European Commission

EUVET mission in Spain

(Barcelona and its metropolitan area)

(2-5 December 2025)

ToR:

1. The experts should provide scientific, technical, managerial and practical assistance on the spot on the refinement of the most suitable control and eradication measures for African swine fever (ASF) under local conditions, especially as regards preparedness, awareness activities, surveillance and coordination efforts in kept porcine animals.
2. The experts should report exclusively to the Commission services and the authorities of Spain. Continuous contact should be guaranteed between the team, the Commission services and authorities of Spain.
3. The experts should provide a written report with conclusions and recommendations aimed to the competent authority. A report to the Commission and the Member States in the framework of the Standing Committee on Plant, Animal, Food and Feed will need to be delivered as well.
4. The experts shall operate under the provisions laid down in Commission Decision 2007/142/EC and in particular based on the standard rules of procedure for groups of experts.

Experts: Anna Zdravkova (Bulgaria); Vittorio Guberti (Italy and rapporteur); Klaus Depner (Germany and team leader)

Short history

25 and 26 November, 2 dead wild boars were found on the campus of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Fig. 1). On 27 November they were positive for ASF virus

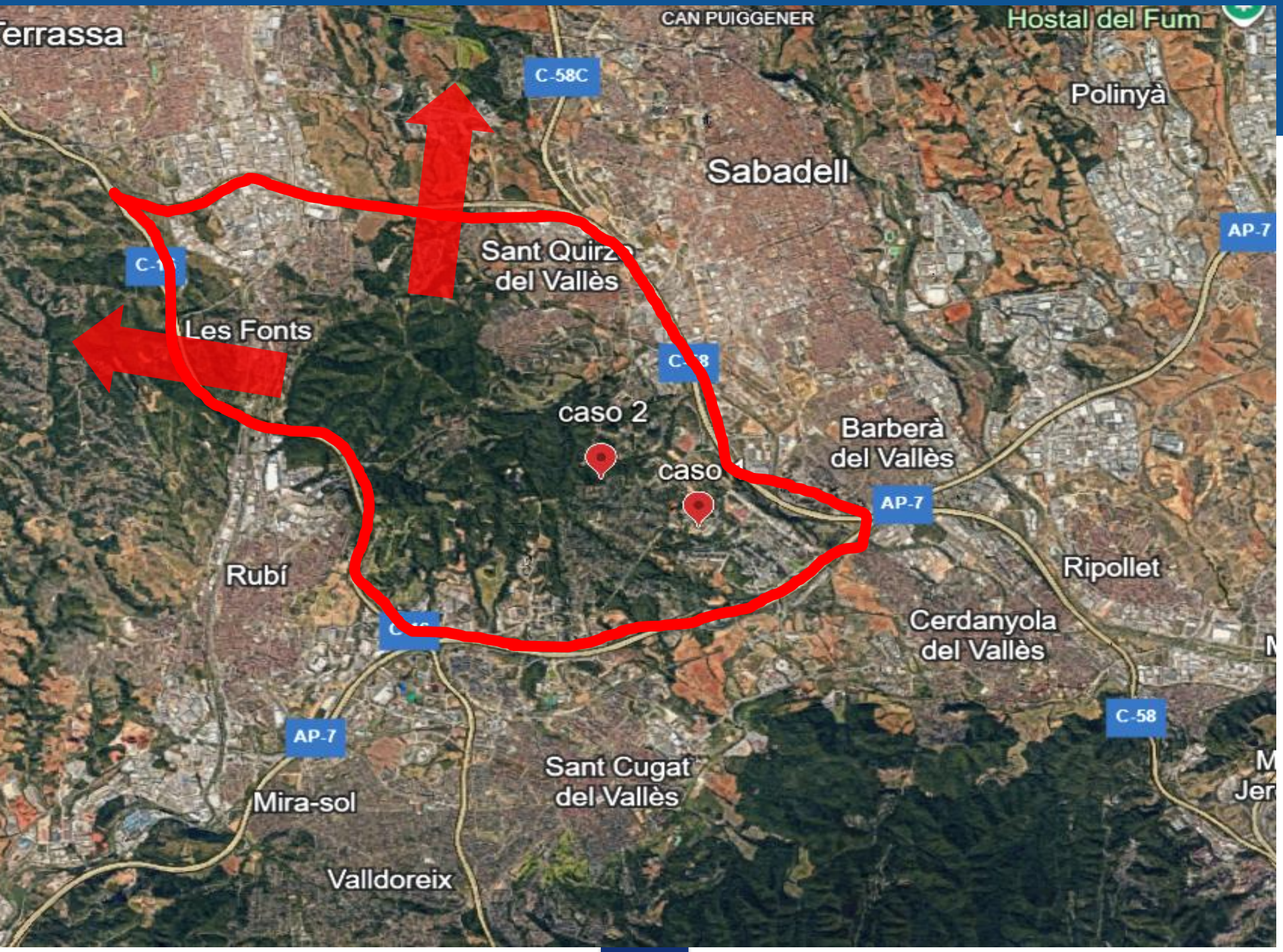
27 Nov - 4 December 13 ASF positive wild boar carcasses were found within a radius of about 2 km.

The affected area consists of the university campus and a residential area with gardens and a small urban forest.

The wild boar density is about 4 wild boars per square kilometre while in the in the Barcelona area and in Catalonia can easily reach 10 animals per square kilometre.

At the time of the mission, the complete sequencing of the isolated virus was not available;


Parque Natural Posets Maladeta
Parc Nacional d'Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici
Parc Natural de l'Alt Pirineu
Parc naturel régional des Pyrénées catalanes
Thuir
Saint-Cyprien
Les Angles
Pas de la Casa
Andorra la Vella
Argelès-sur-Mer
Céret
Banyuls-sur-Mer
Llívia
Puigcerdà
El Pont de Suert
Sort
La Seu d'Urgell
Camprodon
Alta Garrotxa
Parc Natural del Cadí-Moixeró
La Pobla de Segur
Empuriabrava
Graus
Tremp
Ripoll
Olot
Benabarre
Isona
Berga
Banyoles
L'Escala
Oliana
Torelló
L'Estartit
Serra del Montsec
Solsona
Girona
Les Guilleries
Begur
Vic
Cardona
Palamós
Platja d'Aro
Alfarràs
Almenar
Balaguer
Agramunt
Guissona
Manresa
Lloret de Mar
Torrefarrera
Cervera
Tàrrega
Lleida
Mollerussa
Calella
Igualada
Alcarràs
Mataró
Fraga
Les Borges Blanques
Santa Coloma de Queralt
Badalona
Barcellona
Vilafranca del Penedès
Muntanyes de Prades
AP-2
AP-7
E-15
E-90
A9


Terrassa
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Hostal del Fum
C-58C
Polinyà
Sabadell
AP-7
Sant Quirze
del Vallès
Les Fonts
caso 2
caso
Barberà
del Vallès
AP-7
Rubí
Ripollet
Cerdanyola
del Vallès
C-58
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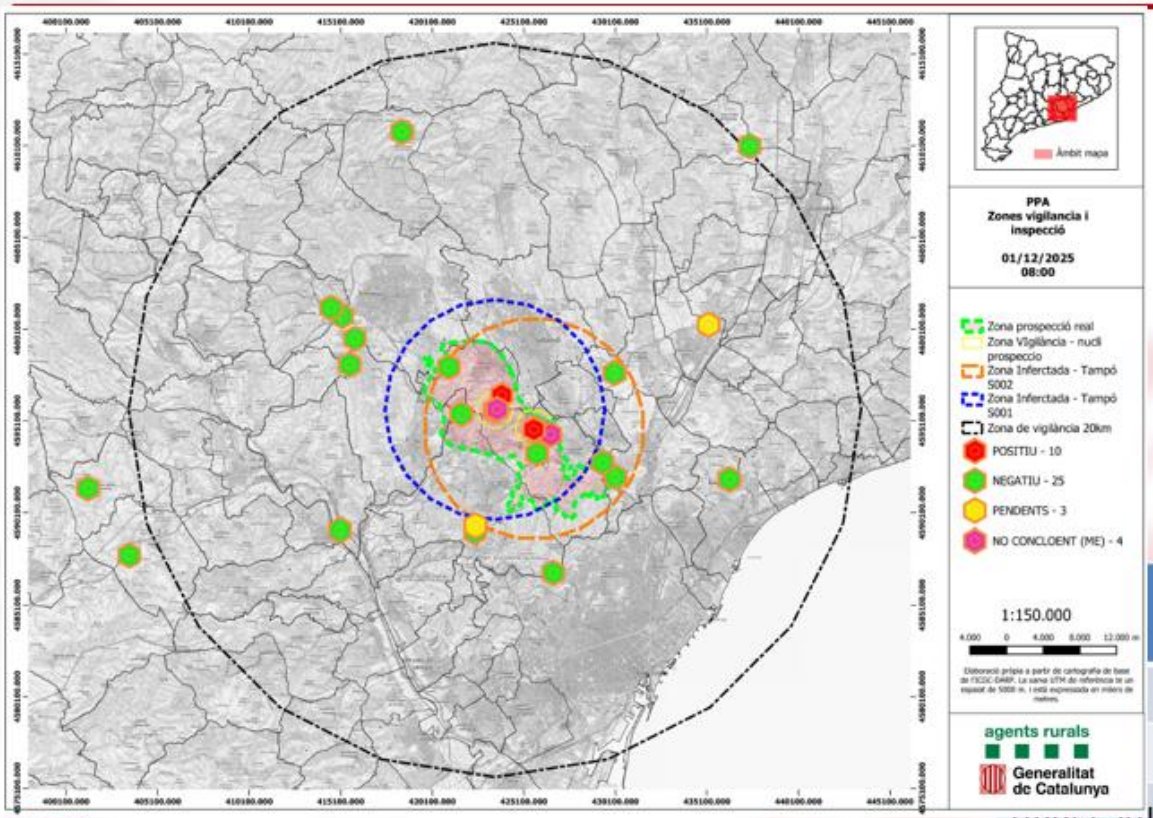
Sant Cugat
del Vallès
Mira-sol
Valldoreix

Results of wild boar surveillance (until 2/12/2025)



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia, Pesca i Alimentació

Location of investigated ASF c

52 **carcasses** detected in the area by **passive surveillance**:*

- **13** ASF positive by PCR
- 5 under study
- 33 negative (Badalona included)

	Infected Zone	Out infected Zone	Total
	14	0	14
	23	10	33
udy	3	2	5
Total	40	12	52

The landscape of the infected area

Measures

A core zone with a radius of 6 km around the first positive findings was established, as well as a risk zone with a radius of 20 km. An intensive search for carcasses was started in the core zone.

All potential escape routes for wild boars (e.g. underpasses beneath major roads) were sealed

A hunting ban was introduced, as well as a ban on people entering forests where potentially infected wild boars may be present off.

Five local logistical centres for the staff involved (performing disinfection activities, etc.) were established in the high-risk areas.

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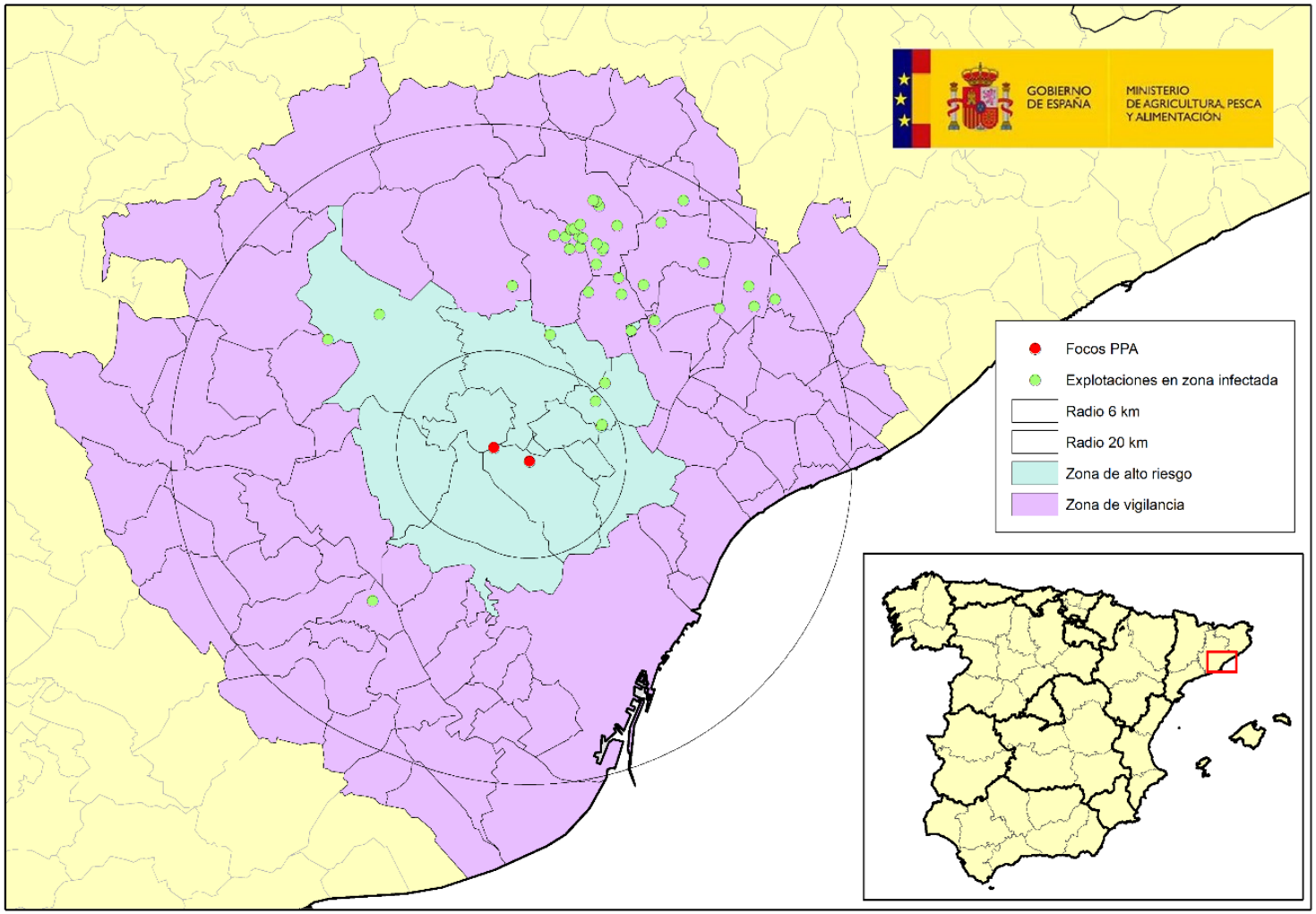
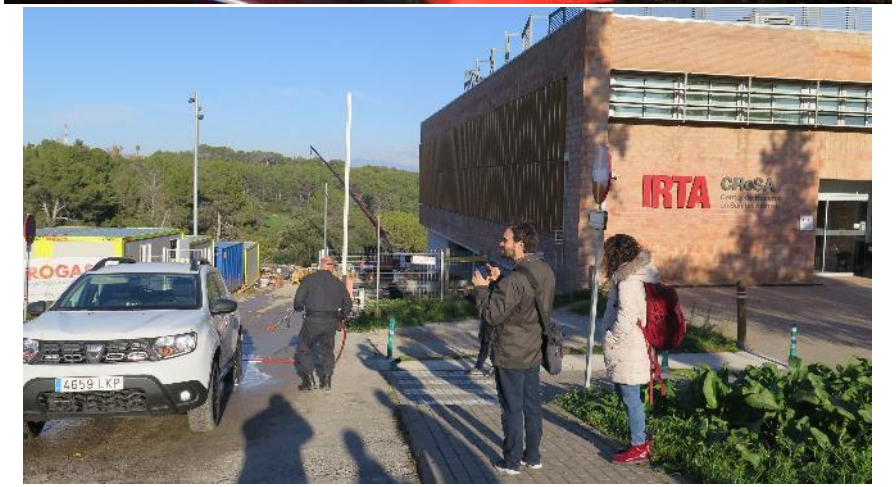
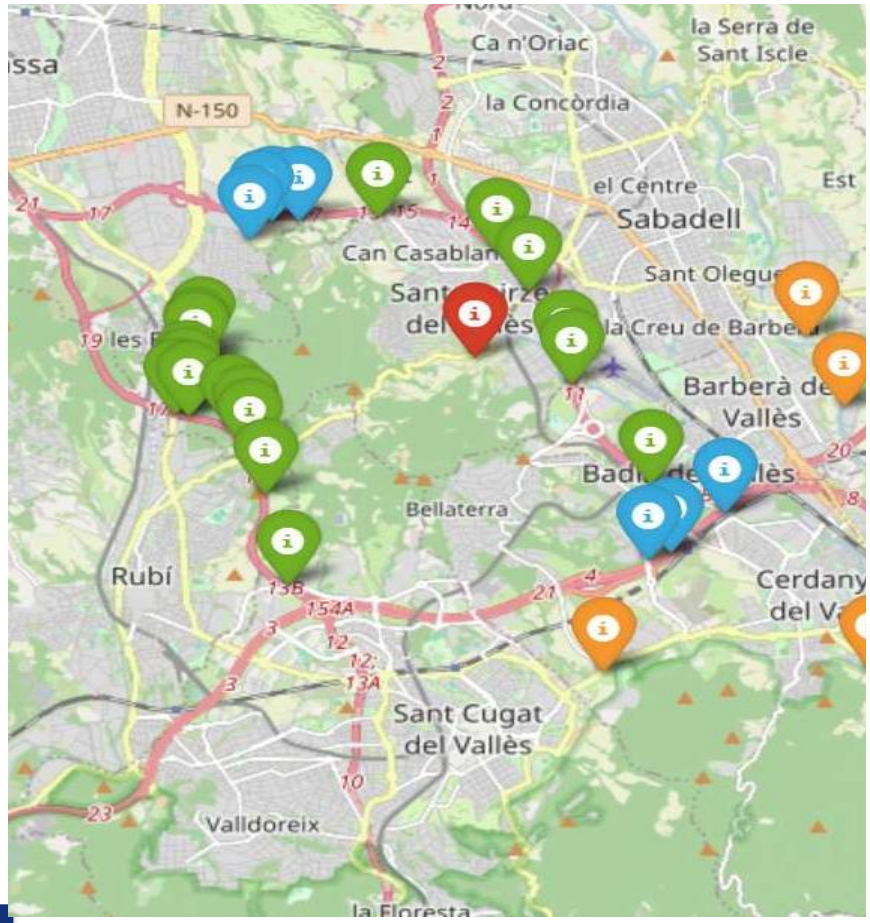
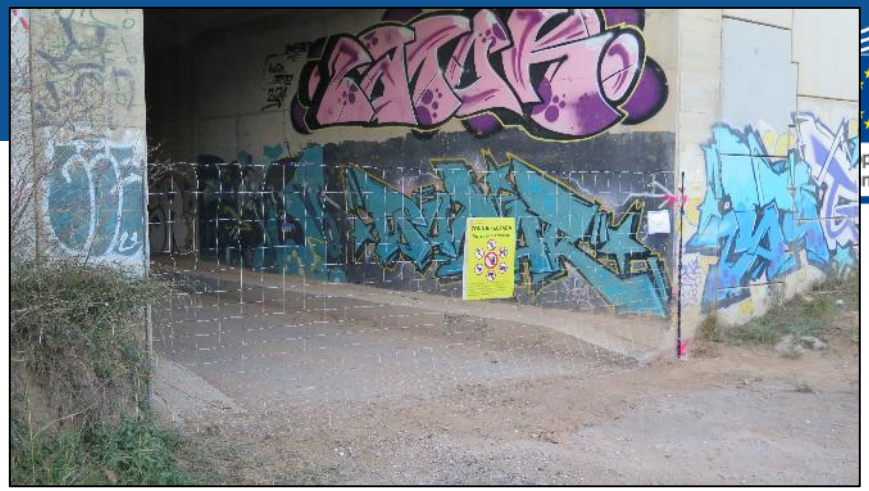




Area for disinfecting vehicles used for sample delivery or carcass search, including dogs involved

Crossing points





55 commercial pig farms are within the 20 km risk zone

The movement of domestic pigs within the 20 km zone is only permitted if the **pigs are clinically inspected** and found to be healthy and **tested serologically** for ASF according to an estimated prevalence of 5%, with 95% confidence (95/5).

With regard to the possible movement of animals from the infected area, the timing of sampling and subsequent testing is not specified.

National Swine Health Surveillance Programme

Active risk-based surveillance

Minimum annual sampling

- ✓ Pig holdings n=600 (distribution between ACs according to census; holdings chosen on the basis of risk factors). They visit twice a year.
- ✓ **ASF:** Animals 95/5 n=(59x600x2)= **70,800 samples/year**
- ✓ CSF: Animals 95/15 n=(19x600x1)= 11,400 samples/year
- ✓ Pig lots from other Member States 95/5= 598 lots/year (distribution between CC. AA. depending on the absence of movements; lots chosen on the basis of risk factors)
- ✓ **Supervision in slaughterhouses**: 9 slaughterhouses (intensive/extensive) = **900 holdings = 26 100 animals/year**
- ✓ C&D control conditions in transport vehicles = 100% vehicles from countries at risk

Diagnostic strategy

- ✓ **Serological examination (ELISA)**
- ✓ Confirmation Virology (PCR-RT)
- ✓ Detection in regional laboratories.
- ✓ Confirmation at the National Reference Laboratory (LCV Algete) and some regional official laboratories

Passive Surveillance

National Wildlife Surveillance Programme

Objectives

- ✓ **Demonstration of ASF and CSF-free status.**
- ✓ **Monitor the epidemiological situation of other diseases affecting wildlife (example: Aujeszky's disease, TB, Tularemia, etc.).**
- ✓ **Early detection of epizootic diseases.**

Components

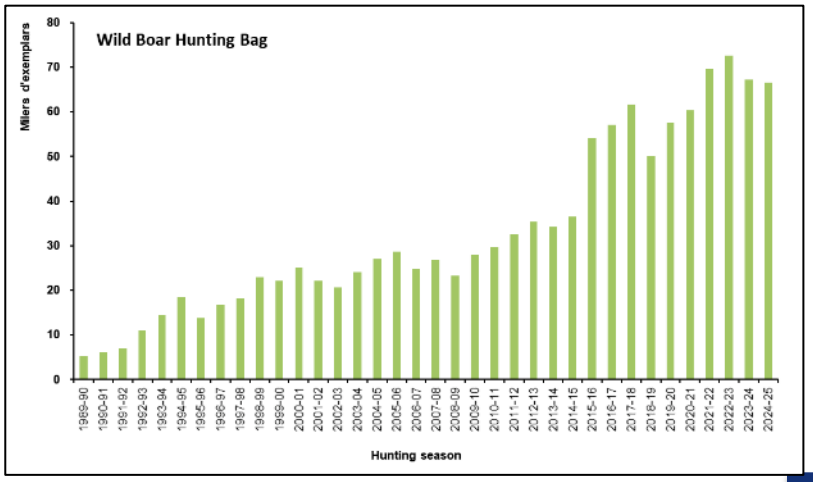
- ✓ **Active surveillance: minimum number of samples to be taken each year in each county. Samples taken from hunting grounds, with distribution between regions depending on the hunting bags of the previous year.**
- ✓ **In the case of wild boar: min. 2070 samples/year at national level**
- ✓ **Passive surveillance: any suspected case (animals found dead) of any of the diseases included in the Program must be notified to the OVS of the AACC, who will decide on the severity of the case and subsequent actions.**

Early detection and demonstration of freedom

Passive surveillance

In the whole of Spain, out of 33 million domestic pigs, 18 suspicions compatible with ASF have been reported in domestic pig holdings.

In Catalonia, 20 suspicions of ASF have been reported in wild boar, where more than 65,000 wild boar are hunted per year (according to EFSA, at least 720 dead animals should be reported).



52 **carcasses** detected in the area by **passive surveillance**:*

- 14 ASF positive by PCR
- 5 under study
- 33 negative (Badalona included)

Conclusions

As the neighbouring regions are ASF free, it is likely that the introduction of the **virus** occurred **through human-mediated activities**. The **competent authorities shall manage risk factors** highlighted by virus sequencing.

The **actions taken** to verify the epidemiological situation in wild boar and the measures planned to limit the spread of the virus are **correct** and were implemented in a timely manner;

Based on the findings it can be assumed that the first cases of ASF in wild boar occurred in **October 2025** hence the epidemic is still in its **initial exponential phase**.

This implies that additional positive cases are likely to occur in the coming weeks, and a further expansion of the infected area cannot be ruled out. An increase in infection among wild boars results in a higher environmental viral load, thereby **increasing the risk of spillover to domestic pig farms.**

Since the **early detection strategy** has been considered **suboptimal**, the farms inside the infected area must be considered at **high risk of late diagnosis** in the event of virus introduction.

The **sensitivity of serological surveillance** to detect acute ASF infection in domestic pigs and wild boars is **insufficient**. The use of serological tests to rule out the presence of infection can create a false sense of security.

The size of the infected area and the virus early detection strategy should be based solely on scientific criteria. The **boundaries** and extent of restricted areas should reflect the **epidemiological situation**, including the distribution of wild boar habitat and the presence of natural or artificial barriers such as motorways and railways; **surveillance** should be planned based on the **sensitivity and specificity** values required for an efficient and effective virus early detection system.

Control and surveillance measures seem to be focused mainly on commercial farms. However, **non-commercial farms** represents a serious **risk**, as experience clearly shows that those farms are particularly vulnerable due to their generally poor biosecurity.

RECCOMANDATIONS

GENERAL

In the already infected area and in order to accelerate the time of ASF cases notification. it is recommended that the **results obtained by the regional laboratory be considered definitive.**

The current ASF early detection surveillance programme should be based on a stronger **passive surveillance** component with **PCR test**, especially in the risk area but **also at national level**.

Only **epidemiological criteria and disease biology should be used to define restricted areas, surveillance programmes and control measures**. Existing natural and artificial barriers should be used as primary boundaries for restricted zones.

WILD BOAR

All **crossing points** connecting infected and free areas, should be **secured** to isolate the infected wild boar population as effectively as possible.

Enhanced passive surveillance should be immediately extended to wooded areas directly **surrounding the current infected zone**. This surveillance should be maintained for at least approximately **one month**, which is considered the minimum period necessary to ensure virus detection if present.

Only **after securing** crossing points and clearly defining the boundaries of the infected area should **active management** of infected and at-risk wild boar populations begin.

The first recommended active management measure is the creation of a **wild boar–free zone** north of the current infected area, in order to reduce the likelihood of viral spread towards the mountainous area north of Barcelona.

DOMESTIC PIGS

A highly sensitive **early detection surveillance scheme** must be implemented for the 55 domestic pig farms located within the risk area.

Every sow and breeding boar that dies must be tested for ASF virus genome (PCR), regardless of the presumed clinical diagnosis. In addition, **at least two dead animals per week** should be tested per epidemiological unit.

A system for **monitoring weekly mortality** at farm level, at least within the risk area, should be established. This would also facilitate the verification of passive surveillance performance.

Based on the information gathered during the mission, **the estimate of the size of the backyard sector will likely require further refinement and validation**. This should be combined with an **awareness campaign** specifically tailored to this type of holding, focusing on **basic biosecurity and early notification of suspicion** by farmers and practitioners.

To verify both local **culling capacity and carcass disposal capacity** through rendering, including alternative methods such as carcass burial.

To define the **procedures for the movement of animals** for slaughter and breeding from the infected zone to areas subject to lower levels of restriction.

Clear rules must be established for the **disposal** of **slurry and manure.**

In light of the spatial-temporal evolution of the infection, and taking into account the number and geographical distribution of sows in the restricted area, the **possibility of temporarily suspending breeding activities should be assessed**, in order to prevent overloading farming establishments with the production of new animals.

Thank you for your attention!

The working atmosphere during the mission was very good. The colleagues from Spain gave all their support and assistance to facilitate a fruitful mission. The EUVET rapporteurs wish to thank all colleagues for their support and help given during the whole mission.