

**Rapid opinion 16-2020 of the Scientific Committee established at the FASFC on the reassessment of the risk and of risk mitigation measures of African Swine Fever introduction in Belgian pig holdings associated to crops and derived products that are produced in the ASF management zones I and II (dossier SciCom 2020/12)**

### **Terms of reference**

In the framework of the management of the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak currently affecting wildlife (wild boar) in a part of the Province of Luxembourg in Wallonia and reported to the OIE on 14/09/2018, in the light of the numerous requests from the affected agricultural sector and recent scientific data since rapid opinion 09-2020 of 20/03/2020, the Scientific Committee is asked to issue an urgent opinion on the risk related to the introduction of African Swine Fever (ASF) into pig holdings through crops and their products from the ASF regulated zones I and II.

The European control strategy involves regionalization, as well as differentiated measures with regard to the zones established in infected countries. Two zones are currently defined in Belgium:

- Zone I is an adjoining zone without infected wild boar;
- Zone II corresponds to the area where infected wild boars were found.

The following questions are asked regarding the risk of introduction of the ASF virus in pig holdings:

- Question 1 - Does the current risk assessment still require agricultural products from ASF zones I and II to be considered as one inseparable whole for the application of biosecurity, storage and processing measures?
- Question 2 – Should the current risk assessment for harvesting, storage and processing of agricultural products from ASF zones I and II still recommend the application of biosecurity measures?
- Question 3 - Under the current risk assessment and when an agricultural product from ASF zones I and II is stored, can certain storage conditions be allowed in order to allow these products to be valorised in the classical processing chain?

### **Method**

The risk assessment is qualitative and is carried out in urgently on the basis of expert opinion and on a recent scientific article (Fischer et al., 2020 - Stability of African swine fever virus on heat-treated field crops). A systematic literature review, a quantitative assessment and an uncertainty analysis could not be carried out within the requested timeframe.

### **Conclusion**

The Scientific Committee acknowledges that the epidemiological situation for ASF in wildlife has evolved favourably and that no positive fresh carcasses have been found since August 2019 (see also Rapid opinion 09-2020).

In its rapid opinion 09-2020, the Scientific Committee highlighted the lack of scientific data on virus persistence in plant matrices and under representative storage conditions. A recent article has provided new data. Based on this, on the favourable evolution of the ASF epidemic in Belgian wildlife and the recommendations of the European Commission's strategic document (Strategic approach to the management of African Swine Fever for the EU), the Scientific Committee considers that, for agricultural products from zones I and II:

- plant products intended for feeding pigs must be stored for at least 30 days before use;
- plant products produced for feeding to species other than pigs must be stored for at least 30 days if traceability and complete separation between these plant products cannot be guaranteed;
- any cross-contamination of batches prohibited for feeding to pigs with other batches which may be used for feeding pigs must be avoided by completely separating the two types of feed if they have not been stored for 30 days before use. This applies to both operators and traders during transport, storage and processing of the feedingstuffs;
- joint storage or mixing on pig holdings of feed for other species with feed for pigs must be prevented by completely separating the two types of feed or by storing the mixed feed for 30 days before use.

The Scientific Committee recommends that, in zone II fields should continue to be inspected prior to harvest for the presence of wild boar cadavers.

The Scientific Committee recommends that the equipment used for harvesting fodder crops and cereal in zone II should continue to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before use outside zone II. This is in line with similar recommendations concerning the cleaning and disinfection of vehicles used for forestry operations as mentioned in the Rapid opinion 09-2019.

This opinion should be reviewed in case of the discovery of any new fresh, shot or trapped cadaver that is found to be ASF-viropositive or any other sample from a wild boar found since 11 August 2019 for which persistent infectivity of the virus has been confirmed.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french.