African swine fever in Latvia: outbreaks, biosecurity measures and trade aspects

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The first cases of African swine fever (ASF) in wild boar in Latvia were registered in June 2014 on the border with Belarus. As a consequence of virus spread in a local wild boar population several ASF outbreaks in backyard pig farms were registered in Latvia. In total, by the end of the year 217 cases in wild boar and 32 outbreaks in pig farms were registered.

In 2015, natural spread of ASF virus in wild boar population was observed in the same territories infected in 2014. In total, 1048 cases in wild boar and 10 outbreaks in backyard pig farms were registered in 2015.

During the summer 2016, further spread of ASF virus in wild boar population occurred covering about 70% of the country. By the end of August 2016, 765 cases in wild boar and 2 outbreaks in small pig farms were registered.

So far, all outbreaks in pig farms were detected in areas where ASF was present in wild boar population and during the summer (June-August) that can be considered as high risk period.

The biosecurity requirements for pig farms were approved after ASF detection in Latvia. For commercial farms the implementation of the biosecurity plan is mandatory but owners of non-commercial farms (backyards) must fulfil a list of biosecurity requirements. All pig farms are inspected every year (1-2 times) to verify the implementation of biosecurity requirements.

Trade restrictions for live pigs and pig meat are determined by the Commission Implementation decision 2014/709/EU. Initially, restrictions for trade were very strict but since December 2015 several derogations are available. However, activities of pig farms located in areas where ASF in wild boar is present are still very restricted.