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ASF EUVET Mission to Italy

9 - 13 July 2023

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Background



In the first half of 2023, numerous cases of ASF in feral pigs and ASF outbreaks in domestic pigs were detected in Campania and Calabria.

ToR

Providing on-the-spot assistance

- most suitable ASF eradication measures
- scientific, technical, managerial aspects
- preparedness and surveillance in wild boar
- preparedness and surveillance in domestic pigs

Key issues addressed

Virus origin:

Where from and how did the virus enter the areas in Campania and Calabria?

Is there a possible connection to other affected regions in Italy?

High risk period (HRP):

When did the virus entered the affected areas?

Measures:

What are the most urgent measures to get more clarity on the ASF situation and to avoid virus spreading into non-affected neighbouring regions?

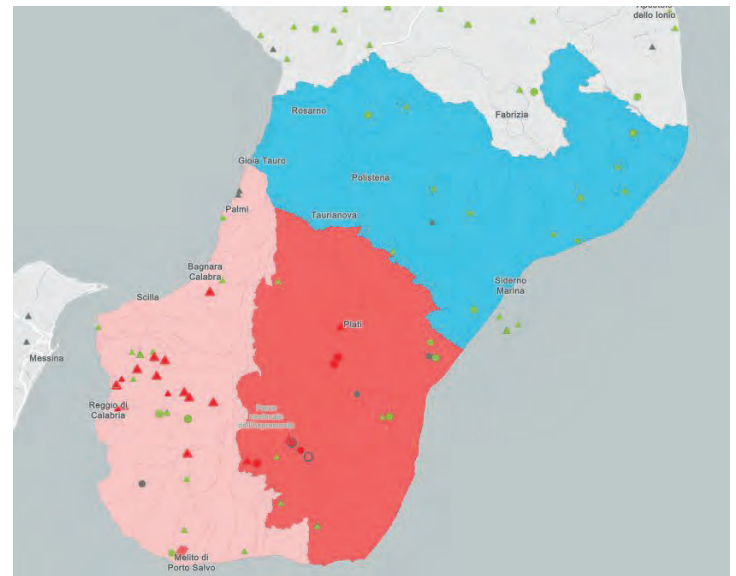
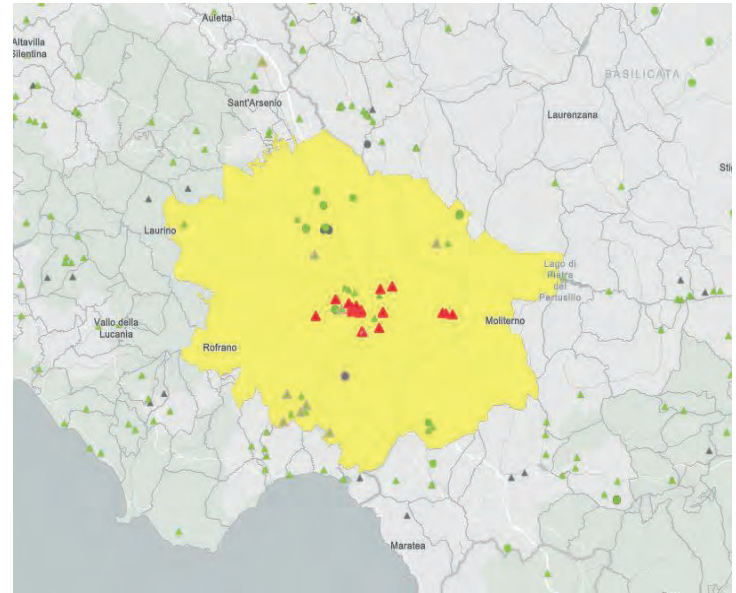
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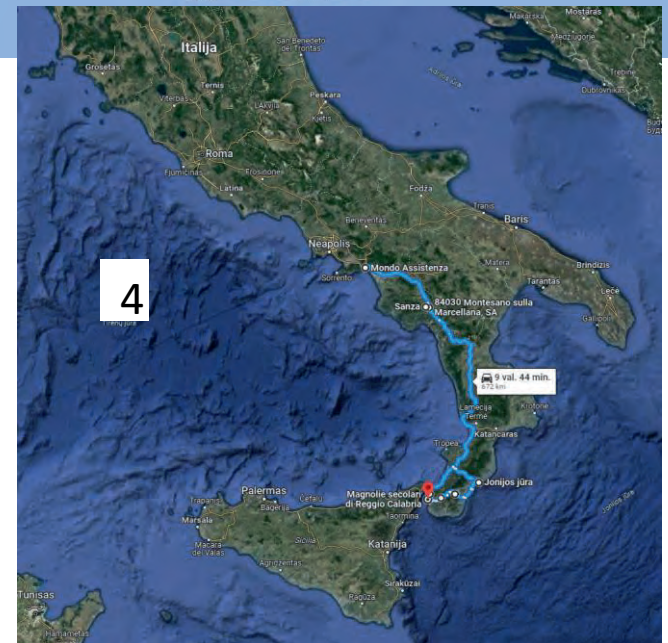
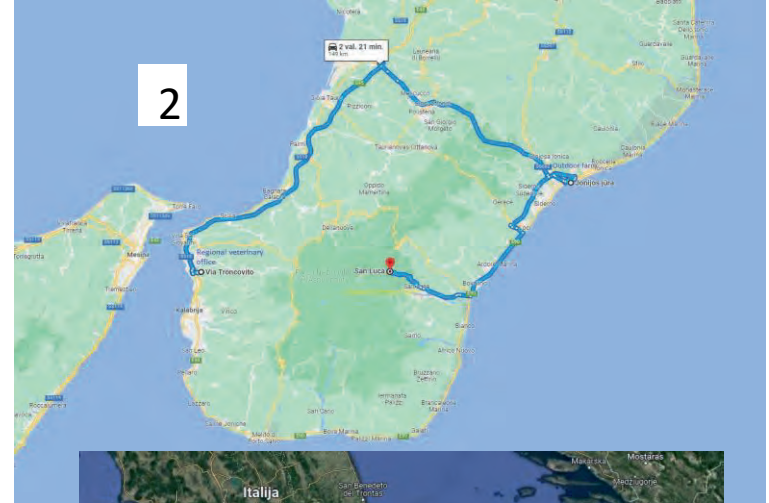
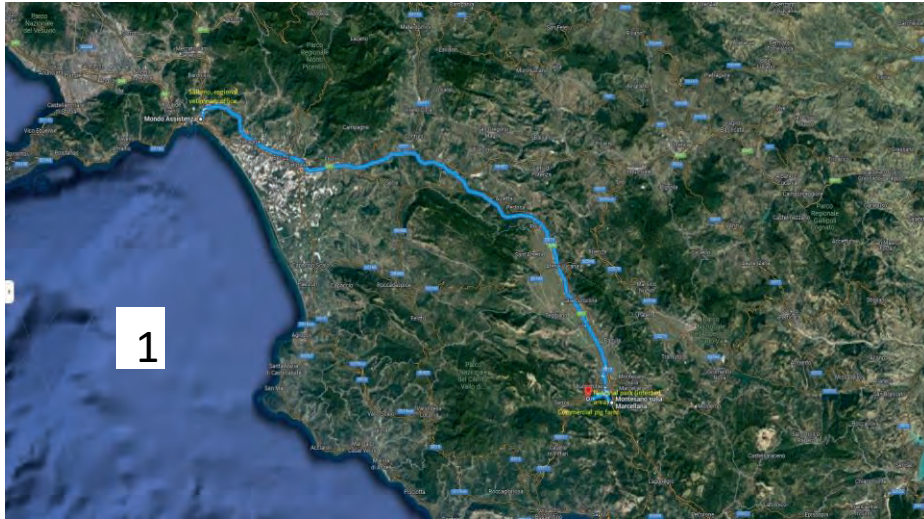
Campania Region

- Salerno, vet office
- Wild boar infected area

Calabria Region

- Reggio Calabria, vet office
- Outdoor farm
- Outbreak farm in San Luca
- Wild boar infected area







Campania: Epidemiological considerations (WB)

Based on the geographical particularities, it can be assumed that the ASF virus may have already entered Campania at the beginning of 2023.

The virus has been introduced most probably by people (human activities)

Due to the harsh geographical conditions many (most) carcasses cannot be found and erecting fences is very difficult

An endemic scenario (months/years of infection) is likely, similar to ASF in central and eastern Europe.

Two options of measures:

(i) the reduction of the wild boar population through hunting or

(ii) not disturbing the wild boars and keeping them in their habitat.

We consider that a strategy that does not disturb wild boars within the infected areas seems to be the most appropriate.

Campania: Epidemiological considerations (DP)

The prevention and control measures for domestic pigs

Preventive slaughter of all domestic pigs (*about 6800 pigs in commercial farms and 390 in back yard farms*) to avoid potential outbreaks

Preventive slaughter only of pigs on farms with insufficient biosecurity, followed by restocking only under adequate biosecurity measures

No slaughter but enhancing biosecurity and monitoring *all pig farms more efficiently to detect and stamp out an ASF outbreak in an early stage of infection.*

Imposing minimum biosecurity requirements *that must be met within a certain period of time. Farms that do not meet these should be closed accordingly and the pigs slaughtered.*

From our point of view, farms with insufficient biosecurity should be tackled first

Calabria: Epidemiological considerations (WB)

The ASF virus could have already entered Calabria at the beginning of the year, perhaps even at the end of last year.

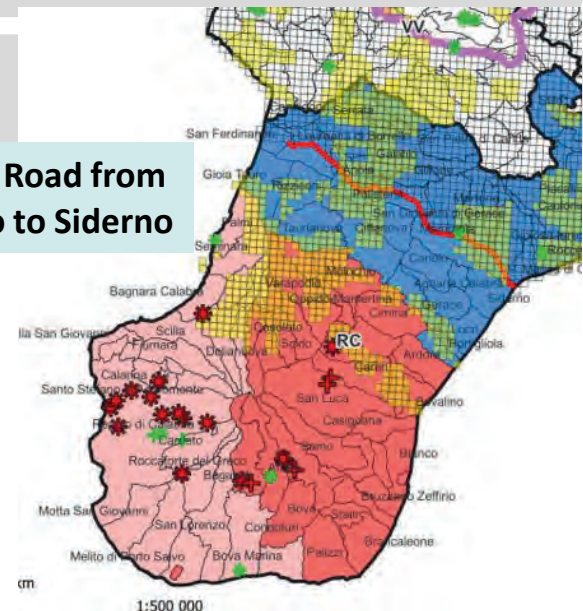
The virus has been introduced most probably by people (human activities)

Due to the harsh geographical conditions many (most) carcasses cannot be found and erecting fences is very difficult.

An endemic scenario is likely.

Just as for Campania, the same considerations regarding hunting apply to Calabria: where, how and when to hunt to reduce the wild boar population.

Road from
Rosarno to Siderno





Calabria: Epidemiological considerations (DP)

The epidemiological ASF situation in domestic pigs appears to be directly linked to the disease in wild boar.

Nevertheless, each individual outbreak must be analyzed separately, as wild boars are not necessarily in every case the source of infection.

In the outbreak farm we investigated, the findings indicated that the infection probably did not originate from the wild boar habitat.

Main conclusions and recommendations

The findings so far indicate an endemic ASF situation in Campania and Calabria.

It can be assumed that the infection in wild boar started beginning of 2023.

A very harsh geographic landscape complicates the control measures, e.g. the carcass search or the erection of fences.

Hunting measures need to be well planned not to cause opposite undesirable effects, e.g. spread of the disease.

Strong consensus with hunters is needed. Financial support could be given for searching wild boar carcasses, particularly in the regions bordering infected areas.

Measures to prevent the disease in domestic pigs (biosecurity) should be introduced without delay.

Main conclusions and recommendations

Biosecurity measures on domestic pig farms have to be reinforced and verified regularly. In particular, the "software" aspect of biosecurity needs to be strengthened.

On farms where biosecurity is inadequate, a temporary ban on pig farming should be considered until biosecurity is restored.

Considering the potential role of seasonal workers in spreading ASF, target awareness and information campaigns for this group of people should be conducted.

Not every outbreak in a domestic pig herd necessarily has a link to the disease in wild boars, even if the outbreak has occurred in a wild boar infected area.

In any primary outbreak investigations should be carried out by a well-trained team of experts.

Short Term Missions (STMs) of external ASF experts are recommended to support local authorities.



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

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