

Updated Outbreak Assessment #04

African swine fever in Europe (Eastern Europe & Belgium)

19 August 2019

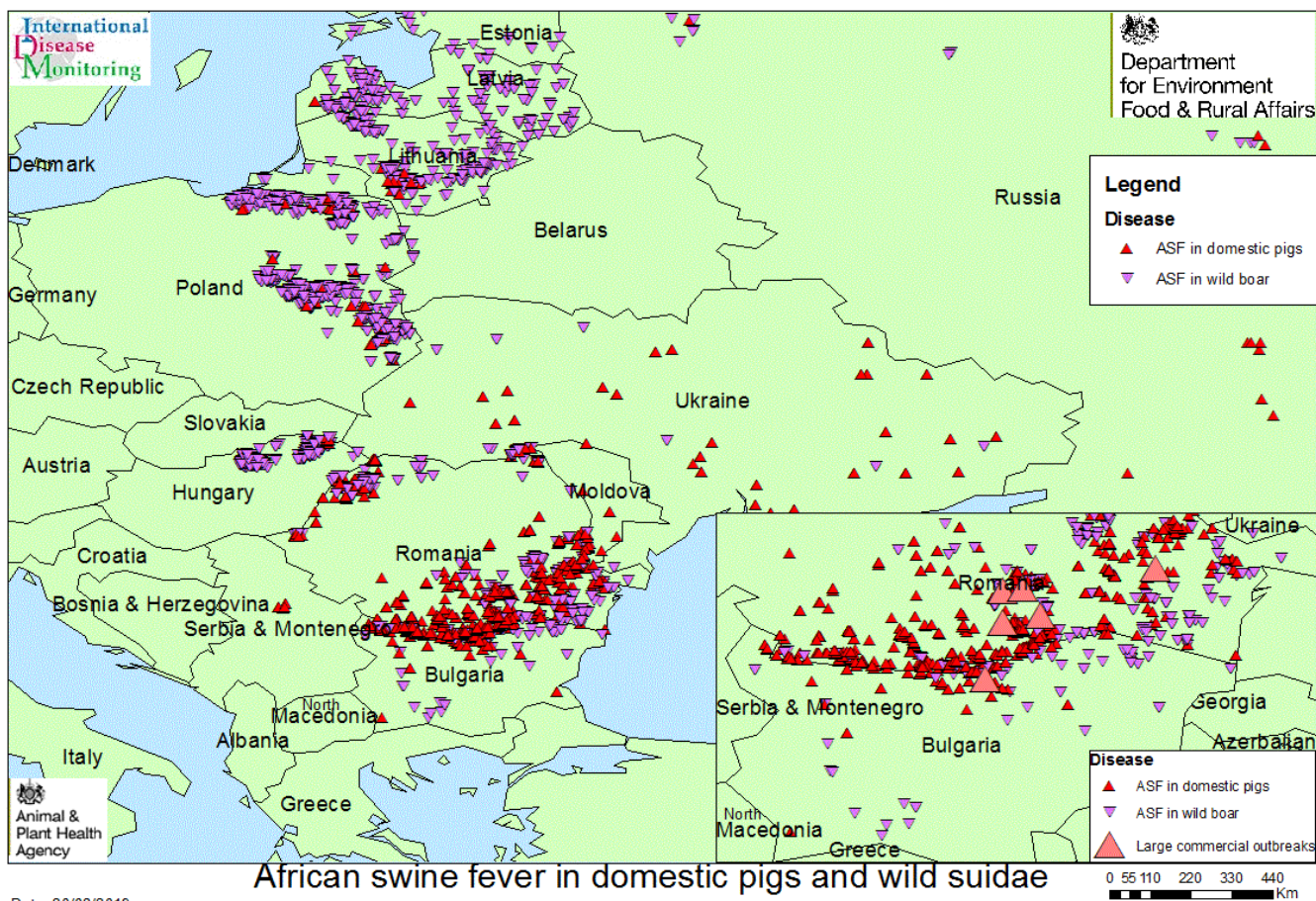
Ref: VITT/1200 ASF in Europe (Eastern Europe & Belgium)

Disease report

Since our last report on the 25 July 2019

[\[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/821776/uo-a-asf-europe-update3.pdf\]](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/821776/uo-a-asf-europe-update3.pdf), Serbia has confirmed the presence of African swine fever (ASF), with four outbreaks in backyard pig holdings around the city of Belgrade. In addition, there have been outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs in large commercial holdings in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania.

There continues to be a large number of outbreaks in domestic pigs in Eastern Europe with a significant increase in recent months (see table below). The seasonal increase is likely due to the existence of multiple transmission routes. These may include vector spread, human mediated routes, common feeding of local contaminated crops and contact with wild boar which are particularly mobile during harvesting periods. The largest number of outbreaks in domestic pigs each month continues to be in Romania, with 395 outbreaks observed in domestic pigs since our last report on 25 July, including two in large, commercial holdings. Outbreaks in domestic pigs in Bulgaria, Poland, Slovakia and the Baltic States, particularly Lithuania, have also increased in recent months (see Table) and the new cases along the Greek and North Macedonian borders also put these countries at risk.



African swine fever in domestic pigs and wild suidae since February 2019

Date: 20/08/2019
 Map prepared by IDM

Table: Numbers of ASF outbreaks reported in domestic pigs (backyard and commercial) since February. All data from ADNS.

Country	Number of Outbreaks in domestic pigs (Feb-Aug 19 th 2019)							
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Belgium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bulgaria	0	0	0	0	0	25	4	29
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hungary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	5	8	2	15
Moldova	0	1	0	0	0	3	11	15
Poland	0	0	0	2	7	24	8	41
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	9
Serbia	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Romania	32	12	9	22	76	441	261	853
Russia	0	1	0	0	1	4	9	15
Ukraine	3	1	5	3	4	8	4	28
Total	35	15	14	27	93	515	311	1010

Situation assessment

Belgium & bordering countries:

Belgium remains officially disease free in the domestic pigs. Since the first reported case of ASF in Belgium, there have been 828 further cases reported in wild boar. The reporting rate of cases in wild boar continues to decrease, with just one case in wild boar to mid August, the previous cases being in early July. This decrease likely reflects the significant investment in their eradication programme.

Ongoing surveillance activities in France and Luxembourg, in close proximity to the Belgian border continue to yield negative results for ASF (Cauchard, 2019).

Bulgaria:

Since our last report on 25 July, a further 16 outbreaks in domestic pigs have been recorded in Bulgaria, with five of these in large, commercial farms. The majority of outbreaks have been observed in the north of the country close to the Romanian border, however cases in wild boar have been reported in the south of the country in the Smolyan region, close to the Greek border (see maps above). Bulgaria has culled over 130,000 pigs on large commercial farms over the last few weeks while a state of emergency has been declared in several districts and 20km sanitary zones have been set up around all registered industrial pig farms (Pig Progress, 2019).

Romania:

There has been a sharp increase in the number of outbreaks in domestic pigs reported by Romania, with 441 reported in July and 261 in August to date (see Table above), and by far the largest number of outbreaks observed across Europe and this mirrors the situation observed last year, albeit in different regions.

The identification of non-compliant holdings and the feeding of kitchen waste to pigs may explain in part the epidemiological situation regarding ASF in Romania. This alone, however, cannot explain the sudden, significant increase in the number of outbreaks. Favourable weather conditions for potential arthropod vectors across the region could have accentuated the rapid dissemination of the virus over the summer (EFSA, 2019). Human mediated routes around harvesting and contact with wild boar which are moving around in the summer could also be implicated.

Serbia

Serbia has now reported its first outbreaks of ASF, with reports in four domestic small holdings all in central Serbia and some distance from the border with Romania. All outbreaks were found close to each other, with 7 animals found infected, and another 114 animals were culled. Disease control measures are in place. Serbia is not approved for the export in live pigs or fresh or frozen pig meat into the EU (under Commission Regulation 206/2010/EU), however Serbia is approved for the export of certain processed products of animal origin. No such products have entered the UK in recent weeks.

Slovakia

Slovakia reported its first case of ASF in domestic pigs at a backyard farm in Kosice in late July. The outbreak was in the east of the country, close to the Hungarian border, where the disease has been circulating in wild boar and near to Ukraine. Given the current epidemiological situation of ASF in the surrounding countries of Poland, Hungary and Ukraine, the discovery of the disease here was unsurprising, though disappointing given their surveillance and disease prevention efforts (PAFF, July 2019). Since our last report on 25 July, there has been nine outbreaks in domestic pigs, all in small holders and two in wild boar, all in the Kosice region close to the Hungarian border.

Conclusion

The risk remains at **medium** for the entry of contaminated or infected products into UK at present. However, as shown in the table this is a critical period for the spread of virus in eastern Europe and the risk remains for spread into other regions through human-mediated routes. Most concerning is the repeated finding of contaminated products in passenger luggage, not only in other countries outside the EU but also within the EU. Border checks on passengers are paramount, as are publicity campaigns aimed at reaching the travelling public that bringing back products of animal origin from outside the EU or from a region in the EU under disease restrictions is not allowed. Commercially produced products which can be safely traded in the EU will be labelled as such. Home produced products are a particular concern.

All travellers are strongly advised to avoid bringing any pork products – including ham, sausages 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. Disease can be spread by pig keepers and members of the public feeding catering waste, kitchen scraps or pork products to their animals. It is illegal to do so.

The risk of exposure to the pig population in the UK is still highly dependent on the level of biosecurity on individual pig premises but is still considered to be **low**.

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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[Pig Progress \(2019\) 9 Aug 2019. ASF Bulgaria: 130,000 pigs culled. https://www.pigprogress.net/Health/Articles/2019/8/ASF-Bulgaria-130000-pigs-culled-459856/](https://www.pigprogress.net/Health/Articles/2019/8/ASF-Bulgaria-130000-pigs-culled-459856/)



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