Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Animal and Plant Health Agency
Advice Services - International Disease Monitoring

Updated Outbreak Assessment #15

African swine fever in Europe (Eastern Europe and Germany)

17 September 2020

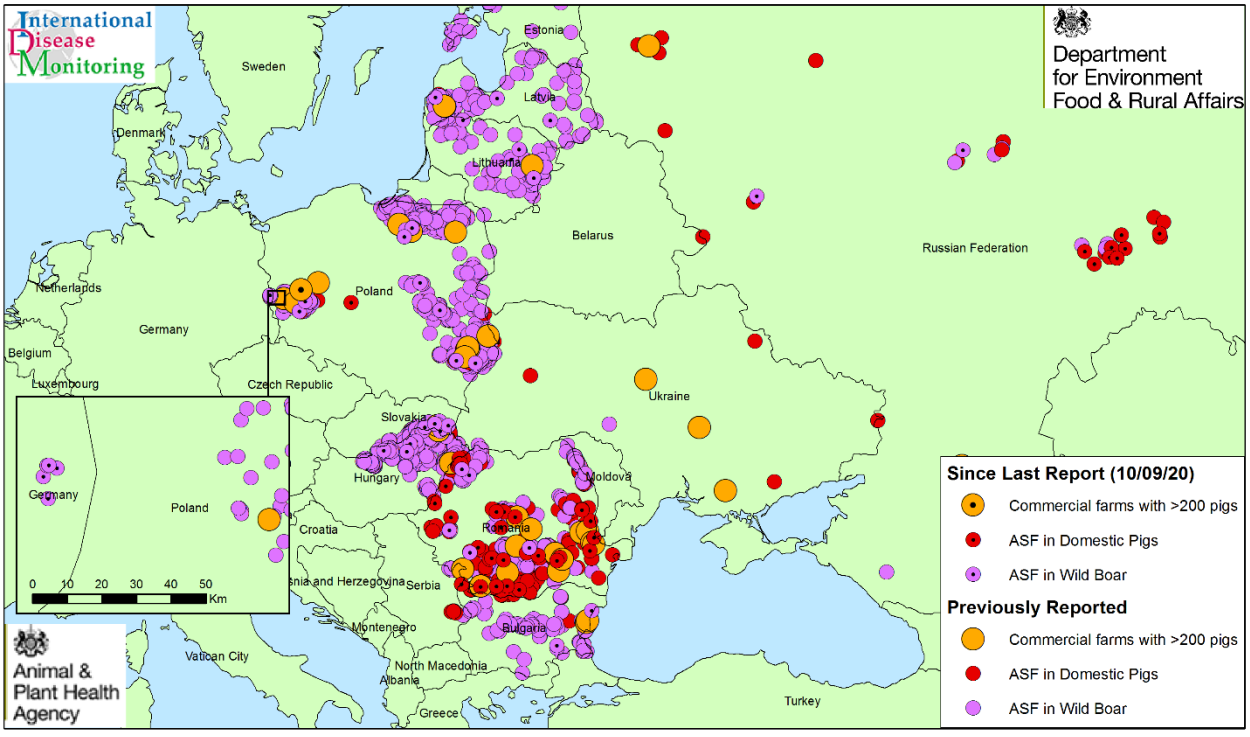
Ref: VITT/1200 ASF in Europe (Eastern Europe and Germany)

Disease report

This is a short update on the new cases of ASF in wild boar in **Germany**, since our last report on 10 September. Following the first report of ASF in wild boar near the German-Polish border on 10 September, there have been six new reports of ASF in wild boar.

Since our last report, **Serbia** has reported four outbreaks in domestic pigs.

The map below shows the outbreaks of ASF in Europe in domestic pigs, and the cases in wild boar, reported from January to 17 September 2020.



Situation assessment

Our last report on 10 September described the first report of ASF in wild boar in **Germany**. This concerned the carcase of a (largely decomposed) female wild boar that was found on 07 September in a field of harvested crops in the state of Brandenburg. It is thought that this wild boar had been dead for approximately two to four weeks when it was found (FLI, 2020) and the assumption is that entry of the virus took place some weeks previously. The distance of this report from the nearest confirmed case of ASF in Poland was approximately 30 km. Since then, a further six cases in wild boar have been reported. That means that the reported finding on 10 September was not an isolated incident. The six wild boar were found between 11 and 14 September near the town of Neuzelle in the Oder-Spree district of Brandenburg. At least four of the six wild boar had been found dead. A fifth (sick) animal was shot (Der Spiegel, 2020). This town is approximately 7.5 km north of the location of the first wild boar found dead and reported on 10 September.

The new findings are most likely the result of new measures implemented by the state of Brandenburg. A ‘core zone’ has been established with a radius of at least 3km from where the first infected wild boar carcass was found. By 12 September this had been completely surrounded by an electric fence, and the search for further wild boar within and outside of this zone had been increased. Brandenburg has announced a reward of up to €100-150 for every wild boar that is found, to help contain the spread of the virus. Inside the core zone there are 182 farms. These farms, together having over 33,000 ha of arable land, are now not allowed to either sow or harvest crops (Pig Progress, 2020).

In the ‘endangered area’, a zone of 30 km around the core zone, specific measures have been put in place to reduce further spread. A hunting ban has been put in place for all animal species in order to prevent unnecessarily startling potentially infected wild boar, accompanied by an intensive game search by trained staff and with the participation of local hunters (ProMed, 2020).

Given the numbers of cases of wild boar, and outbreaks in domestic pigs, on the Polish side of the German-Polish border, it is perhaps unsurprising that there has been these recent reports of ASF in wild boar in Germany. Indeed, according to the FLI, the risk of incursion of ASF by direct spread through infected wild boar into areas of Germany close to the affected regions in Belgium and Poland, was assessed as high prior to this event (FLI, May 2020). However, human introduction via contaminated food cannot be ruled out at this stage.

The discovery of ASF in Germany and subsequent loss of the country's ASF-free status has resulted in a number of countries imposing import bans on German pork. In the first six months of 2020, Germany exported about 400,000 tonnes of pig meat to China. However, China, South Korea, Japan, the Phillippines, Brazil, Mexico and Argentina have all announced import bans on German pig meat.

Since our last report on 10 September, **Serbia** has reported four outbreaks in domestic pigs, close to the border with Bulgaria and Romania, in piglets on backyard pig premises. This is the first time that Serbia has reported ASF in domestic pigs since July 2020.

The number of outbreaks of African swine fever in domestic pigs in Eastern Europe has continued to increase during August and September. The main countries affected are **Poland**, **Romania** and **Russia**. These countries have also reported a significant increase in cases in wild boar in the same period.

ASF cases in wild boar continue to be reported in **Bulgaria**, **Estonia**, **Hungary**, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Poland**, **Romania**, **Russia**, and **Slovakia**, in August and September. Hungary, Poland and Romania continue to report the highest monthly totals of wild boar cases.

Conclusion

The number of domestic pig premises reporting ASF is increasing; and outbreaks reported per month increased during August, particularly in Poland, Romania and Russia. ASF is still present in wild boar across much of Eastern Europe, and now Germany; and continues to increase, particularly in Poland, Romania and Russia. Therefore, there still remains a risk of entry of ASFV in products of animal origin from affected countries, including from illegal imports.

The current risk of ASF being introduced into the UK through the entry of contaminated or infected pork or pork products, remains at **medium**.

All travellers are strongly advised to avoid bringing any pork products – for example, dried or cured meats, sausages, salamis or pâté – back to the UK from affected parts of Europe. Travellers from Asia and other third country areas who bring meat or dairy products can also face prosecution and a large fine.

We would like to emphasise to all pig keepers, pig producers, smallholders and general public to ensure pigs are not fed catering waste, kitchen scraps or pork products, thereby observing the swill feeding ban.

All pig keepers should remain vigilant and ensure that any visitors to their premises have not had any recent contact with pigs or pig premises in the affected regions. People returning from any ASF-affected areas of the world should avoid any contact with domestic pigs in commercial holdings, smallholdings or even household pet pigs. Habitats where feral pigs or wild boar exist should also be avoided. All clothing, footwear or equipment should be disinfected before entering pig areas.

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Pig keepers and veterinarians should remind themselves of the clinical signs for ASF. Any suspect cases must be reported promptly. Please see https://www.gov.uk/guidance/african-swine-fever for more information

We will continue to monitor the situation.

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References

All disease reports are available from the OIE WAHIS database.

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