

Update on African Swine Fever

29th November 2019

Recent developments in Poland

On the 15th of November, Polish authorities reported a case of ASF in a wild boar that was found dead in the Wschowski region in western Poland, an area previously unaffected by ASF (Figure 1 below). This case represents significant spread of the disease in that it is approximately 360km from the nearest case in wild boar in Poland and 300km from the nearest outbreak in domestic pigs with no known link to these outbreaks. It is also located 80km and 120km respectively from the Polish border with Germany and the Czech Republic. Following searches by the authorities, volunteers and the Polish army, a further 20 wild boar cases have been confirmed in this area. A fence has been put in place surrounding an area of approximately a 5km radius from where the boar were discovered.



Situation in Belgium

ASF was first detected in wild boar in Belgium on the 14th of September 2018. There have been no outbreaks of the disease in domestic pigs there. The epidemic wave of ASF in wild boar appears to be on the decline in the affected area of Belgium as the number of wild boar carcasses testing positive for ASF has reduced significantly in recent months. Only one positive wild boar case was reported in August and none in September. A single wild boar carcass was found in the infected area in October which tested positive for ASF. It was estimated that this boar had died more than six months previously. Similarly, the aged remains of an ASF positive wild boar estimated to be more than 6 months old was also detected in November. Since ASF was confirmed in Belgium, fences more than 250km long have been erected around the infected and high-risk adjacent areas. The Belgian authorities are aiming to cull all wild boar from the infected area by 31 December 2019.

ASF situation in the rest of Europe & recent EFSA risk assessment

Since 1st January 2019, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, island of Sardinia, and Slovakia have reported ASF in both domestic pigs and wild boar. Romania has reported the most outbreaks in domestic pigs with 1069 outbreaks in 2019 to date. Hungary, Estonia and Belgium have reported ASF in wild boar only. Table 1 below details the number of outbreaks of ASF in pigs and wild boar in affected EU countries 2019 to date.

Table 1: Number of outbreaks in EU Member States from 1st January to 25th November 2019

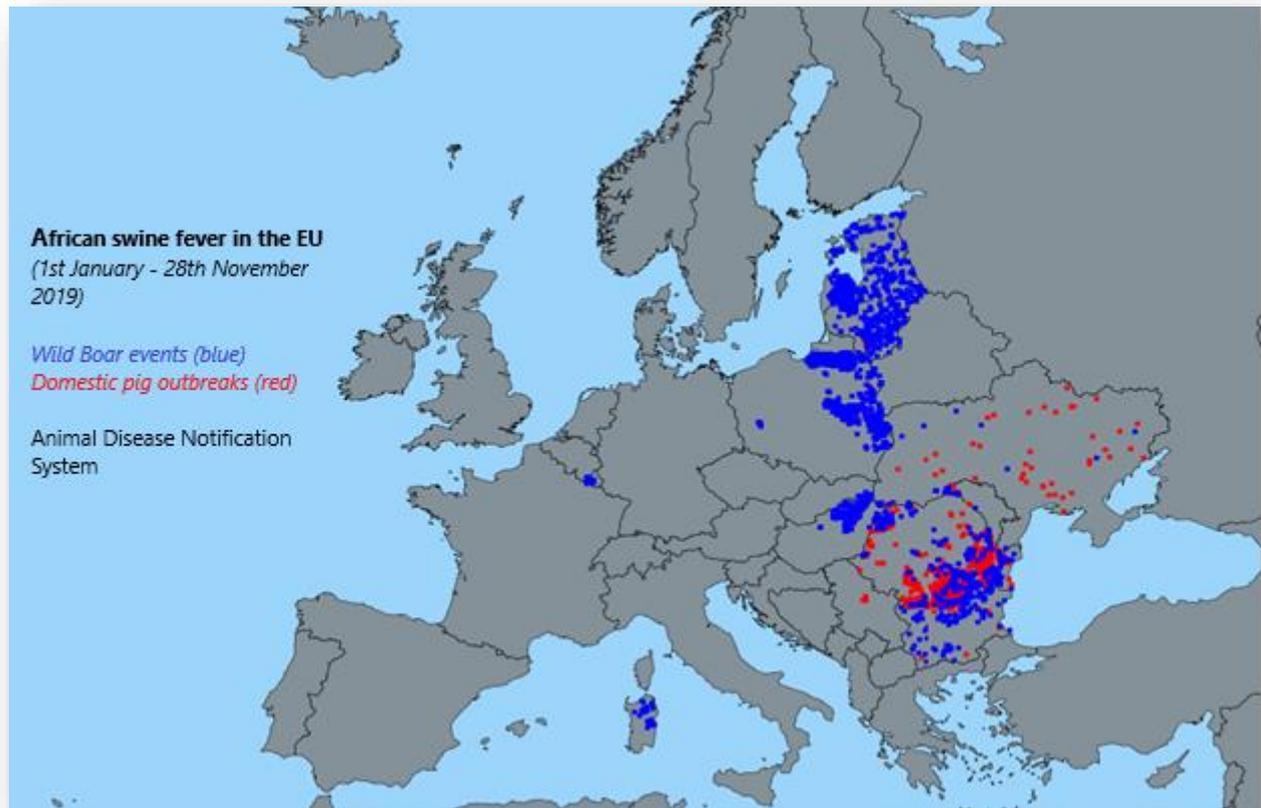
Country	Date of last outbreak in domestic pigs	ASF Domestic Pigs No. outbreaks	Date of last cases in wild boar	No. of ASF positive wild boar events (involving 1 or more animals)
Romania	15/11/2019	1069	15/11/2019	578
Estonia	-	0	14/11/2019	75
Latvia	05/07/2019	1	14/11/2019	313
Lithuania	11/10/2019	19	14/11/2019	427
Poland	11/10/2019	48	16/11/2019	1965
Hungary	-	0	15/11/2019	1337
Bulgaria	23/10/2019	41	14/11/2019	94
Belgium	-	0	13/11/2019	481
Slovakia	19/08/2019	11	14/11/2019	17
TOTAL	-	1189	-	5287

*Excludes Sardinia

Serbia has reported a total of 18 outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs since the disease was first confirmed there on 13th August 2019. No ASF cases have been reported in wild boar to date in Serbia. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) produced a risk assessment on the potential further spread of ASF in Europe in September 2019¹. It concluded that given the prevalence of the disease in Serbia and Southern Bulgaria, there is a very high probability (66-100%) that ASF will spread to other Balkan countries within the next year. The report has identified nine countries at high risk including Croatia, Macedonia, North Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Slovenia and Greece. The assessment considered risk factors such as the presence of a wild boar population, the movement of people and products between these countries, and the structure of the domestic pig sectors which includes large numbers of smallholders where there may be a tradition of home slaughtering. They also considered the likelihood of swill being fed to pigs, a practice which has been banned in the EU since 2002.

The EFSA risk assessment also examined the potential for the spread of ASF from this region to the rest of the EU and concluded that the risk is very low to low (0-15%).

Figure 2: African swine fever in EU Member States from 1st January to 28th November 2019



Situation in Asia

In 2019 to date, Mongolia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, North Korea, South Korea, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and most recently the island nations of Philippines and East Timor have reported their first outbreaks of ASF. This is in addition to continuing outbreaks in China where ASF was first reported in 2018. The rapid spread of ASF is attributable to many causes in Asia. Chinese veterinary authorities (MARA) have estimated that outbreaks have been caused by swill feeding (40%) which is now banned in China, the movement of live pigs and pig products (17%) and contaminated vehicles and personnel (43%)².

Conclusion

The absence of a wild boar population, the distance from ASF affected countries, national and farm biosecurity measures, and our island status all help to mitigate the risk of an outbreak of ASF in Ireland. Furthermore, live pigs and germinal products are not imported from ASF affected areas.

However, vigilance is essential to preventing an ASF outbreak in Ireland. Pig owners are reminded to implement robust biosecurity measures on their premises, in particular to prevent pigs coming into contact with contaminated clothing, vehicles or equipment and to ensure that pigs are never given the opportunity to consume food waste. People travelling to ASF affected areas are strongly advised to avoid bringing back pork or pork products such as cured meats, pates, ham sandwiches etc. It is illegal for people to bring personal consignments of meat products into the EU from non-EU countries.

Further information regarding measures that can be taken to prevent ASF along with all of DAFM's ASF disease updates are available on the [African swine fever](#) page of the DAFM website.

References

1. EFSA (2019) <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/african-swine-fever-early-detection-key-controlling-spread>
2. Current situation and control measures of ASF in China – Dr. Gaollu (CAHEC), GF TADS, Sofia, Bulgaria
11/09/19