Updated Outbreak Assessment #10

African Swine fever in Eastern Europe

25th July 2017

Ref: VITT/1200 ASF in Eastern Europe

Disease Report

Since our last update on 27th June, there have been a further fifty eight cases of African Swine Fever (ASF) in wild boar in the Czech Republic (OIE, 2017). They have all occurred in the Zlin region in the east of the country, 300 km south east of the capital, Prague. Control measures are in place covering the entire region on Zlin. Currently the disease is not present in areas with high density of commercial pigs. There have been no detections in domestic pigs.

Poland has reported 35 outbreaks of African Swine Fever in domestic pigs so far this year, including an outbreak on a commercial premises (>1,000 pigs) located in the Part III zone; current thinking is that virus was brought into the farm on vehicles delivering wood for a co-located sawmill. The disease remains contained within control zones in North East Poland although there has recently been a case reported in wild boar in the Part I control
zone which may result in a small expansion of the Part II zone. Currently the disease is not present in areas with high density of commercial pigs.

Estonia has reported two outbreaks in commercial pig units both with >3,000 pigs present; one in south east Estonia for the first time and the other on the Island Saaremaa where outbreaks in domestic pigs have previously been reported.

Latvia has reported two outbreaks in domestic pigs, one in a backyard farm of 3 pigs and the other in a large commercial breeding unit of 6,025 pigs located in the Part III area. There have also been cases reported in wild boar within the Part I control zone demonstrating that the disease continues to spread westwards.

Lithuania has reported 5 outbreaks in domestic pigs, all on backyard holdings of fewer than 6 pigs and a large commercial farm has also reported disease where >24,000 pigs have been destroyed. The farm is located in the Part II area.

Elsewhere, disease continues to be reported in Russia and Ukraine. A jump in disease to Omsk region on the border with Kazakhstan is being monitored out of interest.
Situation Assessment

Although there have been further reports in the Czech Republic, these remain within a tightly defined area surrounding the western edge of the town on Zlin. Strict control measures are in place in the Czech Republic. These include inspections of all pig premises including backyard farms, a ban of feeding of grass and testing of pigs on all large pig farms. Controls aimed at wild boar in the infected area include a ban on hunting and feeding of wild boar, testing all wild boar found dead and secure disposal of wild boar carcases. In addition to this there has been work to increase awareness of the disease nationally including guidance on how to improve biosecurity.

According to Traces, the EU Electronic Trade Notification System, there have been no recent consignments of live pigs from the Czech Republic to the UK. In terms of pig meat, the UK imports only a very small percentage of pig products from the Czech Republic (Approx. 0.34% per annum).

In the Baltic States, low biosecurity on backyard pig farm remains an issue. The increase in outbreaks in the Baltic States and Poland this year does not increase the risk level for the UK as all the outbreaks occurred within pre-existing control zones. The most probable cause of the outbreaks is fomite transfer or indirect contact with infected wild boar. The outbreaks in Poland are outside the region where backyard farms where depopulated hence this may explain the increase in outbreaks, as disease spread through the movement of wild boar.

As a reminder, the EU disease control measures require designation of risk areas as Part I (wild boar at risk, but no cases found), Part II (wild boar testing positive but no spill over into domestic pigs), Part III (cases in wild boar and occasional spill over into domestic pigs) and Part IV which concerns the island of Sardinia only. Consignments of live pigs, live wild boars, meat of either source and animal by-products of either source are only allowed under certain derogations. For a full explanation, see European Commission Implementing Decision 2014/708/EU.

Conclusion

Despite these outbreaks, due to the low level of trade, the risk of ASF introduction to the UK remains very low (that is, “rare but could occur”). These cases in the Czech Republic are concerning given the number and the wild boar density in the area and it remains to be seen whether the authorities will be able to control disease quickly.

We would like to remind all pig keepers to be vigilant, maintain biosecurity including ensuring pigs are not fed catering waste or kitchen scraps, observing the swill feeding ban and report any clinical signs of suspect disease promptly to a veterinarian. Please see https://www.gov.uk/guidance/african-swine-fever for more information. We would like to
remind the public that any feeding of meat products, including the feeding of swill, kitchen scraps and catering waste, to wild boar or feral pigs is also illegal.

We will continue to monitor the situation.

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**References**


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