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Managing comunication ASF

Valentin Almansa de Lara

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Communication. To whom?

- **Internally**
  - To your team (animal health and SPS Units, they must work together)
  - To your bosses (is basic, your minister must be aligned with the message)
  - To the press unit.
- **National**
  - General population
  - Other administrations (other ministries, regional authorities)
  - Sector (farmers, industry exporters)
- **International**
  - EU partners (Commission; Member States)
  - International organizations (OIE, Members)
  - Trade partners

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Effective communication

- The key is the reliability of the issuer in front of the recipient
- If you are not reliable for the other, it doesn't work
  - It doesn’t matter the format
  - Neither the content
  - Neither who make it

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Reliability

- It is a process
- Build in peace time or in minor incidents (how you work in your daily basis or react to a “normal” problem)
- It´s link with trust

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Trust

Based on

- Predictability (react always with the same patterns)
- Face always the problems (never hide)
- Stability

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In crisis time

- Quick reaction
  - with the new communication networks (social media), it is impossible to hide
  - You must try to be the origin of the information
- Transparency (as complete information as you can and know)
  - The most difficult issue is how to managed what you do not know.
- Through the usual connections and known recipients

And now; from the theory to the real world

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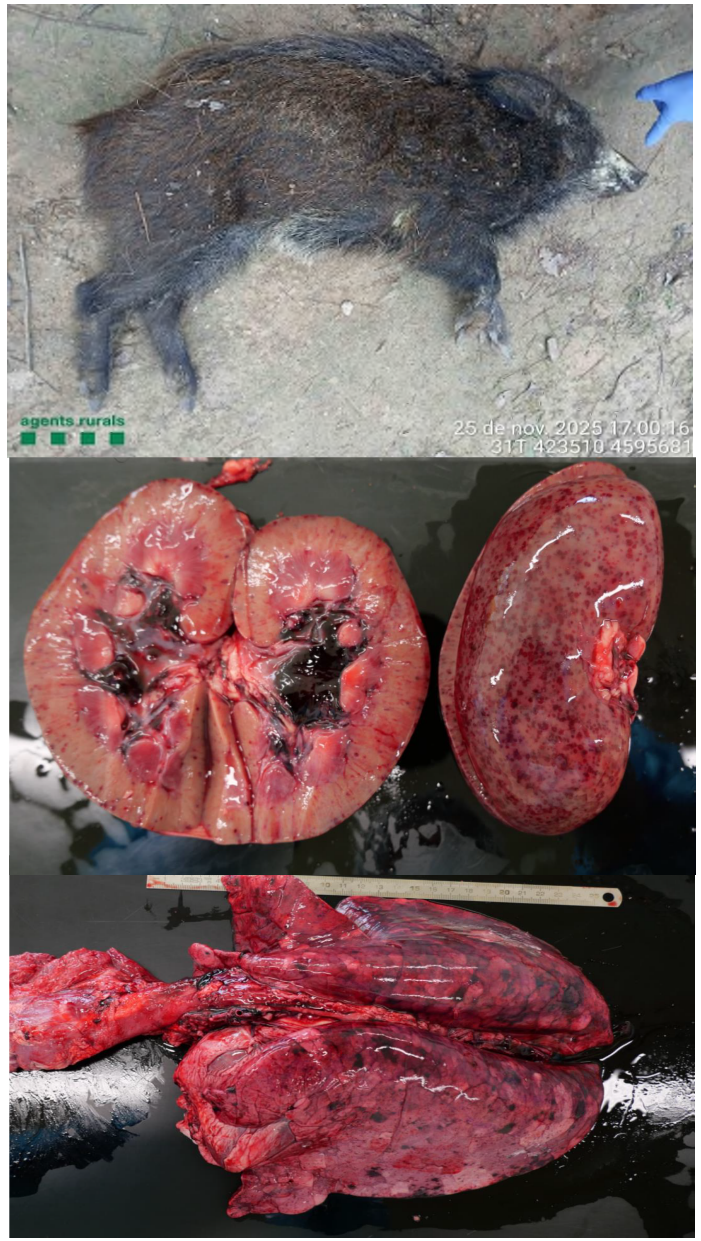
First cases detected in Cataluña

- 25 & 26/11/2025 – Detection of **two wild boar carcasses**, 1 km apart, near the campus of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, in Cerdanyola del Vallès municipality (Barcelona province).
- Carcasses in fresh conditions. Finding later of carcasses in older conditions → **Estimated entrance of the virus in late October in Spain.**
- Samples taken for analysis at the IRTA-CReSA laboratory → **Positive result in PCR** (26/11/2025) → Samples sent for confirmation in NRL.
- 27/11/25 – Sample reception and analysis at the LCV of Algete (NRL) → Positive PCR → **Confirmation of the presence of the African swine fever virus in Spain since its eradication in 1994**.
- Necropsy of the wild boars at the IRTA-CReSA laboratory → **Clear lesions consistent with African swine fever (ASF).**
- 28/11/2025 – Sequencing at the Algete National Laboratory → **Genotype II** confirmed.



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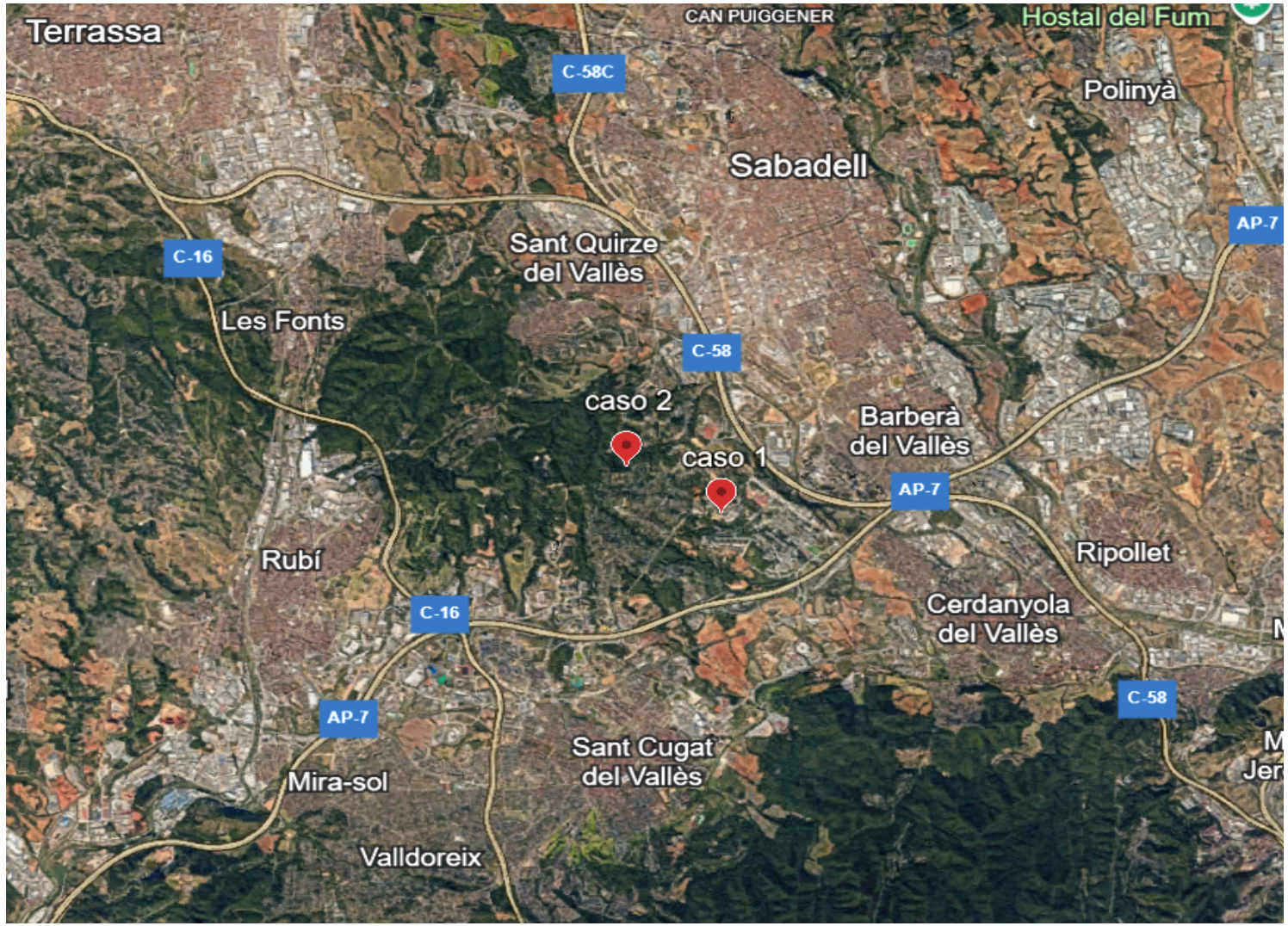
First cases detected in Cataluña



- **Moderately dense forest area**
- **Moderate density of wild boar** in the area (about 4-5 WB/Km^2)
- **Urban and residential neighborhoods** surrounding forest areas → Challenge in implementing many control measures.
- Presence of **fenced-highways and major roads** that delimit the area
- **Low density of pig farms** → total number of 57 pig holdings (of them, 41 were commercial) → Visit by OVS and enhancement of passive surveillance → **Pig sector remains unaffected so far.**

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Initial comunication actions (I)

- **28th november 2025:**
  - **Official notification via RASVE (national system), ADIS and WAHIS.**
  - **Meeting of the RASVE Committee (regional CVOs)**
  - **Meeting of the Committee for the Pork sector**
  - **CVO Press briefing: a videoconference was convened to explain the situation to the press, with journalists' questions being taken.**
  - **Communication to our trade partners (letter and report)**

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Emilio García Muro
DIRECTOR GENERAL
DE SANIDAD DE LA PRODUCCIÓN AGROPECUARIA Y
BIENESTAR ANIMAL

DELEGADO DE ESPAÑA ANTE LA OMSA

Madrid, 28 November 2025

Dear WOAH Delegate,

I am writing to you in relation to the Spanish swine health situation, given that your country is one of Spain's main trading partners in the importation of various products of porcine origin.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of a change in Spain's animal health status following the declaration of an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF), due to the detection of two wild boars that tested positive for the virus and were found dead in the municipality of Cerdanyola del Vallès, in the province of Barcelona. This represents the first detection of the disease in Spain since November 1994. The event has now been officially notified to WOAH.

From the moment suspicion arose, all necessary measures were taken to prevent any possible spread of the virus.

Following the notification of the outbreak, and once all measures ensuring the non-dissemination of the virus beyond the affected area were implemented, the Spanish territory has been regionalised in accordance with the recommendations established in the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code, as detailed in the attached report, which provides additional information regarding this outbreak notification.

Among the measures adopted, the following actions should be highlighted:

- Establishment of a containment zone around the outbreak.
- Surveillance of the epidemiological situation throughout the containment zone, including inspections and sampling in both farms and wild animals.
- Continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures implemented within the containment zone.
- Suspension of the issuance of export certificates for pigs or pork meat originating from the affected area.

I hope that this information will be useful for maintaining the health guarantees of Spanish exports. I also undertake to keep you informed of any developments that may arise in this regard and that could have an impact on Spanish exports to your country.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

CORREO ELECTRÓNICO
exportacionanimal@mapa.es

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DIRECCIÓN DE VALIDACIÓN : https://run.gob.es/hsbIF8yLcR
FIRMANTE(1) : EMILIO LUIS GARCIA MURO | FECHA : 28/11/2025 12:09 | Sin acción específica

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GENERAL DIRECTORATE
OF AGRI-FOOD PRODUCTION
HEALTH AND ANIMAL WELFARE

DEPUTY GENERAL DIRECTORATE
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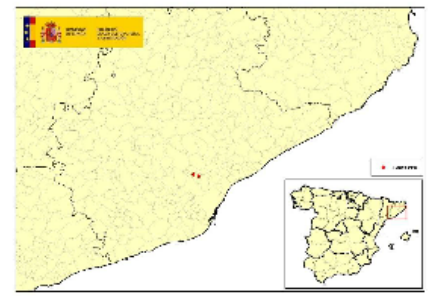
DETECTION OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER IN WILD BOARS IN CATALONIA

28/11/2025

The Official Veterinary Services (OVS) of the Generalitat of Catalonia have reported the detection of two wild boars testing positive for African Swine Fever (ASF) virus in the municipality of Cerdanyola del Vallès, in the comarca of Vallès Occidental, Barcelona (see Map 1). This represents the first detection of the disease in Spain since November 1994.

On 26 November 2025, the OVS were informed of the discovery of two wild-boar carcasses, both in a fresh state and located approximately 1 km apart, in the vicinity of the Autonomous University of Barcelona campus (see Map 1). Blood samples were collected from both carcasses for analysis at the Animal Health Research Centre (IRTA-CReSA) laboratory, with both testing positive for ASF virus by PCR.

Necropsies were performed on both carcasses at the CReSA facilities, revealing hemorrhagic lesions compatible with ASF. Samples were immediately sent to the Central Veterinary Laboratory (LCV) in Algete, Madrid, Spain's National Reference Laboratory for ASF, where the presence of ASF viral genome was confirmed by RT-PCR on 27 November 2025, late in the afternoon.



Map 1: Location of the two wild-boar outbreaks detected in Catalonia (Source: MAPA)

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Initial comunication actions (II)

- **5th december 2025:**

  - **Molecular characterization of ASFv by EU Reference Laboratory CISA-Valdeolmos:**
    - **Genotype II** (as all virus currently circulating in EU)
    - **Novel genetic group 29** (novel group close to genetic group Georgia 2007)

  - **Differences between ASFv Spain 2025 and Georgia 2007:**
    - **30 changes** (single nucleotide polymorphism mutations and short insertions and deletions)
    - **1 large deletion** (around 10,000 pb) in the terminal left variable region)

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COMMUNICATION: A NEW CHALLENGE

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Acción de Gobierno

Nota de prensa

En el marco del cumplimiento de la norma de la Unión Europea (UE)

El Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación abre una investigación complementaria sobre el origen del virus de la peste porcina africana en España

05 de diciembre de 2025. El Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación abre una nueva investigación sobre el origen de la peste porcina africana (PPA) en España, tras haber recibido hoy el informe del laboratorio de referencia de la UE en el que se comunican los resultados de secuenciación del genoma del virus de la PPA.

Se trata de una investigación complementaria a la iniciada el pasado 28 de noviembre, fecha en la que se detectó el brote de peste porcina africana en Cerdanyola del Vallés (Barcelona).

El informe del Centro de Investigación en Sanidad Animal (CISA-INIA), de Valdeolmos (Madrid), laboratorio de referencia de la UE, recoge la caracterización molecular por secuenciación del genoma del virus de la PPA y los compara con los distintos virus de peste porcina africana detectados en toda la Unión Europea.

Todos los virus circulantes en la actualidad en los Estados miembros pertenecen a los grupos genéticos 2-28 y no al nuevo grupo genético 29 al que pertenece el virus causante del foco en la provincia de Barcelona -muy similar al grupo genético 1 que circuló en Georgia en 2007-.

Los virus, en condiciones naturales, cuando se propagan mediante ciclos de infección en animales sufren en mayor o menor medidas cambios en su genoma. El hallazgo de un virus similar al que circuló en Georgia no excluye, por tanto, que su origen pueda estar en una instalación de confinamiento biológico.

La cepa del virus "Georgia 2007" es un virus de "referencia" que se utiliza con frecuencia en infecciones experimentales en instalaciones de confinamiento para realizar estudios del virus o para evaluar la eficacia de las vacunas, que actualmente están en fase de desarrollo.

Del informe se deduce que cabe la posibilidad de que el origen del virus no esté en animales o productos de origen animal provenientes de alguno de los países en los que actualmente está presente la infección.

Por ello, la Dirección General de Sanidad de la Producción Agroalimentaria y Bienestar Animal del Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación ha iniciado las siguientes actuaciones:

1) Comunicar al Servicio de Protección de la Naturaleza (SEPRONA) de la Guardia Civil la necesidad de investigar estos hechos, como autoridad competente para la investigación de posibles infracciones o delitos medioambientales.

2) Iniciar un procedimiento de investigación del origen del virus en el marco del artículo 57.2 del Reglamento (UE) 2016/429, del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 9 de marzo de 2016.

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PRESS RELEASE

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food opens a complementary investigation on the origin of the ASF virus in Spain

All viruses currently circulating in the Member States do not belong to the new **genetic group 29** to which the virus causing the outbreak in the province of Barcelona belongs - very similar to genetic group 1 that circulated in Georgia in 2007.

Viruses, under natural conditions, when spread through cycles of infection in animals undergo changes in their genome to a greater or lesser extent. The finding of a virus similar to the one that circulated in Georgia **does not, therefore, exclude that its origin may be in a biological confinement facility.**

The "Georgia 2007" virus strain is a "reference" virus that is frequently used in experimental infections in confinement facilities to conduct virus studies or to evaluate the efficacy of vaccines, which are currently under development.

For this reason, the Directorate-General for Health of Agri-Food Production and Animal Welfare of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has initiated the following actions:

- **Communicate to the Nature Protection Service (SEPRONA) of the Guardia Civil (Civil Guard)** the need to investigate these facts, as the competent authority for the investigation of possible infringements or environmental crimes.

- Initiate **an investigation procedure** for the origin of the virus in the framework of Article 57(2) of Regulation (EU) 2016/429, of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016.

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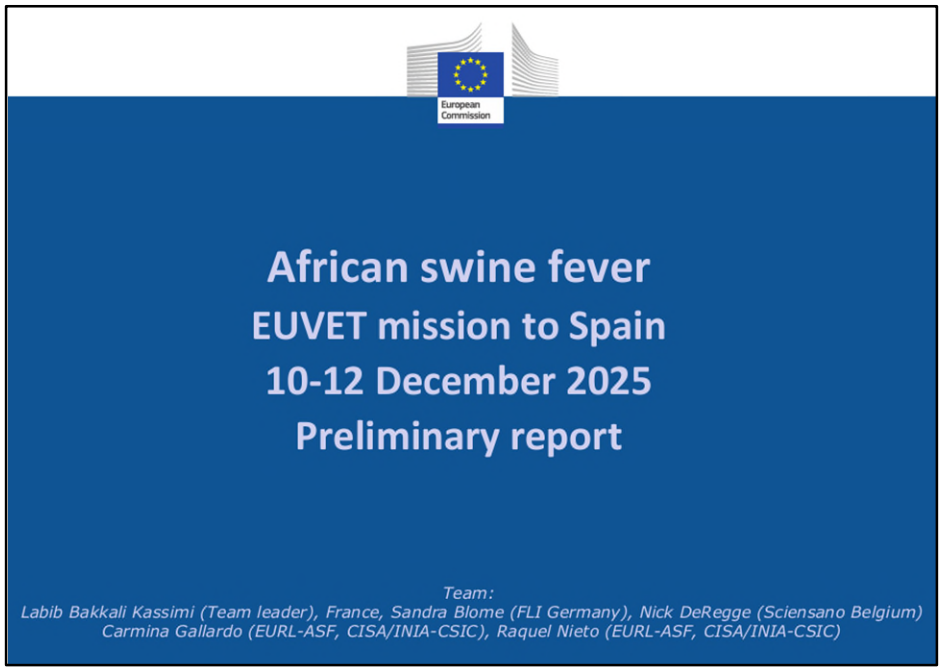
Origin of virus strain: hypothesis and lab. investigation

EU Veterinary Emergency Team (EUvet) - laboratories.



PAFF Animal Health and Welfare committee
December 15-16, 2025

Main conclusion: "Based on the data presented, the **EUVET** team **could not identify any obvious route** by which the **virus could have been released from the IRTA-CReSA facilities**".

Main recommendations:

- Perform **sequencing analysis** of samples collected from **outbreaks** to **follow up the virus variation** (ongoing by the NRL and EURL)
  - Analytical approach: Implementation of partial (Sanger) sequencing of virus to identified **relevant mutations (SNPs)** and a real time PCR for detection and screening for the **deletion** observed in the 5' end of the virus genome.
- Perform sequencing analysis (Sanger and or WGS) of **relevant viruses available in IRTA-CReSA** to exclude any possibility of laboratory scape based on a selection of viral isolates and samples from animals experimentally infected with ASF virus in the last year (ongoing by the NRL and EURL)
- Perform sequence comparison of **relevant viruses kept in other laboratories** in Spain to exclude any possibility of laboratory scape (two laboratories under investigation).
- Address the critical points pointed in the facility or protocols by performing an **audit of CReSA** (done with satisfactory results)

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Medium-term comunication actions

- **22th december 2025:**
  - **On-line WOAH seminar on "*Epidemiological situation of the ASF in wild boar in Spain*" by Spanish CVO and "*Laboratory results and description of the virus*" by the Director of the National Reference Laboratory (LCV-Algete)**
- **24th march 2026:**
  - **WOAH workshop in Strengthening Preparedness and Response to Biological Threats in Europe: "*Initial investigations of a suspicious biological event-case study in Spain*" by the Spanish CVO**
- **16th april 2026:**
  - **On-line WOAH seminar on "*Epidemiological situation of the ASF in wild boar in Spain and disease control measures*" by Spanish CVO and "*Laboratory findings and virus characterization*" by the Director of the National Reference Laboratory (LCV-Algete) and the Director of the EU Reference Laboratory CISA-Valdeolmos**

- **Meetings of the RASVE Committee (regional CVOs) with a frecuency of once a week during the first month and once a month from then on**

- **Meetings of the Committee of the Pork sector (at least one per month).**

- **Report regarding epidemiological situation every two/three weeks. (publish MAPA web page)**

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AFRICAN SWINE FEVER SITUATION UPDATE

IN WILD BOARS IN CATALONIA

12/11/2026

Since the last update note on the situation of African Swine Fever (ASF), sent on November 5, 2026, the Official Veterinary Services (SVO) of the Generalitat de Catalunya have reported the detection of two new outbreaks, which includes a total of five cases detected in the municipalities of Sant Quirze del Vallés (two cases) and Molins de Rei (three cases). These are findings of remains of the corpse located in restricted zone II, within the area delimited by perimeter fencing.

With this new outbreak, the total number of outbreaks rises to **81**, 3 of them primary and 78 secondary (see map 1), which include a **total of 429 positive cases/wild boars** in 13 municipalities: Cerdanyola del Vallés, Sant Cugat del Vallés, Sant Quirze del Vallés, Terrassa, Rubí, Molins de Rei, Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Sant Just Desvern, Barcelona, Sabadell, El Papiol, Castellbisbal and Esplugues de Llobregat (see map 2).

In addition, to date, 15,055 animals that have tested negative have been analysed, of which 12,795 correspond to animals captured or killed without showing clinical symptoms and 2,262 have been investigated within the framework of passive surveillance (whole carcasses or remains found in the natural environment, or animals with symptoms killed) in the restricted areas and their surroundings (see maps 1 and 2).

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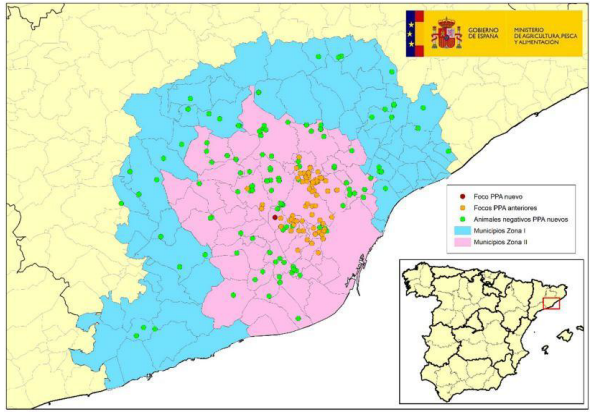
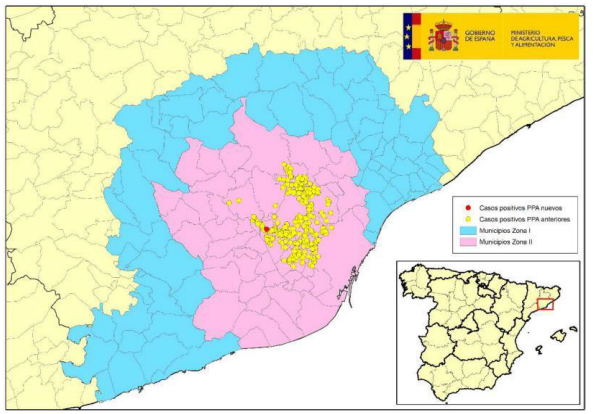


Map 1: Location of the 82 outbreaks in wild boar and wild boar captured or found dead negative detected in restricted zones I and II in the last week (Source: MAPA).
Map



Map 2: Detailed location of cases of wild boar detected in restricted zone II (Source: Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food).

With regard to actions on farms and other pig establishments located in zones I and II, the SVOs maintain their controls, inspecting their biosecurity measures and carrying out the reinforced passive surveillance established by EU regulations on commercial farms, without any positive cases having been detected in domestic pigs.
In addition, the vast majority of farms located in zone II are currently empty.
A high level of alert is maintained with reinforcement of passive surveillance and biosecurity in pig farms and wild boar populations, both in Catalonia and in the rest of Spain.

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Long-term comunication actions

- **5th december 2025:**
  - **Creation of a Scientific Committee for ASF (Orden APA/1387/2025)**
    - **February 2026: first progress report (publish MAPA webpage)**
    - **June 2026: progress report (publish MAPA webpage)**
    - **They are expected more reports and a final one when the eradication occurs.**

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