



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

**Seventeenth meeting (SGE ASF17) – 4 June 2021**

Following the discussions, after reviewing the reports on the current epidemiological situation from the SGE Members<sup>1</sup>, and on the basis of the latest scientific conclusions on an ASF exit strategy,

the SGE ASF 17 recommends that:

General issues

1. The Standing Group of Experts on African swine fever (SGE ASF) acknowledges that, even in the absence of a vaccine, science based tools for the prevention, control and eradication of ASF exist and all countries should fully implement them to fight this deadly disease.
2. The SGE ASF since 2014 has been publishing recommendations based on shared experiences and science, all countries should implement previous SGE ASF recommendations to prevent, control and eradicate ASF.
3. In addition, the GF-TADs initiative for the Global control of ASF aims to strengthen the capability of countries to control (prevent, respond, eradicate) ASF using OIE standards and best practices that are based on latest scientific evidence. All countries should contribute to reach the objectives of this initiative.
4. The SGE ASF briefly addressed including ASF in the list of diseases for which the OIE grant the official recognition of animal health status. The practicability, advantages and disadvantages of such request will need to be further explored at the level of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, and in other OIE Regions.
5. The OIE recently published Compartmentalisation Guidelines. To make the link easily available to interested countries, the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Bruxelles will add the link to the guidelines to the SGE ASF dedicated website<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine

<sup>2</sup>[https://oiebulletin.com/?panorama=05-1-10-2020-1\\_compartmentalisation](https://oiebulletin.com/?panorama=05-1-10-2020-1_compartmentalisation)

#### Exit strategy for ASF in wild boar populations.

6. The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code provides for general and specific criteria for the determination of the ASF status of a Country or zone. In this context, an appropriate surveillance programme should be in place, for a certain period, to demonstrate the absence, presence and distribution of ASF virus infection and to monitor the trend of the disease.
7. Several SGE ASF members (and former members) have been applying two main strategic approaches in eradicating ASF in wild boar: (i) virus eradication through the **quasi-extinction of the infected wild boar population** following its fencing, through fencing the infected area, ban of almost any activities, culling of the animals in the fence (e.g. Czechia and Belgium); and (ii) virus eradication through **progressive decrease of incidence**, through zoning, targeted hunting, economical and leisure activities allowed and biosecurity measures.
8. Countries should approach the control and eradication of ASF taking into account the lengthy experience of the SGE ASF members and adapt it to national and local settings.
9. The different ASF surveillance strategies were recently assessed to provide evidence of absence of virus circulation in wild boar (Exit Strategy) when the eradication approach is based on the progressive decrease of incidence. A **two-phased** approach (screening phase, followed by a confirmation phase) is suggested as a possible approach for an ASF Exit Strategy in wild boar populations. This science-based approach could be taken into account by countries designing, implementing and assessing a surveillance system to demonstrate freedom from ASF.
10. The accuracy of the Exit strategy increases with increasing number of carcasses collected and tested. Surveillance information gathered by seroprevalence in wild boar would have a limited impact on the performance of the exit strategy; **passive surveillance is key**. Countries should concentrate surveillance efforts on wild boar carcass search, testing and removal.

#### Next meeting

11. The eighteenth meeting (SGE ASF18) of the Standing Group of Experts on African Swine Fever in Europe under the GF-TADs umbrella should be held virtually, in **November 2021**. The date and the modalities of the meeting will be decided depending on the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.
12. The focus of the next meeting will be on 'Challenges, role and management of backyards and outdoor farming in the framework of ASF prevention, control and eradication'