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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	AOB item for the meeting of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of 22 and 23 September 2025: African swine fever (ASF) outbreaks and situation overview in Estonia <i>- Information from Estonia</i>

African swine fever (ASF) is a highly contagious viral disease affecting domestic pigs and wild boar, that spreads rapidly, causing significant economic damage and animal suffering. ASF is currently present in wild-boar populations in more than ten Member States.

Estonia has been engaged in combating ASF for over 10 years. During the early years of the ASF spread, the wild-boar population declined sharply. This was as a result of the disease and intensified hunting, while at the same time the number of viral positive wild boars also decreased. Recent few years' mild winters have contributed to substantial growth of the wild boar population and to widening of areas with virus- positive wild boar.

ASF has re-emerged in the domestic pig population in Estonia this year. There have been 10 outbreaks in domestic pigs in a short period of time. First outbreak started on 29 of June and the recent cases were diagnosed on 27 of August. This has resulted in the loss of more than 55,000 animals - nearly 20% of the entire domestic pig population. The disease has also affected the largest pig holding in Estonia, with a breeding herd of approximately 8,000 sows, which is more than 40% of all breeding herd population of Estonia. The culling over 8000 sows means a deficit of approximately 80 000 piglets in 1 production system in a cycle. This places pig producers, feed producers and the entire food supply chain under severe pressure and has implications for food security as well as for Estonia's pork export.

Estonia has taken all possible measures to limit the spread of the disease and to eradicate the outbreaks. From 9 to 11 September, the European Commission's EUVET ASF team visited Estonia to share their advice and expertise. All relevant EU measures have been applied to eradicate the disease¹. We have implemented additional prevention and control measures, including a prohibition on access to the vicinity of holdings; additional measures to reinforce biosecurity; procurement of canned wild boar meat; the use of drones with thermal cameras to support targeted hunting of wild boar; and support to hunters (compensating for fuel and necessary hunting equipment). We are looking for additional ways to support farmers with the aim of maintaining national self-sufficiency and sustaining effective functioning of the pig production sector.

It is essential to keep wild boar numbers as low as possible to bring ASF under control in wild boar population. Priority must be given to surveillance of wild boar and to incentives for hunters to carry out targeted wild boar hunting. However, the challenge is to co-finance surveillance and to find use for wild boar meat (fresh wild boar meat). There is insufficient market demand for heat-treated wild-boar meat.

¹ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/687 control measures and the special measures under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594

To control ASF efficiently and ensure a future-proof approach in the EU that supports a high level of animal health and food security we urge the Commission to:

- support for targeted hunting measures and the sustainable use of wild boar meat;
 - ensure sustainable and continuous EU funding to Member States for disease surveillance and control;
 - emphasize the central role of research, with adequate funding, in identifying solutions for the prevention and control of ASF;
 - keep updating the existing legal framework in the light of the latest scientific evidence.
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