

Management of ASF in wild boar in Sweden

lecture 14 mars 2024 by Maria Cedersmyg, the Swedish Board of Agriculture

Compilation

On Sept 6 2023, Sweden confirmed its very first outbreak of African swine fever (ASF), situated in the municipality of Fagersta, county Västmanland. Within a few days, seven wild boar carcasses were found in close vicinity to a waste management centre where the wild boar had free access to residual waste. The centre may well have been the introduction point, but it has also most likely served as a focus concentrating the outbreak.

An infected zone of 1000 km² was established, where restrictions were imposed, affecting farming, forestry, hunting, tourism, sportslife and more.

A sampling central was established in Fagersta for the management of wild boar carcasses. In connection to this, a local command centre was also established.

An intense search for wild boar cadavers has been performed by hunters. All search efforts have been logged and plotted combining several apps and GPD systems to produce a map for overview. By the beginning of December 2023, all of the infected zone had been searched once and the core area twice.

After one week, a core area was identified. This area was fenced in with a 1,2 m sturdy net with a digging protection on the inside, as a complement to already existing game fences. 63 km of fence surrounds the core area of approx. 140 km².

All carcasses were photographed, logged and plotted on a map on site. They were then brought for sampling and finally incinerated using a mobile incinerator.

Within a week, all the six pig establishments in the zone were subject to pre-emptive slaughter. A total of 60 pigs were culled, and the keeping of pigs in the zone is since prohibited.

On Nov 30, the restriction zone was reduced to 600 km² as a result of regionalisation. The fenced in core area is now RZII, and the remaining part of the zone is RZI. The restrictions were adapted both then and in February 2024, and are now focusing on forestry.

In the RZII, culling of the remaining wild boar was initiated in December, using both traps and shooting at baiting sites. Motion sensor cameras have been placed on all baiting sites and on sites where there is a risk that wild boar may enter the RZII (e.g. crossings with road or railroad). The RZII is now totally depopulated. Culling in RZI is focused on animals in the vicinity of the fence to minimise the risk that wild boar from RZI enter RZII if there is a break in the fence.

Strategic surveillance

	Positive	Negative
Cadavers in infected zone	62	31
Culled in infected zone	0	74
Roadkill in infected zone	0	7
Roadkill in surveillance area	0	3
Hunted in surveillance area	0	74
Cadavers in surveillance area	0	4
Cadavers in remaining parts of SE	0	178

Control of compliance is performed, targeting activities that have been granted exemptions as well as tips from the public concerning possible non-compliance.

Extensive resources have been spent on communication, e.g. several local meetings for the public and for the hunters, every day press conferences, weekly meeting with specific stakeholder groups (forestry, farming etc), ample information on the webpage and a podcast.

A new search effort is planned in May. The search findings together with the surveillance results will add to the epidemiological evaluation, and hopefully we will have the data needed to send a request to regain free status to the European commission in September 2024.

Keys to success before the outbreak:

- Regular stakeholder meetings (we've had meetings every other month for two years), explaining e.g. roles, relevant action and necessary restrictions in case of an outbreak.
- Discussions with the hunters' organisations on resources and forms for cooperation in case of an outbreak.

Keys to success during the outbreak:

- Close cooperation with hunters, preferably led by someone who knows about hunting.

- Authorities are present in the outbreak area from day one and giving the same key messages.
- Communication targeting all groups from media to the public in the area.

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