

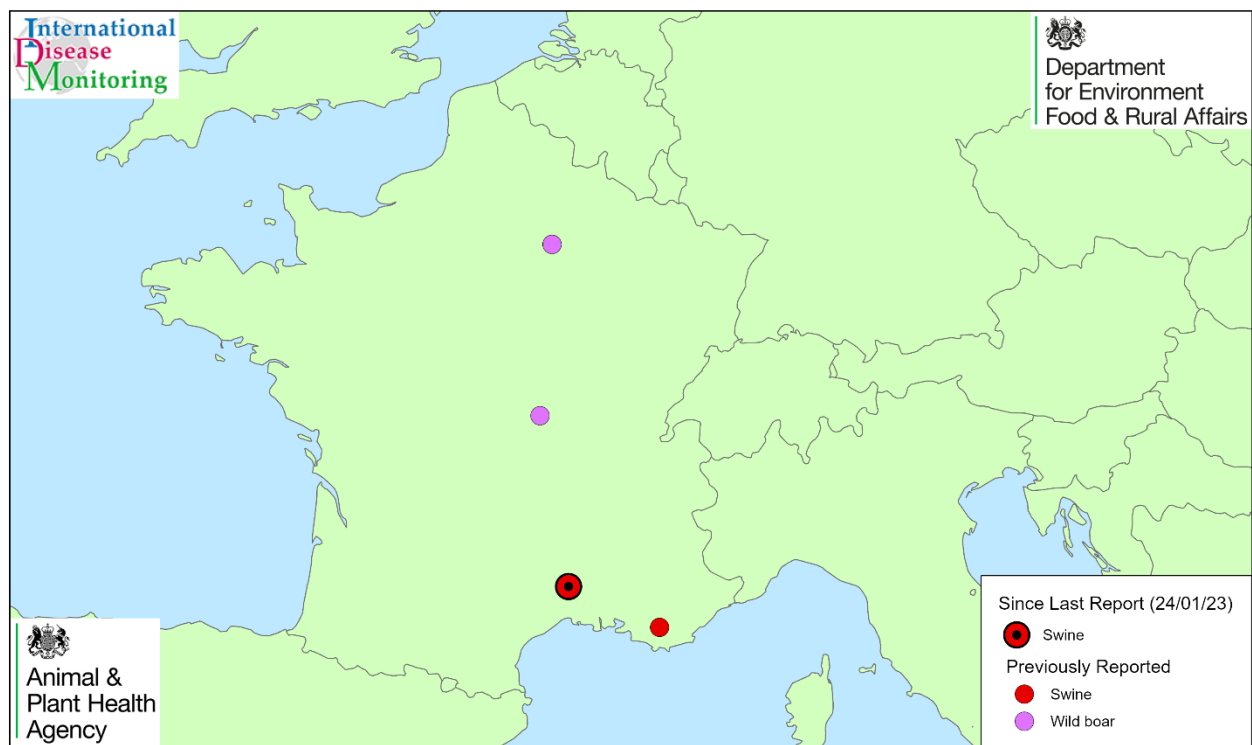
Updated Outbreak Assessment

7 February 2023

Aujeszky's disease in pigs in the south of France

Disease report

In January 2023, an outbreak of Aujeszky's disease (AD) was confirmed in domestic pigs in France (WOAH 2023). The outbreak was on a farm premises with 15 pigs near Alès in the Occitanie region in the south of the country. These are the first reports by France to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) since 2022, when there were 2 outbreaks on wild boar farms in France in January and February 2022, and one outbreak on a domestic pig premises in France in March 2022.



Map Prepared by IDM

Date: 07/02/2023

Absolute Scale: 1:10,000,000

Aujeszky's Disease
February 2022 to February 2023
(WOAH Data Only)

0 180 360 540
Km

Map 1: Aujeszky's disease reports to WOAH between February 2022 and February 2023.

Situation assessment

Our [last report on 24 January 2023](#) provided a full situation assessment on AD in Europe. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the epidemiologically significant change noted in France.

AD is a notifiable disease of pigs, caused by a Herpes virus infection. It is characterised by the appearance of nervous signs in piglets, respiratory disease and stunting in growing pigs, and abortion in adult pigs. The disease cycles in breeding herds and can spread to young pigs in finishing herds. Aujeszky's disease virus (ADV) also infects cattle, dogs and cats, but ADV-infected pigs are the main source of virus spread.

Other species are less important in virus spread since there is usually 100% mortality, and spread is therefore interrupted (Wittmann, 1986). In addition to Europe, AD is also present in South and Central America and Asia. ADV is carried in live animals and is generally spread by direct contact between pigs, although it can also be spread through fomites, semen, and by aerosol.

Wind-borne infection can occur in areas where there is a high density of pigs and farms (Pejsak and Truszczynski 2006). In a series of outbreaks of AD in Yorkshire in the early 1980s, it has been suggested that 7 of the 11 outbreaks investigated could have resulted from airborne virus (Gloster et al. 1984).

France has reported sporadic cases of AD over recent years. In December 2019, AD was reported on a free-range pig farm in France. The farm was located on the edge of a forest and the biosecurity was not sufficient to prevent contact with wild boar. The probable origin was reported to be contact with wild boars as was the case for the reports of disease earlier in 2019 in south-east France in a free-range small commercial pig farm.

On 14 January 2022, AD virus was detected in wild boar reared for hunting at a farm in La Chapelle-sous-Orbais in north-east France. The wild boar were tested as part of an active surveillance programme and 2 of 120 wild boar tested positive for AD virus. None of the wild boar showed clinical signs.

On 14 February 2022, AD was reported in farmed wild boar kept in an enclosure on a farm in Montbeugny in central France. The 22 animals were intended for hunting.

On 18 March 2022, two of five domestic pigs on a free-range farm in Tourves in southern France tested positive for AD virus. In January 2022, cases of AD were reported in hunting dogs in the Hautes-Pyrenees department in south-west France, again through exposure to wild boar during hunting (ProMED 2022a).

France is listed as free from the AD and despite these recent cases in pigs their freedom status is maintained. Occasional cases do not affect disease-free status. According to the WOAHP guidelines, the herd prevalence rate in the country must not exceed 1% for the last 3 years. The International Disease Monitoring and UK Office for SPS Trade Assurance teams are closely monitoring the situation and may amend the third country listings as needed if the situation changes, if deemed appropriate.

To prevent incursion of AD into Great Britain there are strict testing controls pre-export and post-import dependent on the product type being imported and on the exporting country status. No post import testing from Officially Free Countries is required unless the importer

is considered high risk, in which case 10% of randomly selected consignments should be sampled. All consignments from non-Officially Free Countries are tested.

For live porcine, imported from countries that are not free of AD, as listed in the third country listings for live ungulates (Commission Regulation (EU) No 206/2010), additional guarantees including serological testing and residency periods for AD have to be met and certified. For importation of porcine semen there are many AD guarantees required, including testing to provide assurance for AD freedom for semen consignments.

In Great Britain, the last recorded outbreak of AD occurred in 1989. Officially Free status from AD was gained in 1991 (Defra, 2009) with no disease present in domestic pigs or wildlife and no use of vaccination. The most important route of entry into countries free from AD is via the importation of live pigs and semen and free movement of wild boar from areas where the disease is present (Morley, 1993; Martinez-Lopez et al., 2009; Boadella et al., 2012).

The current epidemiological situation suggests that for AD to enter the pig population in Great Britain, the most likely route would be via live pigs or semen. A live animal introduction would seem the most likely source, possibly from a trading partner considered free but where disease has been reintroduced but not detected at the time of export. There has been only one consignment of live pigs imported from France in the last 6 months from the Maine-et-Loire department in western France, and the last import of pig semen was in May 2022. The current case in France is too far and disparate for windborne transmission north to the UK.

Conclusions

Aujeszky's disease occurs sporadically in farmed wild boar and domestic pigs across Europe with 16 reports in domestic pigs or wild boar from France, Germany, and Hungary in the last 2 years. The wild boar cases sometimes spill over into hunting dogs with fatal consequences, as reported on ProMED in December 2022 in the Czech Republic (ProMED 2023) and in south-west France in January 2022.

Currently, we consider there to be a **very low** likelihood of introduction of AD virus from any affected country to the UK via various pathways, and the ongoing low levels of sporadic detections in wild boar in France, Germany and the Czech Republic do not affect this risk level. We continue to emphasise the importance of prompt reporting of suspect disease in pigs, and the implementation and maintenance of appropriate biosecurity measures.

Guidance on [identifying and reporting aujezkys disease](#) can be found on GOV.UK .

We shall continue to monitor the situation.

Authors

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