

Chair's Conclusions from the high-level Ministerial meeting on African swine fever (Brussels, 27 September 2022)

General

- African swine fever (ASF) keeps **spreading globally** and remains one of the most challenging animal health issues the world is facing.
- Prevention, control and eradication of ASF, **remains a matter of high priority for the EU** as it raises food security concerns and represents a serious risk for an important sector of farming, the wild boar population and the environment.
- The use of National strategic plans under the EU's **Common Agricultural Policy** for ASF prevention should be further promoted. Evidence and experience show that improved biosecurity is key in the prevention of any further spread of diseases into pig farms. Enhanced biosecurity coupled with structural changes in the pig farming are required to ensure **sustainability of the sector** in the Union in the long-term.

I. How to further raise awareness?

- **Knowledge on ASF**, including of disease symptoms, consequences and possible means of prevention including biosecurity and control, is a prerequisite for efficient ASF management and essential in ensuring the early detection of this challenging disease.
- The continuous risks of long distance jumps of ASF virus due to **human behaviour** requires permanent efforts at EU, national and local levels to reinforce disease awareness and preparedness.
- The Member States concerned should continue organising and carrying out **specific trainings** concerning the risks of ASF and possible prevention, control and eradication measures to targeted groups (such as veterinarians, farmers and hunters) as part of their contingency planning.
- Improved biosecurity at small farms is crucial in the prevention of further spread of ASF, therefore the national efforts of Member States on **stepping up the knowledge and education on ASF** (in combination with other measures) should be focused on this sector, where relevant.
- The Member States should consider using social sciences to better target and increase impact of awareness on ASF.

II. How to foster R&D to achieve an ASF vaccine?

- Despite **unprecedented efforts in the Union** to prevent, control and eradicate ASF, based on the current scientific knowledge, a full ASF eradication in wild boar in wide areas might be very difficult or even hardly achievable.
- **Safe, effective and sustainable vaccines are required** as additional tool to prevent further spread, more effectively control and eventually fully eradicate ASF at global level, including in wild boar.
- Despite decades of ASF vaccine research and development funded by the EU, no safe and efficient vaccine is available yet worldwide. Therefore, a **higher level of ambition and innovation is now needed** for the successful and timely development of ASF vaccines.

- Potential synergies and **cooperation with EU trading partners and global scientific community** fostering research & innovation investments concerning vaccine candidates against ASF should be further explored.

III. What could a long-term wild boar management in the EU look like?

- Based on scientific evidence, **wild boar play an important role** in the transmission and persistence of ASF virus, representing a constant threat for pig farms.
- As some experience shows, **the absence of action in wild boar could result in an uncontrolled, rapid and devastating spread** of ASF throughout vast territories.
- The continuous risk of ASF spread through wild boar populations requires **long term planning on how to control and reduce, where appropriate, wild boar populations** and ensure optimal coordination of national resources involved.
- Such long-term efforts could be coordinated within the Member States through **national action plans for the management of wild boar in the framework of the prevention, control and eradication of ASF** ensuring effective collaboration and cooperation between agriculture and environmental sectors and through the strong collective commitment and mutual understanding by both sectors and relevant stakeholders, such as farmers and hunters.
- Successful experiences of ASF eradication following a focal introduction of the disease in wild boar in limited areas of the **Czech Republic and Belgium** should be considered and used, where relevant, as best practises by the Member States concerned by ASF.