



Standing Group of Experts on African swine fever in Europe under the GF-TADs umbrella

Eleventh meeting (SGE ASF11) Warsaw, Poland, 24-25 September 2018

Recommendations

After reviewing the reports from the SGE Members, the topic of the management of the wild boar population in the context of ASF infection was addressed and the progress on the GF-TADs Handbook on ASF was reviewed.

The main recommendations, which build up on previous recommendations¹, are:

General issues

1. Considering the current situation in south east Europe and the apparent different epidemiological scenario, further awareness raising efforts should be carried out in that sub-region. In addition, a specific risk assessment should be carried out to identify risk factors and possible pathways of further spread.
2. The Standing Group of Experts on ASF for Europe should continue to support affected countries, using CVO/OIE Delegate level meetings, expert missions and tailored capacity building activities at national, regional and international level; one key underlying principle for success is the provision of fully transparent information by countries and the fulfilment of their reporting obligations to the OIE.
3. Awareness campaigns should be organised by the competent authorities throughout Europe and involve hunters, farmers and travellers. These should be targeting each separate audience in order to convey specific messages.
4. The GF-TADs “Handbook on ASF in wild boar and biosecurity during hunting” should be distributed electronically (GF-TADs website) as soon as possible and the process for its printing and publication

¹ Notably following the discussions of the Standing Group of Experts on African swine fever in the Baltic and Eastern Europe region under the GF-TADs umbrella Third meeting (SGE3) in Moscow (Russia) on 15-16 March 2016.

should continue. The Handbook should be regularly updated in order to reflect new scientific findings, technology innovation and best practises.

5. Belgium and Bulgaria should become full members of the SGE ASF, and as such participate in future SGE ASF meetings to share their experience and receive relevant guidance.
6. SGE ASF field missions should be sent to Belgium and Bulgaria as soon as possible, to understand in depth field aspects and collate best practises in the prevention and control of ASF.
7. The next SGE ASF technical meeting (SGE ASF12) should meet in Prague, in March 2019 (date to be confirmed). The topic will be the practical field management of ASF and stakeholders' coordination (tbc).

Wild boar management

8. Hunters are an additional resource for the management of wildlife. They should be aware of the risks related to ASF and actively contribute to passive surveillance, active dissemination of information and adapt their practices to the disease situation. They should encourage wild boar management practices aimed at minimising the risk of the disease entering into new areas.

Wild boar management in ASF free areas

9. Wild boar populations are growing, with severe socio-economic impacts; efforts in ASF free areas should be undertaken to partially reduce this grow (hunting management, ban of supplementary feeding, agricultural practises).
10. The risk and the consequences of any new invasion of ASF in a ASF-free wild boar population should be effectively minimised through preventive and long term management of wild boar population aimed at reducing wild boar density and size in ASF-free areas. This long term management requires coordination with forestry management bodies and hunters.

Wild boar management in ASF infected areas

11. It should be acknowledged that, in ASF infected areas, management actions altering natural socio-spatial behaviour of wild boar (intensive culling, supplementary feeding) may stimulate ASF spread.
12. Disease control efforts, such as carcass search, should be focused on high-density populations where chances of detecting and eliminating ASF-positive wild boar are higher.
13. Taking stock of all the positive experiences, in particular of the Czech Republic, in case of occurrence of ASF in wild boar in a newly infected area a coordinated set of practices should be applied. These should include a reinforced passive surveillance in order to define the infected area, and the coordination of actions with the various stakeholders (farmers, hunters, forest management bodies).
14. In case of a first detection of ASF in a previously ASF-free area, the eradication of infection is a challenging and delicate process, due to the high number of infectious wild boars present; while the risk to provoke further geographical spread of the virus is high. Hence any attempt to hunt or depopulate when the first carcass is detected should be banned, while carcass removal should be carried out systematically, under strict biosecurity and by trained staff.
15. It is only during the endemic phase that follows the epidemic phase that the infection has a certain probability to be eradicated, if and when the host population is reduced as much as possible. Any action should be undertaken under strict biosecurity.

16. The ultimate management of the disease in the wild has to be set according to the different phases of the infection, which can be identified only through a continuous, accurate passive surveillance. In the ASF epidemiological landscape the prompt removal of carcasses will minimise the viral contamination responsible for the long lasting of the virus in the environment.
17. A continuous passive surveillance is the sole tool for understanding the evolution of the disease (i.e. phase identification, geographical spread etc.). Active surveillance can have a value, but only in terms of scientific research.