

ISAH webinar: African Swine Fever – Present state, spread & prevention

Key note speaker: Prof. Dr. Franz J. Conraths



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Epidemiology of African Swine Fever in Europe

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Key words of the talk:

- African Swine Fever
- Wild boar
- Domestic pigs
- Europe
- Epidemiology
- Prevention
- Control

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Abstract

African swine fever (ASF) is a notifiable disease that was originally limited to Africa. Since the 1950s, sporadic introductions into domestic pigs in European countries (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Belgium, the Netherlands) were reported, often caused by swill-feeding, e.g. of food leftovers from international flights. After introduction in Portugal and Spain in 1960, it took more than 30 years to eliminate the disease from the Iberian Peninsula. On the island of Sardinia, ASF has been endemic since 1978.

The first cases of the current ASF epidemic were reported from Georgia in 2007. Subsequently, the disease spread into neighboring countries and reached the Baltic states and Poland in 2014. Further European countries followed. Germany was first affected in September 2020 in an area close to the border with Poland.

Jumps over large distances in the disease spread (e.g. to Belgium and the Czech Republic) clearly show the existing risk of introduction through human activity. The introduction of ASF into Germany probably occurred through wild boar migration across the border between Poland and Germany.



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ASF control is based on the culling of affected pig herds, cleaning and disinfection of the holdings, movement and trade restrictions as well as biosafety/biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of the virus through people, equipment, fomites etc. Preventive measures include the ban of swill-feeding, careful disposal and adequate rendering of leftovers of food products that may contain raw or undercooked pork or wild boar meat, cleaning and disinfection of equipment that may be contaminated with blood, tissue, secretions or excretions of potentially infected pigs or wild boar. In Europe, there is no vaccine available to protect pigs against ASF or to control the disease in affected populations.

The current epidemic of ASF genotype II in Europe and Asia causes massive economic losses, also due to trade restrictions that are regularly imposed against affected countries to prevent the further spread of ASF. These trade restrictions apply regardless of the occurrence of ASF in domestic pigs or wild boar in an affected country.

