

Updated Outbreak Assessment #14

African Swine fever in Eastern Europe

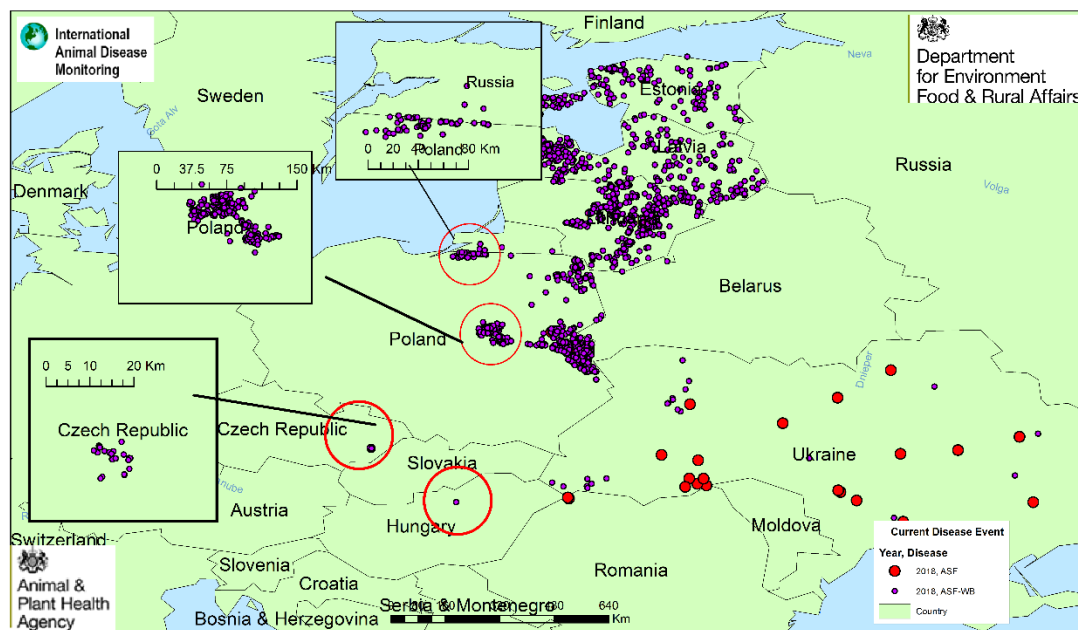
25 April 2018

Ref: VITT/1200 ASF in Eastern Europe

Disease Report

Since our last update on 29th December 2017, the numbers of cases of African Swine Fever (ASF) reported in wild boar in Europe and in domestic pigs and farmed wild boar in western Eurasia have increased.

Of particular note is a new case in a wild boar in Hungary.



African Swine Fever outbreaks
domestic pigs and wild boar since October 2017
[Insets: wild boar cases in Czech Republic, Kaliningrad and Poland]

Hungary has reported a single wild boar case in Heves region. According to information from the competent authority, the most likely source is contaminated meat or food waste brought in by non-EU workers. This is the first case reported in Hungary and is outside the areas of intensified surveillance of border traffic along the borders, which has included confiscating pork products found in personal luggage. It is important to note that some of these products (2 out of 56) have tested positive for ASF virus. Since January 2017, Hungary has been carrying out active surveillance in all hunted wild boar and passive surveillance in wild boar and domestic pigs across the whole country with no positive samples reported until this first case (PAFF, 2018).

Poland: The new focus of disease, west of the original restriction zones on the Eastern border, has continued to expand. In addition, a new focus of wild boar cases on the border with Kaliningrad in the north represents a new area of infection possibly due to spread through movement of wild boar from over the border. Significant steps have been taken to depopulate backyard farms and increase biosecurity of farms within the wider disease control zone, but wild boar cases continue to be reported as many hunted animals are being tested. There has been no recent trade in live pigs from Poland to the UK. The EU control zones have been revised to take account of these new foci.

In the **Czech Republic** there have now been over 200 wild boar cases reported from within the restricted area where disease eradication plans are being implemented. Several cases of ASF have been reported outside the fenced eradication zone, traced back to a breach of the fence and the EU control zones have been expanded correspondingly.

Situation Assessment

There were a number of significant geographic jumps in the distribution of ASF in 2017 in Eastern Europe, with the infection being reported in Czech Republic, Central Poland, and Kaliningrad for the first time. The number of wild boar cases has increased substantially which is reflective of the enhanced levels of surveillance in affected regions. Commercially produced meat from the affected regions cannot be traded as fresh or frozen meat to other member states. However there are clearly concerns around pork products from non-EU countries entering the EU in passenger luggage and then being discarded in areas where wild boar are present.

The first case in a wild boar in Hungary is indicative that these illegal personal products of pig origin from non-EU countries is a constant risk for any EU country.

Conclusion

The risk of ASF introduction to the UK was previously raised to “low” in August 2017. This was because despite the relatively low level of legal trade in live pigs or commercially produced pig products, there could be a risk from the fomite pathway involving movement of people and vehicles from affected Eastern EU countries and the evidence around the findings of contaminated non-EU origin pig products detected in the EU. This risk is showing no sign of decreasing, and it is vital that visitors to the EU Member States understand the impact of bringing personal food items which are discarded for wildlife to pick up. Similarly, visitors to affected areas that have any contact with the environment around wild boar cases should be vigilant about cleaning and disinfecting any vehicles, clothing, footwear or equipment which may be contaminated. The ASF virus persists well in cool temperatures and therefore winter is often a season of increased risk when the persistence of the virus is compounded by greater difficulty in cleansing and disinfecting vehicles. Hunters visiting affected areas should not bring back “trophies” as these could be contaminated.

The current risk of ASF introduction to the UK is therefore still considered to be “low”, although the situation is being kept under review.

We would like to highlight to all pig keepers and the public to ensure pigs are not fed catering waste, kitchen scraps or pork products, thereby observing the swill feeding ban. All pig keepers should be aware that visitors to their premises should not have had recent contact with affected regions. Anybody returning from the affected EU MSs should avoid contact with domestic pigs, whether commercial holdings or smallholdings, areas with feral pigs or wild boar, until they are confident they have no contaminated clothing, footwear or equipment. Pig keepers and veterinarians should remind themselves of the clinical signs for ASF, which may not always be immediately obvious, as this virus appears to have reduced pathogenicity according to some disease reports. Any suspect cases must be reported promptly.

A campaign to highlight the dangers of swill feeding has been launched and more information can be found on this [link](#). Please see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/african-swine-fever> for more information. We would like to remind the public that any feeding of meat products, including the feeding of swill, kitchen scraps and catering waste, to wild boar or feral pigs is also illegal.

We will continue to monitor the situation.

Authors

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References

All disease reports are available from the OIE WAHIS database.

PAFF (2018) Presentation on African Swine Fever controls in Hungary in 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/reg-com_ahw_20180418_pres_asf_hun.pdf



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