

# African Swine Fever Exercises in Austria



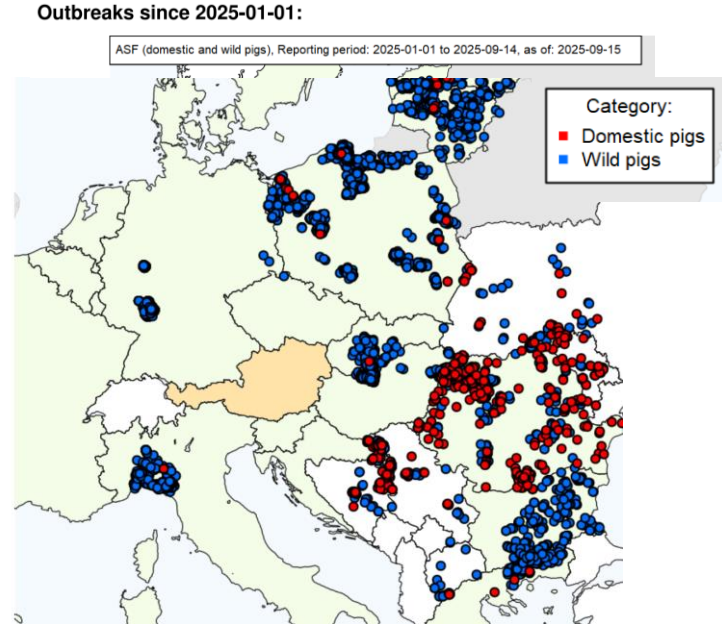
Beate Liehl

Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection

GFTADS ASP

# ASF Situation in Austria

- Austria is currently free of African swine fever (ASF)
- Despite **extensive efforts** to prevent its spread within the European Union since its first occurrence in 2014, several neighbouring countries have been affected (Czech Republic- 2017- infected wild boars only 80km away from the Austrian border; Hungary since April 2018; Slovakia since July 2019; Germany since September 2020, Italy mainland since 2022)
- Infected wild boars in Hungary and Slovakia have been detected close to the Austrian border, posing a considerable risk of introduction through natural spread among wild boars as well as through human mediated transmission



## Exercises as a Key Tool in Contingency Planning and Preparedness

- The Austrian authorities regularly conduct ASF exercises.
- These exercises are considered an important tool to test and update the ASF contingency plan, as well as to ensure early detection and effective control measures.
- This approach is in line with European animal health law, which requires Member States to establish contingency plans for Category A diseases and verify them through exercises.
- Eastern Austria (federal states of Burgenland, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, and Styria) faces a higher risk of ASF introduction and therefore conducts most of these exercises.

## Main objectives of exercises

Exercises are based on realistic scenarios observed in already affected countries.

Depending on the objectives, different formats are used (desktop vs. field exercises).

Main objectives include:

- Testing contingency plans and national regulations
- Improving communication across administrative levels and stakeholders
- Identifying weaknesses for targeted improvements
- Ensuring early detection and rapid response
- Clarifying responsibilities (administrative bodies, hunting associations)
- Practicing search and disposal procedures
- Raising awareness

# Upper Austria, 2023 - Desktop Exercise – Border Fencing after ASF in the Czech Republic

- Desktop exercise to test technical, legal and budgetary aspects of fencing along border to Czech Republic
- Objective: Assess preparedness of IT tools, legal aspects, and costs related to constructing fences after an ASF outbreak close to border
- Mayors of local communities were asked to provide proposals for fencing routes after consultation of local experts
- During exercise the local crisis team of district Rohrbach was convened and mayors of affected communities were invited
- Outcome: Fencing routes agreed upon with local communities; challenges with private land use were addressed through amendments to Austrian Animal Health Law.
- Awareness was raised in municipalities and responsibilities were clarified



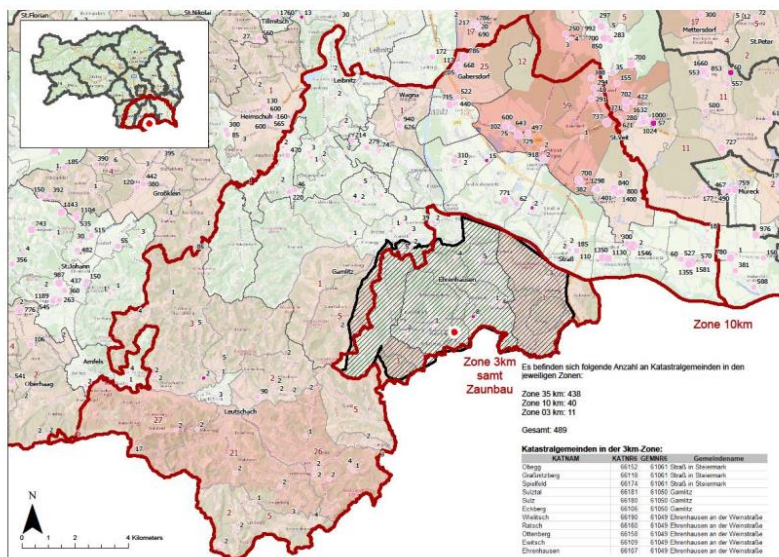
## Styria, July 2024 - 3 days field exercise

- Objective:
  - Practise initial steps following an ASF outbreak in wild boars in an area bordering 2 federal states and 1 neighbouring country
  - Validate crisis centre activation and information flow between authorities/stakeholders
  - Compare carcass detection methods (drones vs. dogs)
  - Practice carcass search, sampling, disposal, and decontamination
- Scenario: ASF detected in a wild boar carcass in the border region of Styria, Carinthia, and Slovenia.
- Agenda:
  - Day 1: Crisis centre activation, stakeholder communication, carcass search planning, fencing preparation, media training (press conference)
  - Day 2: Field search (37 ha, 21 teams with drones and dogs)
  - Day 3: Lessons learned - Debriefing

# Styria, July 2024 - 3 days field exercise

An exercise manual was created and restriction zones were established

## Übungsannahme Zonen





## Styria, July 2024 - 3 days field exercise

### Stabssitzung



### Pressekonferenz





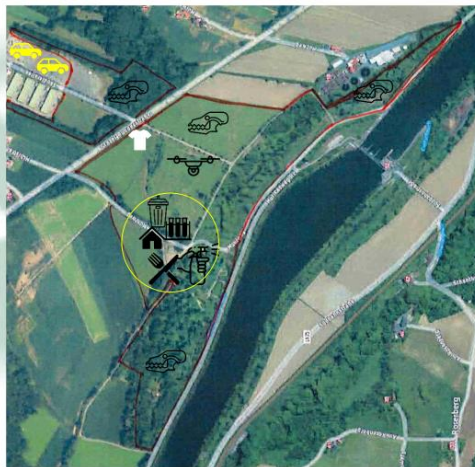
# Styria, July 2024 - 3 days field exercise

## Carcass search on Day 2

### Organisation der Kadaversuche



- ⇒ Einsatzleitung 
- ⇒ Tierärzte 
- ⇒ Suchtrupps 
- ⇒ Kadaverortung u. Markierung 
- ⇒ Probennahme 
- ⇒ Kadaver/Entsorgung 
- ⇒ Drohnensuche 
- ⇒ Dekontamination 
- ⇒ Verbindung 
- ⇒ Verpflegung 
- ⇒ Nachbesprechung vor Ort 
- ⇒ Ausgabe Schutzbekleidung 



### Zoneneinteilung und Anzahl der Suchtrupps

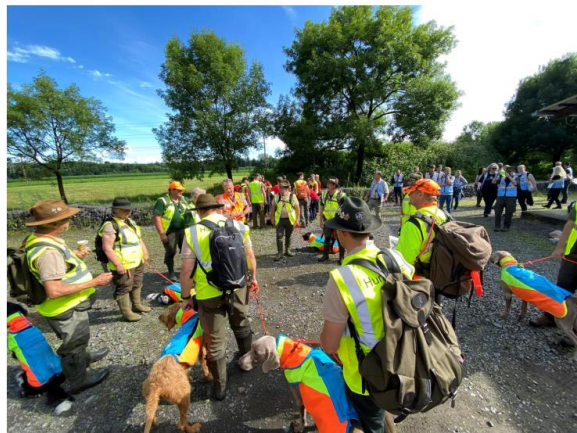


Zone	Größe	Trupps
1	7,81 ha	3
2	3,98 ha	2
3	5,68 ha	4
4	8,85 ha	6
5	2,37 ha	1
6	2,54 ha	2
7	5,69 ha	3
Gesamt	36,92 ha	21



# Styria, July 2024 - 3 days field exercise

## Auftragsvergabe Suchtrupps



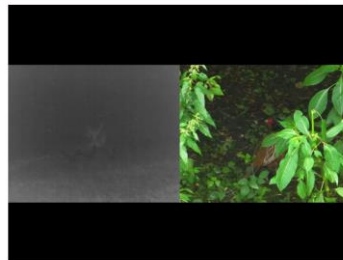
## Probennahme



## Drohnenflug



## Drohnenflug Ergebnisse



## Styria, July 2024 - 3 days field exercise

### Outcome:

- Processes and contingency plans were appropriate
- Practical weaknesses identified and addressed
- Combination of dogs and drones proved most effective
- Emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation and communication with media/public

## Lower Austria, March 2025 - 3 days field exercise

- Planned as 3-days table top and field exercise to practise initial steps following an ASF outbreak in wild boar – due to the FMD situation in Hungary/Slovakia practical aspects of exercise were downsized
- Scenario: Simulated ASF outbreak with wild boar carcasses placed in the field
- Agenda:
  - Day 1: Activation of local crisis center, informing the relevant authorities and stakeholders; initiate carcass search;
  - Day 2: Carcass search in the field
  - Day 3: Lessons learned - Debriefing

## Lower Austria, March 2025 - 3 days field exercise

### Objectives:

- Practice carcass detection with dogs and drones
- Reporting via mobile app, marking locations, carcass disposal, cleaning, and disinfection

### Outcome:

- Contingency plans and national regulations validated, with improvements introduced to carcass search and removal procedures
- Interdisciplinary cooperation is essential

# Lower Austria, March 2025 - 3 days field exercise



## Übungsrevier

- Fläche 2.800 ha
- Abschuss: pro Jahr ca. 240 WS





## Lower Austria, March 2025 - 3 days field exercise





## Upper Austria, 17 September 2025 – field exercise

- Field exercise to practise wild boar carcass search following an ASF outbreak
- Scenario: Simulated ASF outbreak with wild boar carcasses placed in the field
- Objectives:
  - Practice carcass detection with dogs and drones
  - Reporting via mobile app, marking locations, carcass disposal, cleaning, and disinfection

## Conclusion and Outlook

- Austria's ASF preparedness is strongly supported by regular, practical exercises.
- These not only ensure readiness but also strengthen cooperation and public awareness.

# Thank you for your attention.