

Improving coordination at borders to curb the spread of African swine fever

**The GF-TADs held an expert meeting in Kiev, Ukraine
22-23 March 2018**



The 9th meeting of the Standing Group of Experts on African swine fever (SGE ASF), presided by Dr B. Van Goethem, was dedicated to Cross border cooperation addressing illegal movements of pigs and their products

African swine fever (ASF) remains the major animal health concern today in both the northern and eastern parts of Europe with two countries newly infected last year and several others put at high risk of introduction. Illegal movement of live pigs and pig products have been largely implicated in the latest outbreaks, whether intentional (smuggling) or involuntary (uninformed travellers). At its ninth meeting in Kiev last month, the SGE ASF called for increased collaboration among competent authorities working at borders, especially the Veterinary Services and Customs Administrations within and among countries, to better address these illegal movements. For the first time, representatives from the World Customs Organization (WCO) and national Customs Administrations joined the SGE ASF meeting to present control activities at borders that could contribute to the fight against ASF. Open discussions took place and a set of recommendations was agreed upon, recognising **coordinated border management** and **awareness campaigns** as fundamental tools to fight illegal movements.



Everyone should become fully aware of their responsibility in spreading the disease and thereby potentially causing heavy damages to the entire European pig sector.

In particular, experts recommended that competent authorities unite efforts to develop specific tools and procedures to be visibly exhibited at border checkpoints, aimed at travellers, such as hunters, tourists, daily workers and truck drivers, moving back and forth from and to infected areas. Luggage and vehicle control should additionally be made at borders based on risk assessment, with ‘amnesty bins’ displayed to encourage travellers to voluntarily surrender at-risk food products. Disinfection of empty animal trucks is also an important measure to be taken at borders, based on well-defined coordinated procedures using disinfectants recommended by the OIE.

The SGE ASF in the Baltic and Eastern Europe region is an innovative mechanism, under the umbrella of GF-TADs, which aims to better comprehend the disease dynamics in both domestic pigs and wild boar, as well as to increase trust and dialogue among affected and at-risk countries, providing them with science-based technical guidance from renowned ASF and wildlife experts for coordinated control. In operation since 2014, the SGE ASF is recognised by the highest regional animal health authorities and the SGE ASF9 recommendations have been notably presented at the ministerial meeting on ASF held in Warsaw late last month. ■

- Link to the [SGE ASF9 recommendations](#) on cross border cooperation addressing illegal movements of pigs and their products.
- Link to the [SGE ASF initiative](#).
- Link to [WCO Coordinated border management Compendium](#).