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Press Release

African Swine Fever: The Belgian case shows capacity for swift reaction in the EU

Cases of the African Swine Fever (ASF) in pigs and wild boars have so far been detected in Russia, China and some Central and Eastern EU countries. The identification of two infected wild boars in Belgium is the first case detected in Western Europe.

The Belgian Food Safety Agency (AFSCA) and the Belgium ministry of Agriculture held an emergency meeting on September 13th to discuss the rapid measures to put in place. Measures will mostly address wildlife populations, but also the domestic pig population in order to avoid any introduction of the virus to farms. AFSCA mentioned that these cases were detected due to a well implemented surveillance programme, and that Belgium has prepared itself for the possibility of an event like this.

For Pekka Pesonen, Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General “The identification of infected wild boars in Belgium yesterday is concerning all of us. However, it also shows the capacity for rapid response and effective action of EU and national public authorities. All of our members are fully cooperating with the relevant authorities and stakeholders to contain the spread of the disease.”

The EU is known as an important exporter for pig meat and products. This is why it is also important that international trading partners acknowledge all measures that are in place to contain ASF and the strict Biosecurity measures taken by farmers, keeping their trust in the sector.

At a difficult time for the European pig meat sector, facing price drops and the closure of exporting markets, it is essential that European and national authorities take efficient and quick measures to support the sector, starting with impacted farmers.

The scientific community is clear about ASF, [the disease can only be transmitted to pigs and wild boars and does not affect humans](#). Therefore, we need to inform the citizens who might be in contact with these species that they can have an active role by taking basic measures that could prevent the spread of ASF. Other stakeholders, especially hunters, will have a key role to play in prevention and containing the disease.

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