



GF – TAD`s Expert mission on African swine fever to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Experts: Petr Šatrán (team leader, CZ), Mārtiņš Seržants (LV), Mark Hovari (FAO, Hungary), Budimir Plavsic (WOAH, Serbia)

(12. – 14. 07. 2023)

Terms of Reference of (ToR) the SGE Expert Missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina



- 1 The experts should work with the Veterinary Services in order to **determine the following aspects:**
 - a. **extent of the areas of occurrence of ASF in domestic pigs.**
 - b. **geographical distribution of ASF in wild boar.**
 - c. **formulate hypothesis on the drivers of ASF occurrence.**
- 2 Propose **measures intended for the control and eradication of ASF under local conditions**, in line with the WOAH International Standards and the Recommendations formulated by the GF-TADs SGE on ASF

Background – wild boar

There is no precise data on population of wild boar and in certain territories, hunting does not take place due to lack of legislation

Procedure of passive surveillance in wild boar population is in place, but during the year 2022 and 2023 no suspected wild boar (found dead or roadkill) has been sampled and tested (until expert mission).

No information about ASF in wild boar population.



	Hunting ground capacity	Game use planned 2020-2021	Game use executed 2020-2021
Republika Srpska	8 660	8 303	2 408
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	14 153	3 536	2 418
Brčko District BiH	No data	No data	No data
Total (whole country's territory)	22 813	11 839	4 826

Background - kept porcine animals

Animal Identification and Movement Control System are in place on a national level and identification and registration of porcine animals are mandatory according Veterinary Law.

In total 545 000 pigs are registered (74 000 sows and gilts).

	Total number of registered domestic pig farms	Median number of pigs per farm	Total number of registered domestic pigs
Republika Srpska	97	1 662,6	464 550
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	47	≈664	≈31 243
Brčko District BiH	11	710	45 000
Total (whole country's territory)	155	≈687	≈543 793

Farmers are obligated to implement and maintain biosecurity measures, but no leagal biosecurity requirements stipulated in legislation or on the recomendation level.

Epidemiological information

- The first outbreak was confirmed on 22 June 2023, in Municipality Bijeljina, Dragaljevac Srednji, part of the Republika Srpska entity.
- 5 – 15 new outbreaks are detected daily.
- By 14 July, 135 outbreaks were confirmed in the north-east of the country (29 in BD and 106 in RS), predominantly in Municipality Bijeljina.
- Most of the outbreaks was found in non-registered smallholder farms with very low biosecurity,
- Some larger farms with a pig population of 400 – 600 were affected.
- Direct contact to wild boar in small domestic pig holdings (outdoor farming).



First outbreak, Dragaljevac Srednji, Bijeljina

Findings and Conclusions

Based on the epidemiological information following hypothesis of ASF drivers were established:

- movement of infected domestic pigs,
- visits from unauthorized persons (neighbors, guests etc.),
- infected meat products

Considering the high infection pressure in the area, the unknown epidemic situation in wild boar (during the mission) necessary to consider the risk of spreading the disease via:

- direct contacts between domestic pigs – wild boar (vice versa),
- indirect contact - contaminated feed, straw and hay forced by harvest season.

Recommendations

- Crisis communication and coordination between State Veterinary Office, Entity veterinary authorities and laboratories should be improved (long way/delay of information flow).
- In order to share information, it would be appropriate to create a unified national information system for sharing information on the results of laboratory tests, the epidemic situation, the pig population and the movement of pigs.
- Animal identification and registration system (legislation and procedures) are in place in terms of legislation and written procedures. In practice, big commercial pig holdings are registered and approved by Veterinary Authority of the entities. However, expert team noticed that majority of suspected and confirmed backyard farms and animals were not registered and identified.
- Categorization of pig holdings based on biosecurity level should be established (e.g. commercial farms, family farms, backyard holdings). The minimum biosecurity requirements or guidelines, based on the livestock production systems should be developed and elaborated.

Recommendations

- In reaction to epidemiological situation and the current pig raising conditions (mainly in the backyards without biosecurity), the depopulation of the unsafe pig holdings / farms following the compensation to owners, in the radius set by the competent authority should be taken into account to avoid the further spread of the ASF due to the secondary outbreaks.
- Inspections of pig holdings should take place in the areas where ASF is present in wild boars or was detected in domestic pigs and were backyards/commercial farms continuing their activity. Frequency of the control should be defined by CA based on risk assessment.
- Enhanced passive surveillance is encouraged. It is recommended not to use active surveillance for ASF early detection and not to test the collected blood samples for ELISA, but to enhance passive surveillance and to target sick or dead pigs and all the samples should be tested by PCR.



Recommendations

- Procedure of passive surveillance in wild boar population is in place, but during the year 2022 and 2023 no suspected wild boar (found dead or roadkill) has been sampled and tested.
- Incentives for reported found dead could improve passive surveillance in the wild boar population, and thereby provide more information on areas where domestic pig holdings are at higher risk.
- Communication among services and all stakeholders on all levels needs to be considerably improved. It is a critical point for the successful control of ASF. Wildlife biologists/experts, foresters and hunters should be involved, to enable a clear understanding of the wild boar population (estimated numbers, densities and habited areas) in the country.
- Continuous strong reduction of the wild boar population is highly recommended all over the country and throughout the whole year. Reduction of the wild boar population must be particularly considered and applied in the territories around the big industrial holdings.



Recommendations

- Laboratory capacity (reagents, equipment, quality assurance) should be replenished and planned for a long-term period to ensure continuous detection of ASF.
- It is recommended to designate NRL on ASF, which should participate in proficiency testing and collaborate with regional reference laboratories and partners (EU, WOA, FAO, IAEA)
- The level of awareness targeting the pig farmers, hunters and the public, in general, should be increased, using all available tools primarily focussing on mass media (TV and radio), local newspapers, trying to disseminate the information on the disease itself and the measures on how to prevent the ASF and to whom to report any suspected cases in the domestic pigs and in wild boars.
- Continuous training and education for the commercial pig farmers, managers, and veterinarians employed on such farms on key knowledge of ASF, transmission ways, clinical signs, ASF prevention, surveillance and control measures, biosecurity on pig farms, and during the trade is necessary.



Thank you for your attention!

The experts team wish to thank all colleagues from Bosnia and Herzegovina for their support and help given.

The working atmosphere during the mission was open and very good.

The colleagues from Bosnia and Herzegovina gave all their support and assistance to facilitate the mission.

