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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Eradicating African swine fever in the EU - Involvement of European
research
- Information from the Czech delegation

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Czech delegation on the above mentioned subject to be raised under "Any other business" at the session of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 29 January 2018.

Eradicating African swine fever in the EU - Involvement of European research

Explanatory document by the Czech Republic

In June 2017, the Czech Republic reported the first occurrence of the ASF in wild boar. The authorities in the Czech Republic have immediately implemented strong and decisive action with maximum use of measures available to contain the disease. No outbreaks in domestic pigs have been reported until now in the Czech Republic. This disease does not respect the state borders. The human failure is considered to be the main source of ASF spread over a larger distance. Gradual proliferation is usually caused by the spread of the disease in the wild boar population, for that reason it poses a big threat to whole EU territory. This is the reason, why we consider the implementation of appropriate measures for protection mainly of domestic pigs holdings into standards structures of veterinary administrations. These standards allow the trade to be maintained in the case of spread in wild boars only and additional measures taken in the given area. It is necessary to set up the international trade rules for particular cases of containing the disease in wild boars and domestic pigs specifically. Those targets and inefficiency of the standard procedures and approaches for eradication the disease are the main reason why we believe that research in this field must help us to stop this outbreak.

The key objective for stopping the spread of ASF in the EU will be fast and effective reduction of wild boar, detailed knowledge about the characteristics of the ASF virus and the course of the disease in infected pigs, the development of an effective vaccine and consistent removal and disposal of cadavers from the environment.

All planned research directions conducted by the Czech research institutes are aimed to block or effectively reduce spread of the ASFV in the Czech Republic. Five research areas which will be dealt with priority by the Czech research institutes are envisioned.

- 1) Procedures focused to define which active substances of disinfectants can be used to effectively destroy ASFV from the environment matrices will be performed. Also, development of rapid diagnostic methods for the detection of infectious virus in cadavers and environmental samples will be carried out, in parallel to research of genetic and antigenic variability of the virus in relation to the host immune response.
- 2) The epidemiology of ASFV in wild boar populations will be studied from the point of view of etiology and social behavior of the group and the infected individual.
- 3) New ways of identification of wild boar carcasses in the environment using especially modified drones and other equipment adapted for this purpose will be explored.
- 4) Effective methods for reducing of the wild boar.
- 5) An evaluation system of preventive measures aimed at minimizing the risk of penetration and spread of ASF originator into pig breeds, including vectors between wild boars and pigs in large and small breeds, will be studied, together with preparation of informational systems and educational activities to instruct targeted professionals (hunters, breeders, veterinarians, etc.).

The ASF outbreak represents a serious threat, where standard procedures and approaches are not effective. The Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic via agricultural research institutes and university departments has started to work on the above mentioned research topics.

In order to find complex and effective solution all research activities leading to eradication of this disease should be centrally coordinated by the Commission and funded from the EU budget.