

Updated Outbreak Assessment #36

African swine fever in Europe

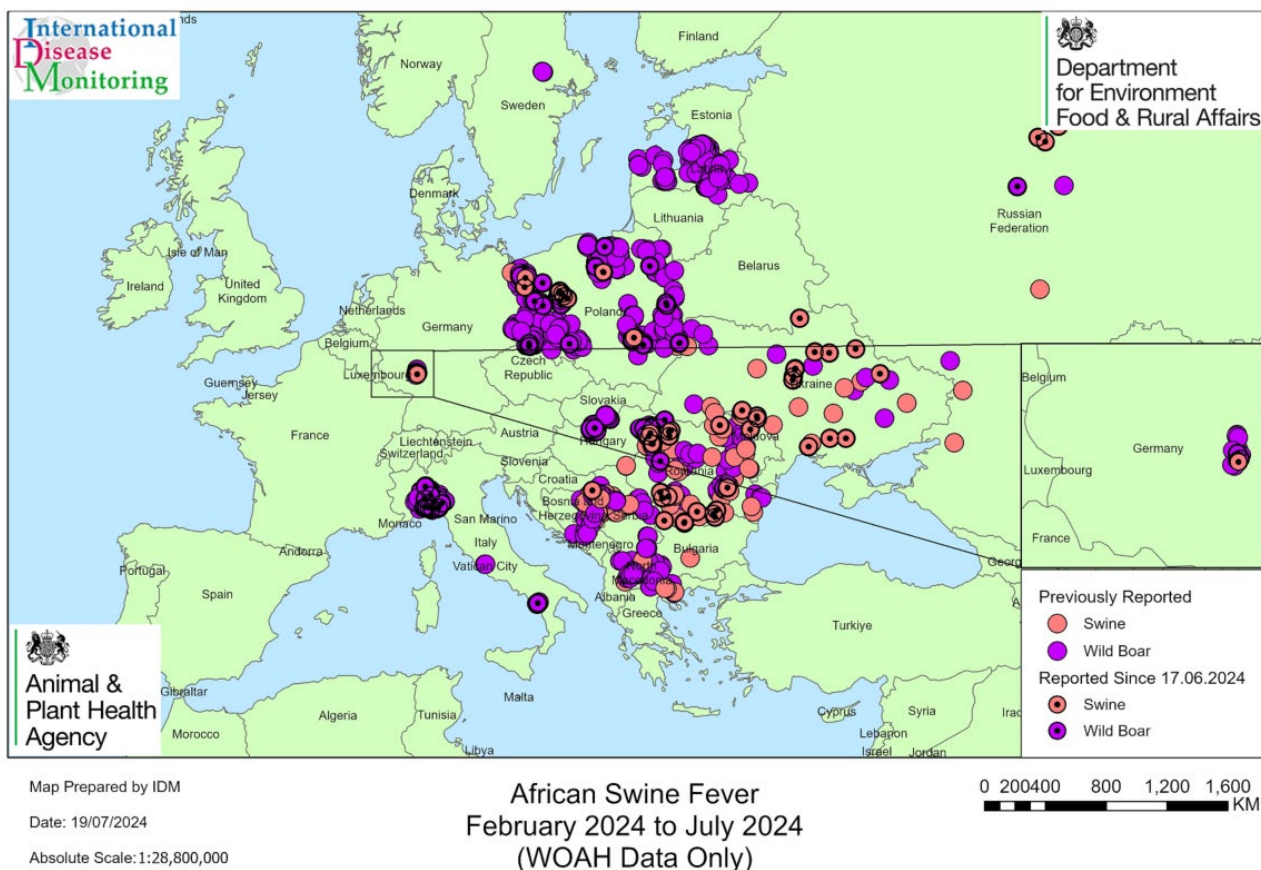
24 July 2024

Disease report

African swine fever (ASF) has continued to be reported in domestic pigs and wild boar across Europe, with an uptick in domestic pig outbreaks since the start of summer. Our last update on [17 June 2024](#) included the detection of ASF in wild boar in western Germany for the first time. Since then, ASF has continued to be detected in 39 wild boar in the state of Hesse, which neighbours the highest pig-producing state in Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia. There have also been further detections of ASF in wild boar in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, to the west of Hesse.

Four outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs have now been reported in the same area of Hesse that infected wild boar have been found. The first outbreak was on a backyard premises of 9 pigs on 8 July 2024. The second premises affected was a finisher unit with 1,100 pigs on 18 July 2024, according to the German reporting system Tier Seuchen Information System (TSIS). Two further cases were confirmed on the 23 June 2024 according to TSIS, but these have yet to be reported to WOA. To date, 39 wild boar have been found to be infected in the state of Hesse.

In June, both Poland and Germany reported their first outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs of 2024. To date in 2024, Poland has reported 19 outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs and Germany has reported 4 outbreaks. Efforts to control wild boar populations continue in Germany, Poland, and northern Italy where cases continue to be detected in wild boar.



Map 1: African swine fever outbreaks in domestic pigs (red points) and wild boar cases (purple points) across Europe from February 2024 to 22 July 2024. (WOAH data only). New data since the last report on 17 June 2024 are shown as points with a central dot. Two further outbreaks have been reported and shown in the inset map, but not yet reported to WOAH according to TSIS.

Since 17 June 2024, according to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) reports, outbreaks in domestic pigs have been reported in Croatia, Germany, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine. ASF cases in wild boar have been reported in Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Russia, Sweden and Ukraine (Map 1). According to [EU Animal Disease Information System \(ADIS\) summary tables](#), there have been additional reports in wild boar in Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Montenegro (not shown in Map 1).

Outbreak data

Details of all outbreaks and cases provided in the map in this report were taken from WOAH (formerly OIE), unless stated otherwise. Additional information has been provided, where available, from the [ADIS summary tables](#), and information from relevant PAFF (the EU Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed) presentations. Tables of numbers of WOAH reports by country can be found in Annex A. These numbers show reports only, not the number of individual animals affected.

In this report, 'Restricted zone I (RZ I)' means an area of a Member State listed in [EU legislation](#) with a precise geographical delimitation subject to special disease control measures and bordering restricted zones II or III.

'Restricted zone II (RZ II)' means an area of a Member State listed in EU legislation due to an outbreak of ASF in a wild porcine animal with a precise geographical delimitation subject to special disease control measures.

'Restricted zone III (RZ III)' means an area of a Member State listed in EU legislation due to an outbreak of ASF in a kept porcine animal with a precise geographical delimitation subject to special disease control measures.

'Infected Area' means an area in which any RZ restrictions have been applied, but the boundaries of the RZs are yet to be implemented into legislation.

Situation assessment

Germany

Four outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs have now been reported on TSIS, the German reporting system in Hesse, West Germany with a single case reported on 9 June to WOA. The first outbreak was on a backyard premises of 9 pigs, the second on a farm premises with 1,100 finisher pigs and [two other farms](#) with 17 and 170 pigs (ISN, July 2024). All of the affected farms have been located within the existing restriction zone in Hesse. The disease was initially suspected in one herd by the finding of a dead animal, and the other larger farm, some animals were behaving abnormally and confirmed after sampling of the affected animals. The source of infection for these outbreaks is unclear. Trade restrictions were applied accordingly. Therefore, no exports from the infected zone around the wild boar case prior to the reports in domestic pigs were permitted from that time. Disease control strategies in response to these outbreaks include stamping out, movement controls and protection and surveillance zones have been established. A [hunting ban](#) has been applied and the district veterinary office and trained hunters are looking for other affected animals in the surrounding area with the help of drones. Surveillance in the area for wild boar is ongoing, and 19 ASF-positive carcasses have been detected in Hesse since our last report. Infected wild boar carcasses have also been found in the neighbouring state of Rhineland-Palatinate for the first time, to the west of Hesse, with 5 infected wild boar reported to WOA to date.

The affected area is approximately 400km from the nearest infected area in Germany and around 500km from the nearest infected area in Italy. The states of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate neighbour North Rhine-Westphalia which contains the highest density of pigs in Germany, [5.7 million pigs](#). Epidemiological investigations around the initial introduction of ASF to wild boar the region suggest that the virus is not likely to have been introduced from eastern Germany, as the virus was more genomically similar to viruses found in south-eastern Europe ([see the article in Pig Progress for more information](#)). Human-

mediated spread has been speculated ([Hessenschau](#)), and has been the source of large geographical jumps in disease previously. Further epidemiological investigations are ongoing.

Elsewhere in Germany, there have been continued detections of ASF in wild boar in Brandenburg and Saxony in the east of the country, where there have been 7 cases involving 45 animals.

Poland

Since the last update, Poland has reported 19 outbreaks on domestic pig holdings spread throughout the country, in 5 separate areas. The recent increase in domestic pig cases has resulted in an increased number of Restriction Zones. Following surveillance activity, the infected zone established in response to the previously reported wild boar cases near Gdansk has now been designated as an RZII zone and associated RZI (PAFF presentation, July 2024).

Since our last report, according to WOAHA, there were a further 192 reports of ASF in wild boar with a total of 253 wild boar affected throughout the east and the west of the country.

Latvia

Since our last report, according to ADIS summaries, there have been approximately 4 outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs in Latvia. These are the first ASF outbreaks of the year in the country, with the last outbreak being reported in August 2023.

These outbreaks occurred in areas designated as RZII zones with infected wild boar, with 2 outbreaks in the north near to the border with Estonia and 2 outbreaks in the centre of the country. As a result, two new RZIII zones have been proposed ([PAFF Presentation- Latvia, July 2024](#)). The first outbreak was confirmed on the 20 June ([PAFF Presentation - Latvia, June 2024](#)) on a premises with 527 pigs, and 3 premises were on backyard premises with fewer than 25 animals. At the last PAFF update on the 11 July, Latvia reported a total of 704 wild boar cases had occurred since January, approximately 108 of which occurred since our last report on 17 June, according to ADIS. These cases have been spread throughout the country but with clusters present in the central southern region. Most of the wild boar cases have been found dead.

Lithuania

Since our last report, according to ADIS summaries, there have been approximately 5 outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs in Lithuania. These are the first ASF outbreaks of the year in the country, with the last outbreak being reported in July 2023. The first outbreak was confirmed at a non-commercial premises containing 3 pigs on 13 June 2024 ([PAFF Presentation- Lithuania, June 2024](#)). This resulted in enlargement to a current RZIII zone. Most of the cases in domestic pigs have occurred on small backyard holdings with poor

biosecurity being present including feeding thermally untreated feed such as fresh grass and potatoes ([PAFF Presentation- Lithuania, July 2024](#)).

Lithuania have also reported approximately 43 cases of ASF in wild boar since our last update on 17 June.

The entire border with Belarus has been surrounded by a fence which has provided a physical barrier to prevent the movement of wild boar. Since February 2024, there has been an alteration in the ASF surveillance testing of hunted wild boar. In areas where virus has been detected within the last 12 months, wild boar are tested by PCR, but in areas where virus has not been detected they will be only be selected for PCR testing according to prevalence of the disease in the area. Two new ASF RZ IIIs have been created for 2 of the most recent outbreaks ([PAFF Presentation- Lithuania, July 2024](#)).

Greece

Since our last report, Greece has reported 2 cases of ASF in wild boar, in Macedonia and Thrace and Epirus and Western Macedonia. There has been an extension of the central RZ III zone ([PAFF Presentation – Greece, June 2024](#))

Romania

Romania has reported 34 outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs across the whole of the country (WOAH data only) since our last assessment on the 17 June 2024. One outbreak involved two domestic pigs found on public land, and the remainder were on backyard premises with less than 100 animals. The whole of Romania remains under RZ III restrictions. Romania also reported 5 cases of ASF in wild boar. At the recent PAFF presentation in July, Romania updated that cash incentives have been introduced in the form of hunting rewards to improve both passive and active surveillance ([PAFF presentation - Romania, July 2024](#))

Italy

Since our last assessment in June, there have been no outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs in Italy. However, there have been 146 reports of ASF in wild boar affecting 146 animals. Most cases occurred in the northern regions of Emilia Romagna, Liguria, Lombardy and Piedmont. Italy has increased the size of the restriction zones in these regions as a result of these detections. The restriction zones were extended into Tuscany after finding ASF-positive carcasses in the RZ II, close to the border with the RZ I. The zones have now extended to the perimeter of the cities of both Milan and Parma. In June 2024, new cases have been found in wild boar in Campania resulting in an extension to the zone along its western side. Only 1 case has been found in the region of Lazio which was a wild boar carcass in an advanced stage of decomposition where only bones remained ([PAFF presentation – Italy, June 2024](#)). Management of ASF in restriction zones has focused on preventing wild boar movements using existing landscape features, such as motorways, and on gaining a better understanding of the presence and density of wild boar. Wild boar

depopulation within restriction zones is ongoing, including the use of military to cull wild boar and active searching of carcasses along main transport routes (Falconi, 2024) ([PAFF Presentation - Italy, April 2024](#)).

Sweden

Since the first report of ASF in Sweden in September 2023, there have been a low number of cases in wild boar reported with those confirmed in 2024 likely to have died between July and September 2023. The reports have been in Fagersta only, close to the epicentre of the outbreak. Surveillance and control plans have been ongoing, and based on their current findings, they have concluded that there is no active infection ([PAFF Presentation - Sweden, June 2024](#)). These historical detections do not affect Sweden's proposal to apply for disease freedom in Autumn 2024.

Croatia

Since 17 June, Croatia has reported one outbreak of ASF domestic pigs on a village premises with 83 pigs. The outbreak was in Vukovarsko-Srijemska, along the border of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to ADIS summaries, this is the first report of ASF in Croatia in domestic pigs since December 2023. Croatia reported some of the highest numbers of domestic pig cases in [Europe](#) in 2023, with the total number of outbreaks reported as 1,124. The majority of these outbreaks were in Vukovarsko-Srijemska, which were predominately small holding establishments.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has reported 7 more cases of ASF in wild boar since our last assessment in June 2024. All cases were in the Liberecký region, close to the border with Poland. The Czech Republic has not reported any outbreaks in domestic pigs since ASF was re-introduced in December 2022. The Czech Republic have enlarged both RZII and RZI zones in the eastern regions of Liberecký.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since the last update, Bosnia has reported 6 outbreaks in domestic pigs occurring in backyard pigs. The largest group affected contained 30 pigs. They have also reported 2 cases in wild boar.

Estonia

To date in 2024, according to ADIS summaries, there have been approximately 6 further ASF cases in wild boar reported since the last update.

Hungary

Since 17 June 2024, there have been a further 30 reports of ASF in wild boar comprising a total of 32 animals in Hungary. There are 3 main clusters of cases, 1 being just to the north

of Budapest, another in Salgótarján and the final cluster around Debrecen. The clusters are relatively close to the border with Slovakia and Romania.

Moldova

Since our last report, Moldova has reported one outbreak of ASF in domestic pigs in a village in Singerei region. No cases were reported since the last update in wild boar to WOA. H.

Russia

Since our last report, Russia has reported 3 outbreaks in domestic pigs to the east of Moscow, according to WOA. H. reports. All were on backyard holdings. There was also 1 case of ASF in wild boar in West Russia since our last assessment.

Slovakia

Since our last report, according to ADIS summaries, there have been approximately 9 cases of ASF in wild boar in Slovakia since our last report on 17 June. There have been no outbreaks in domestic pigs.

Ukraine

Ukraine has reported 15 outbreaks in domestic pigs since the last update, reported across the country. The outbreaks were on a mixture of commercial farm, backyard and unspecified premises. The largest premises contained 19,174 pigs and the remaining 12 outbreaks were on premises with less than 520 animals. Ukraine has also reported 2 cases of ASF in wild boar, affecting 3 animals.

Conclusion

ASF continues to circulate in wild boar across multiple regions in Europe. The recurrence of ASF in Poland and Germany within domestic pig populations highlights the continued threat to livestock, and that human-mediated routes of incursion continue to be a risk. The increase in ASF outbreaks in the Baltic states over summer months, namely Lithuania and Latvia, is similar to patterns seen in previous years. The recent cases in wild boar in western Germany, and the two outbreaks in domestic pigs less than 100km from the border with France, is concerning. Human-mediated spread has been implicated in large geographical jumps previously, and there could be gradual spread further west via movements of wild boar if they are not effectively controlled. Disease spread has been relatively slow in northern Italy, and it remains to be seen whether this could occur in western Germany.

There has been ongoing investment into vaccinations for ASF by EU-funded projects such as Horizon's [VAX4ASF](#) project which involves collaboration between institutions across Europe, including The Pirbright Institute in the United Kingdom. [The Pirbright Institute](#) has

also recently partnered with The Vaccine Group in Plymouth to progress the development of a safe and effective vaccine for ASF. A vaccine for ASF in Europe is likely some years away, but progress in this area is promising.

Given the above, we consider that the risk of entry of ASF virus in live animals and products of animal origin (POAO) from affected countries, remains unchanged at **MEDIUM (occurs regularly)**.

The potential high risk for non-commercial imports of pork products from ASF affected areas remains of high concern. Evidence from inspections at Great Britain ports suggest that there are several vehicles illegally bringing pork meat into Great Britain from some regions of the EU affected by ASF. Some of these instances involved large quantities of porcine POAO, some of which appear to be home-slaughtered and arrive in Great Britain from an undisclosed origin, as a non-commercial import, with poor levels of biosecurity and food hygiene. Therefore, the risk of ASF entering Great Britain, from the human-mediated pathway and moving porcine POAO, is considered to remain at **HIGH (occurs very often)**, though there is considerable uncertainty around this until data is fully collated and analysed, and we will reassess as further information becomes available.

It remains a critical time for the spread of the virus throughout Europe, particularly through human-mediated routes such as introduction from non-commercial imports (including illegal imports) or fomites. On 1 September 2022, strict new controls were introduced restricting the movement of pork and pork products into Great Britain from the European Union (EU) and European Free Trade Association states. It is no longer legal to personally bring in pork or pork products weighing over 2 kilograms unless they are produced to the EU's commercial standards. This does not apply to commercial imports, which remain unaffected by the control, but Great Britain will be bringing in further controls. Although the new controls do not currently apply to non-commercial imports of pork products less than 2 kg from the EU, all travellers are strongly advised to avoid bringing, buying, ordering on the internet, or requesting any pork products – for example, fresh or frozen meat, dried or cured meats, sausages, salamis, or pâté – back to the UK from affected parts of Europe. It remains illegal for travellers to import meat or dairy products from Asia and other non-EU country areas.

Swill feeding any animal, whether pigs, poultry, ruminants, or wildlife is illegal and has the potential to cause substantial harm. We would like to emphasise to all pig keepers, pig producers, smallholders, and the general public to ensure pigs are not fed catering waste, kitchen scraps or pork products, thereby observing the swill feeding ban.

All pig keepers, whether commercial holdings or not, should remain vigilant and ensure that any visitors or seasonal workers have not had any recent contact with pigs, pig products, pig premises, wild boar (including hunting) or equipment associated with such activities in the affected regions in Europe or other affected parts of the world. As with all

biosecurity, these measures are only as effective as the people using them, so proper training should be provided.

Pig keepers and veterinarians should remind themselves of the clinical signs for ASF. Any suspect cases must be reported promptly. Read guidance about [African swine fever: how to spot and report the disease](#) for more information.

We will continue to monitor the situation.

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