EU production.



### WHAT HAPPENS IF AN OUTBREAK OCCURS?

- ▶ If a farmer suspects an ASF case or if a dead wild boar is found in a forest, the **competent veterinary authority** shall be immediately notified.
- ▶ **Virological and serological tests** can diagnose ASF in a laboratory.
- ▶ Once a Member State confirms the presence of ASF, it reports it to the European Commission.
- ▶ Once a farm is contaminated, all animals have to be slaughtered.
- ▶ If the Member State was previously ASF-free, a **European Union Veterinary Emergency Team** can be deployed within a few days to provide advice on how to deal with the outbreak.



### ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

- ▶ **Coordination** of the actions of Member States to prevent the occurrence of ASF and to control the disease, including through experts' meetings;
- ▶ Coordination of Regional and global, multilateral and bilateral discussions with third countries and international organisations (WOAH, GF-TADs) on ASF
- ▶ **Development and update of legislation, including regionalization, and guidelines** to take into account the evolution of the disease;
- ▶ **Support to Member States** to scale up national efforts on awareness campaigns amongst hunters, veterinarians, farmers and the general public;
- ▶ **Organisation** of ad hoc trainings for Member States and third countries;
- ▶ **Maintain** of the EU diagnostic capability for ASF in all 27 Member States through the EU Reference Laboratory for ASF;
- ▶ **Regular update** of scientific opinions requested to the European Food Safety Authority and **support for vaccine research**.



### HOW CAN DOMESTIC PIGS BE PROTECTED?

- ▶ Very stringent **veterinary and biosecurity measures** exist within the EU to prevent the spread of the virus from wild boars to domestic pigs and to contain any outbreaks in domestic pigs.
- ▶ The **“human factor”** is closely related to long distance “jumps” of the disease.
- ▶ Step up the awareness, knowledge and education on ASF (in combination with other measures).



### WHAT DOES LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF WILD BOAR POPULATIONS ENTAIL?

- ▶ **Intensive hunting and not feeding wild boar** are essential to reduce the risks of outbreaks in free areas.
- ▶ **Specific measures and joint programmes of cooperation** between the agriculture and environmental sectors (hunting management, ban of supplementary feeding, agricultural practises) are tailored to the particular situation of each Member State.
- ▶ Development by Each Member States of “National action plans for wild porcine animals in order to avoid the spread of African swine fever in the Union.

### WHAT IS THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE EU?



The total allocation of EU funds for ASF for the period 2013-2023 is around **€215 million**.

**VETERINARY PROGRAMMES:**  
**AROUND 93,000,000**

**EMERGENCY MEASURES:**  
**AROUND 122,000,000**

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