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Two Cases of African Swine Fever in Poland.

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Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

On February 13 and 15, 2014 two cases of African swine fever were detected in wild boar population in Poland. Both cases were detected in dead wild boars found in sites situated close to the Polish border with Belarus. Polish Veterinary Service (PVS) notified OIE, EU and third countries about the outbreak and implemented measures to combat the disease and to prevent its further spread in accordance with regulatory procedures.

On February 26, the EU, OIE, and Customs Union began a review of the ASF situation in Poland.

The PVS is in direct contact with FSIS in order to provide current information about the status of the ASF outbreak in Poland.

General Information:

Dr. Janusz Zwiazek, Poland's Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO), has announced that two cases of African swine fever were detected in wild boar, on February 13 and 15, 2014. The first case detected was near the village of Grzybowski, Szudziałowo County (Podlaskie province) at the site situated approximately 900 meters from the Polish border with Belarus. In a tissue sample taken from a dead wild boar genetic material of the African swine fever virus was detected. Laboratory tests were conducted at the National Veterinary Institute - National Research Institute (NVI-NRI) in Pulawy. According to preliminary data, 117 farms housing 398 pigs are situated within a 10 km radius of the outbreak site. According to Dr. Zwiazek, all measures to combat the disease and to prevent its further spread have been undertaken in accordance with regulatory procedures. The Polish Veterinary Service has notified the European Commission, the World Animal Health Organization (OIE) and some third countries about the situation.

The second case detected was near the village of Kruszyniany (municipality Krynki) in Sokółka County (Podlasie province) on February 15 at a distance of about 15 km from the location of the first confirmed detection. According to the Director of the NVI-NRI in the second case the virus concentration was high, which may suggest that the disease had entered into the acute phase.

Both dead boars infected with ASF were found in the border zone of Belarus. Dr. Janusz Zwiazek, Chief Veterinary Officer, reported that buffer zones have been created in the Warmia and Mazury, Podlasie and Mazowieckie Provinces in Eastern Poland. Farmers in these counties have been advised to exercise extreme caution and to follow the recommendations of the local veterinary service to enclose their farms with fences and to use disinfectant mats.

On February 26, 2014, the EU-Community Veterinary Emergency Team arrived in Poland to begin a three-day assessment of the ASF situation. Representatives of the Customs Union and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) are also participating in the assessment. The official visit will include meetings with the Polish Ministry of Agriculture, site visits to the first detection site in Sokolka near the border with Belarus, and to the NVI-NRI in Pulawy. The Ministry of Agriculture reports that the role of the expert group is to support the activities undertaken by the Veterinary Inspection in the areas where the buffer zone has been designated pursuant to the Commission's decision of 18 February 2014 No. 2014/100/UE. The Commission decision concerns certain interim protection measures in relation to African swine fever outbreak in Poland.

On February 26, the Ministry of Agriculture held a press conference in Sokolka wherein the Deputy CVO announced a Ministerial Order allowing movement of pigs for slaughter and for further fattening to facilities outside the buffer zone on receipt of a permit from the County Chief Veterinarian. Those animals are to remain under strict supervision of the local veterinary authorities. The order became effective as of February 26, 2014. At the same press conference the Minister of Agriculture emphasized that the ASF outbreak is an issue of concern for the entire European Union and not only for Poland and Lithuania where the detections occurred.