



# African Swine Fever in Belgium : story of a successful eradication



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# Overview

1. Belgian context & preparedness
2. Outbreak ASF in wild boar & European regionalisation
3. Measures ASF in wild boar
4. Measures ASF in domestic pigs
5. Last ASF cases in wild boar
6. Eradication of ASF in Belgium : free status EU + OIE
7. Post-crisis measures in wild boar and domestic pigs
8. Awareness raising



# 1. Belgian context & preparedness

## Competences in Belgium

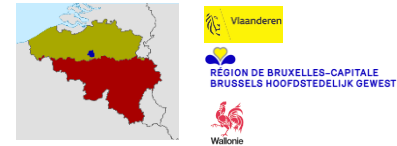
### Federal level : Domestic animal health

- Food chain safety
- Exports (sanitary aspects - SPS)
- EU and third country relations
- CVO & OIE delegate



### Regional level : Wild animal health

- Hunting, Nature and Forests, Tourism
- Agriculture & other than sanitary (Economy etc.)
- Animal welfare



**Before the outbreak : strong network between ASF (potential) partners -> taskforce ASF, working group Wildlife etc. => RAPID DETECTION = RAPID RESPONSE**



FAVV - AFSCA - FASNK - FASFC



AGENTSCHAP  
NATUUR & BOS

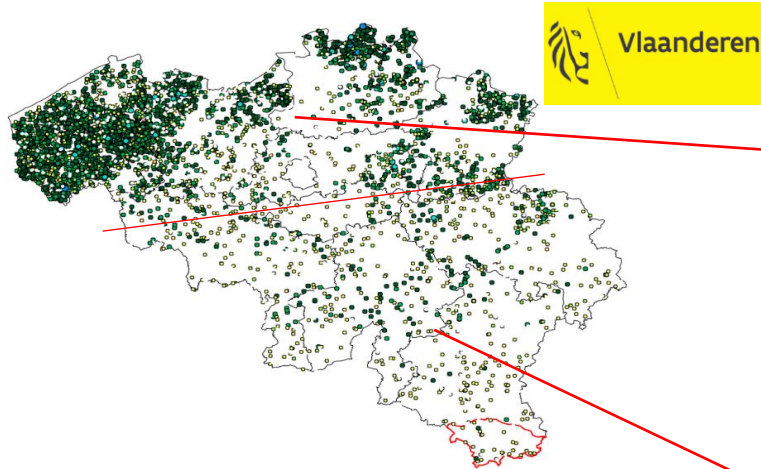


# 1. Belgian context & preparedness

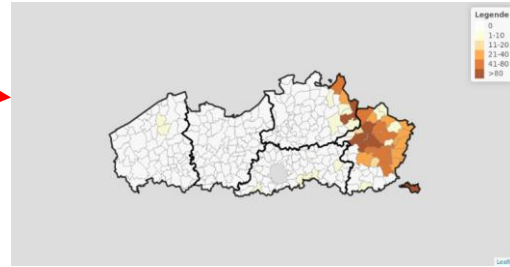
Characteristics of the pig farming sector

Distribution of the wild boar population

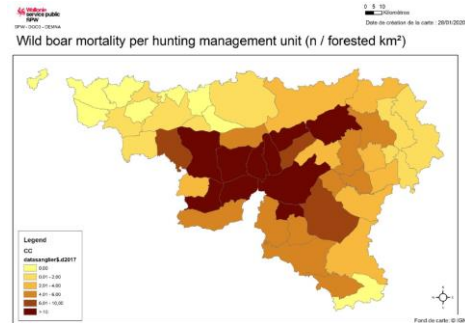
25/9/2018



For the Flemish region (data from 2019)



For the Walloon Region (data from 2017)



## 2. Outbreak ASF in wild boar & European regionalisation

### First outbreak

### Confirmation ASF in wild boar in Belgium on 13 September 2018



“provisional infected” zone





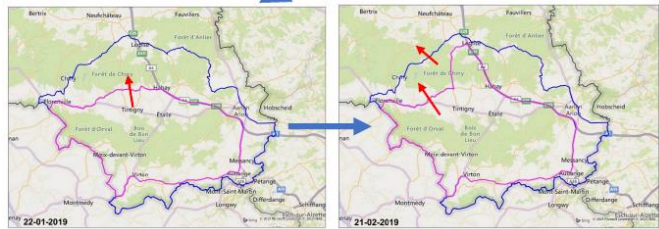
# 2. Outbreak ASF in wild boar & European regionalisation

## Changes in zoning - EU



14/09/2018  
Zone I  
Zone II  
Infected zone

27/11/2018



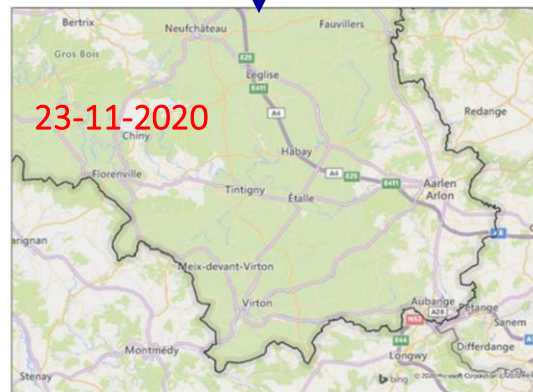
22/01/2019

21/02/2019

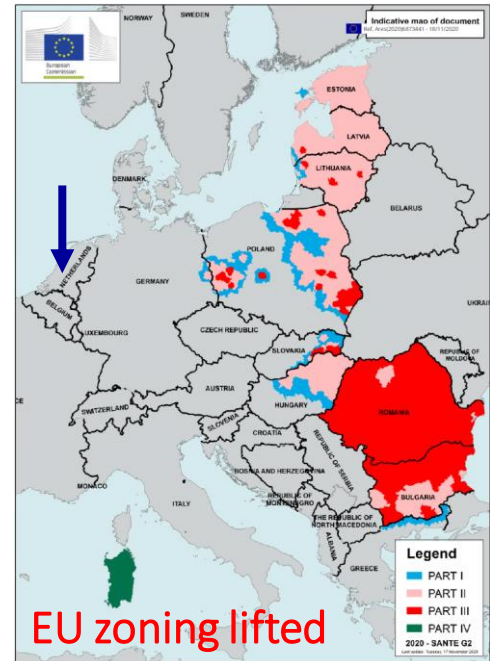


25/03/2019

16/01/2020



23-11-2020



EU zoning lifted

### 3. Measures ASF in wild boar



- 1) A standstill of activities in the infected forest (hunting, forestry work and tourism)



- 2) An intensive search for dead wild boar – the removal of the carcasses found out of the forest – sampling – analysis by the national reference lab



Wallonie  
service public  
SPW

Service public de Wallonie agriculture ressources naturelles environnement





# 3. Measures ASF in wild boar

## 3) Quick and drastic depopulation in the area surrounding the infected zone & later in the infected zone



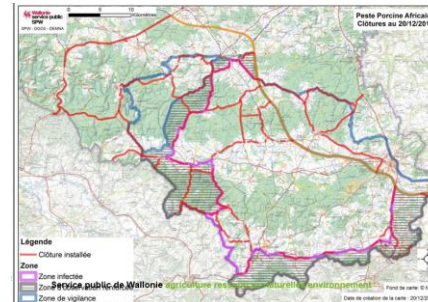
Piège INBO démontable 3x3



Piège coral



## 4) Containment of the Wild boars (virus) by a network of wild boar-proof fences (300 km)





## 4. Measures ASF in domestic pigs



### **No cases in domestic pigs**

April 2019 : renewal of the 2007 declaration to WOAHO/OIE for ASF-free status for domestic pigs/swine

### 1) Preventive measures already in place before the crisis

For the whole of Belgium :

- infrastructure requirements such as hygiene barrier
- operational requirements such as keeping a register for visitors
- To prevent contact between domestic pigs and wild boar such as for outdoor farms installing double fences or a partition made of hard material

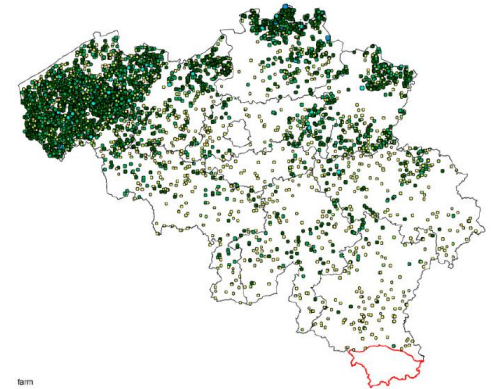
## 4. Measures ASF in domestic pigs



### 2) Preventive culling of all the domestic pigs within the provisional Infected Zone

27/09 – 03/10/2018

- Eliminate the risk of introducing ASF to pig farms:  
Preventive culling of all domestic pigs in the infected zone + ban repopulation
- Ban on repopulation
- Compensation
  1. Federal: Sanitary fund (animals + feed)
  2. Walloon region: Immediate economic losses and compensation for loss of activity



## 4. Measures ASF in domestic pigs



### 3) New structural measures taken in 2018 among which enhanced passive surveillance on pig farms in the whole of Belgium

- Assembly of pigs prohibited (except for slaughter)
- Only 1-1 transports of pigs (except to the slaughterhouse and cat. 2 assembly center)
- No visitors allowed to pig farms if not needed
- **Enhanced passive surveillance: in case of sickness of pigs, 3 pigs have to be sampled for ASF tests before a treatment is installed regardless the clinical symptoms**

## 4. Measures ASF in domestic pigs



### 4) BIOSECURITY enforcement

Reinforced controls at the onset of the disease

Since 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2021 new legislation with additional biosecurity measures + New App : mandatory yearly evaluation of the biosecurity measures applied on the pigs farms -> tool Farfit/biocheck, check list on an app used by the farm veterinarian -> results auto. transmitted to the authority -> Monitoring, targeted controls

#### Goals :

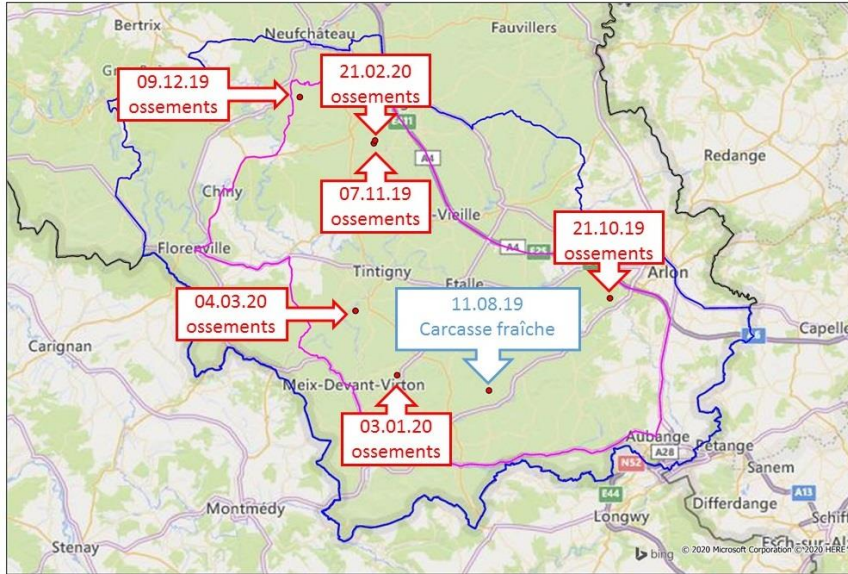
- Evaluation of the level of biosecurity of all pig farms
- Enhance the level of the biosecurity of the pig farms
- If level is too low/ major non-conformity/specific epidemio. risk -> FASFC takes action !



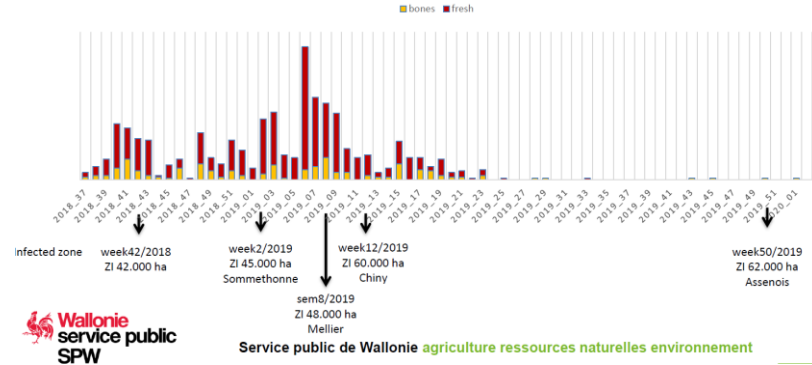


# 5. Last ASF cases in wild boar

Stabilization of the situation !



01-08-2019 - 31-08-2020



Wallonie  
service public  
SPW

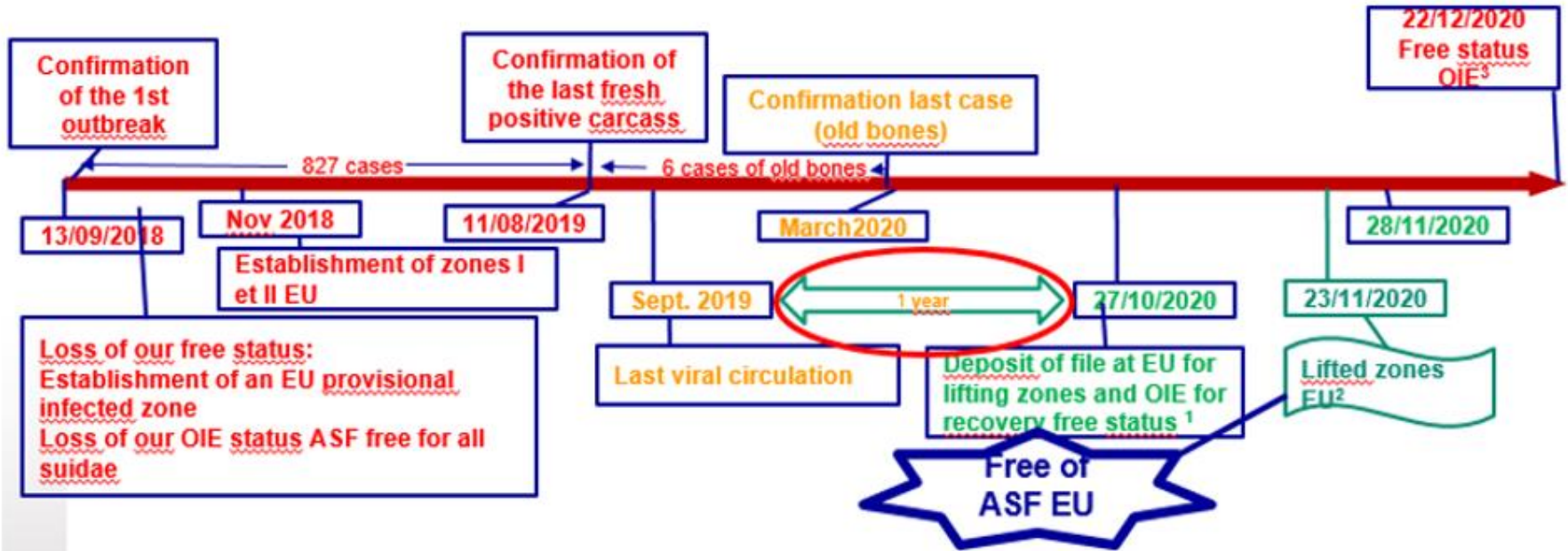
Service public de Wallonie agriculture ressources naturelles environnement

Since beginning of August 2019 (last fresh carcass positive) only 6 other positive cases  
 -> last case (bones) dates back from a dead wild boar 6 months ago  
 -> since end of September 2019 no virus circulation anymore in wild boar population in Belgium



# 6. Eradication of ASF in Belgium : free status EU + OIE

## Recovery of our free status



# 7. Post-crisis measures in wild boar and domestic pigs

## In wild boar measures – exit strategy :

- fence network maintained & sustain 5 years from 2022 except where there is a problem (decision changed 180° compared to initial decision given the increase in general risk)
- reduction of wild boar population
- (enhanced) passive + active surveillance
- awareness campaigns for hunters, forestry workers etc.



## In domestic pigs :

- **repopulation of pig farms is possible again** since Ministerial decree of 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 -> only under strict application of biosecurity measures!
- assembly of pigs still forbidden but restrictions on movements are lifted
- **enhanced passive surveillance in pig farms is maintained !**
- in addition : active surveillance in “farms which could be at risk”
- awareness campaigns for pig farmers, veterinarians etc.
- enforced biosecurity measures in place since the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2021 (mandatory yearly evaluation by use of a too/app)



# 8. Awareness raising

Awareness raising of **all actors** is required  
-> **veterinarians, pig farmers, hunters**  
**but also truck drivers, the general public**  
**and the travellers**

Also waste management for rest areas  
(along traffic axes)  
is necessary.

## Awareness raising through :

- Meetings (such as the taskforce ASF)
- Newsletters destined to veterinarians and pig farmers
- Brochures destined to all actors and in different languages !



### The disease

African swine fever (ASF) is a very contagious viral disease that affects pigs and wild boars. There are no specific symptoms that occur with ASF. Every unusual death must be considered a possible case of ASF.

The disease can occur in three forms:

#### an acute form:

- heavy **fever**, anorexia, diarrhoea,
- lethargy, a **tendency to gather close together**
- blood disorders that are accompanied by **subcutaneous haemorrhages and jaundice**
- a quick death (2 to 3 weeks) and a **mortality rate** that comes close to 100%.

#### a subacute form:

less intense symptoms, a lower mortality rate with deadly consequences over a longer term.

#### a chronic form:

- diffuse symptoms that point to a disease developing over the course of several months, such as
- **abortions**, shorter pregnancies, growth retardation in piglets
- **little weight gain** when fattening up the animals



Source: FLI

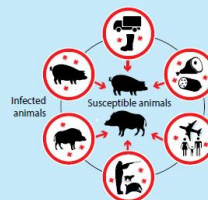


Redness of the skin  
Source: JM Gourneau

### Most common ways of transmission

ASF can be transmitted through:

- contact with **infected pigs or wild boars** (including carcasses or offal)
- **meat/meat products** from infected animals
- **contaminated objects** such as shoes, clothing, vehicles, equipment
- **people** who have come into contact with infected animals or who have recently visited ASF-affected areas.



The virus remains contagious for a long time on **cadavers of animals, in the environment and in meat/meat products** of infected animals (up to 105 days in the offal and blood and up to 300 days in dried meat!!!).

ASF is not transmissible to humans, so there is no public health risk.

### 3 ways to stop ASF

#### Prevention

There is no vaccine (yet) for ASF. The only way to prevent the introduction of this disease on a farm is to implement the following hygiene and **biosecurity measures**:

- use a hygiene barrier, have a pest control programme
- apply the hygiene measures for every person who enters the farm
- put new pigs in quarantine
- do not feed the pigs kitchen waste
- prevent contact between the pigs and wild boars
- deny access to the farm to every person, every vehicle and all equipment that has been in contact with wild boars or that has been in a risk area in the previous 72 hours.
- it is particularly important to comply with these measures when you employ people who come from or have resided in risk areas (seasonal workers).
- for pigs that are kept outside:
  - put up double fences to prevent contact with wild boars
  - place signs for passers-by that state that it is forbidden to feed the pigs

\*Do not hesitate to consult the checklist of items identified for the biosecurity audit

[https://www.favv-afscab.be/professionnels/productionanimale/animaux/circulaires/documents/20210531\\_circ\\_instructienveterinaireanalysederisque\\_FR\\_v1.pdf](https://www.favv-afscab.be/professionnels/productionanimale/animaux/circulaires/documents/20210531_circ_instructienveterinaireanalysederisque_FR_v1.pdf)

#### Early detection

Always contact your veterinarian when you find symptoms that might point to ASF or in the case of unusual mortality.

Whenever disease symptoms are detected in a group of pigs and a treatment has to be started, **blood samples must also be sent to the laboratory to be analyzed for ASF.**

**It is always better to analyze one sample too many than one too little!**

#### Eradication

There is no treatment against ASF. Disease control takes place through measures such as the **culling of pigs and restrictions on the movements of animals**.

The applied measures are aimed at isolating the outbreak as soon as possible to prevent the disease from spreading and to eradicate the virus. These measures are laid down in the European legislation and are, among others:

- slaughtering all the pigs at the outbreak and destroying all the carcasses
- cleaning and disinfecting the contaminated farm
- establishing restriction zones around the outbreak where the movement of animals, goods and people is prohibited or limited.





# Information – Links to websites

- AFSCA/FASFC FR – ENG

<http://www.afsca.be/ppa/>

<http://www.afsca.be/businesssectors/animalproduction/animalhealth/africanswinefever/>



- Walloon Region

<http://www.wallonie.be/fr/actualites/mesures-de-lutte-contre-la-peste-porcine-africaine>

- EU Commission & OIE

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/asf\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/asf_en)

<http://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/animal-diseases/african-swine-fever/>

- EU Commission educational film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyQ4t1wHI2M&feature=youtu.be>

- Scientific Committee's opinions

<http://www.favv-afsca.fgov.be/ppa/publications/avis/>





**Thank you for your attention !**

