



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY
Health and Food Audits and Analysis

DG(SANTE) CT-2025-0069

**FINAL REPORT OF AN AUDIT CARRIED OUT IN
ITALY
FROM 15 TO 26 SEPTEMBER 2025
IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF ANIMAL HEALTH CONTROLS IN RELATION TO AFRICAN SWINE FEVER**

Executive summary

This report describes the outcome of an audit in Italy, carried out from 15 to 26 September 2025 as part of the Directorate-General (DG) for Health and Food Safety work programme.

The objective of the audit was to assess the current epidemiological situation of African swine fever (ASF) in Italy and to evaluate the progress that the veterinary authorities are making to overcome the issues identified in the previous DG SANTE audit to combat the disease.

The report indicates that Italy has strengthened many aspects of ASF control since the previous audit, particularly in traceability, surveillance, laboratory capacity, movement controls and coordinated implementation in several zones. Italy has a structured control system supported by a clear legislative framework, IT tools, trained staff and an active expert group. Guidance, communication and awareness campaigns contribute to informed stakeholders and early reporting.

The traceability and registration system for domestic pigs supports rapid response during outbreaks. Biosecurity programmes and risk-based inspections have led to improvements in many regions, although inconsistent daily practices on some farms continue to contribute to infection clusters. Control measures in wild boar populations are extensive. Coordinated culling and biosecurity rules have reduced densities and helped contain ASF in several areas, although progress varies due to ambitious reduction targets and limited population data.

Surveillance in domestic pigs and wild boar is well developed, supported by continuous monitoring, carcass searches and a reliable laboratory network. Detection is generally timely, though low carcass reporting and limited resources in some areas reduce sensitivity. Outbreak response procedures and contingency plans have helped contain outbreaks, although simultaneous outbreaks in large farms can slow culling and disposal. Barriers and containment zones have delayed spread in several areas, while infection persists in regions with challenging terrain or high wild boar density.

Controls on animal and product movements are well structured and function effectively where biosecurity and surveillance conditions are met. Where farm protection is weaker, movement authorisation may carry residual risk. Ongoing measure adjustments are supported by supervision, data monitoring and coordination, though delays in audits during the emergency phase limit their implementation across all regions.

The report contains recommendations for the veterinary authority aimed at addressing areas in which further improvements are required.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
2	OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE	5
3	LEGAL BASIS	7
4	BACKGROUND.....	7
5	MAIN CONCLUSIONS	9
6	ORGANISATION OF THE OFFICIAL CONTROL SYSTEM	10
7	PREVENTIVE MEASURES	11
8	EARLY DETECTION AND SURVEILLANCE.....	19
9	DISEASE CONTROL AND ERADICATION MEASURES	23
10	CONTAINMENT MEASURES AND TRADE RESTRICTIONS	25
11	SUPERVISION AND VERIFICATION OF EFFECTIVENESS	29
12	CLOSING MEETING	30
13	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	30

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

Abbreviation	Explanation
ASF	African swine fever
ASF guidelines	Commission Notice on the guidelines on the prevention, control and eradication of African swine fever in the Union (ASF guidelines) (C/2023/1504)
Carabinieri NAS	Carabinieri Anti-Adulteration and Health Unit (<i>Nuclei Antisofisticazione e Sanità</i>)
CEV Areas	Viral expansion control areas
EU	European Union
ELISA	Enzyme linked immunosorbent assay, which is a laboratory test method for the detection of antibodies and/or antigens.
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction, which is a molecular biology test method for the detection of nucleic acid (typically from virus genomes)
Previous audit	Audit carried out from 15 to 27 June 2023 in order to evaluate the implementation of animal health controls in relation to African swine fever. DG(SANTE)2023-7733
Non-DPA	Non- commercial establishment which are allowed to keep up to two pigs not designated for food production
NRL	National reference laboratory
SIMAN	National system for the notification and the management of outbreaks of animal diseases
SINVSA	National system for animal disease surveillance activities
TRACES	TRADE Control and Expert System

1 INTRODUCTION

The audit in Italy took place from 15 to 26 September 2025 as part of the work programme of the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety. The audit team comprised two auditors from the Commission services.

The audit team held an opening meeting on 15 September with the central competent authority, i.e. the Ministry of Health, and representatives of veterinary services of the Regions and the National reference laboratory (NRL).

At this meeting, the audit team confirmed the objectives of, and itinerary for the audit. Representatives from the central competent authority participated in every meeting throughout the audit.

The audit took place partially remotely by videoconference and it also included visits in two regions of Italy.

2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The purpose of this audit was to assess the current epidemiological situation of African swine fever (ASF) in Italy and to evaluate the progress that the veterinary authorities are making to overcome the issues identified previously to combat the disease.

The main objectives were to assess:

- the early detection of ASF by surveillance;
- the effectiveness of measures and actions taken to prevent the disease from spreading into the domestic pig population in infected area;
- the effectiveness of measures to control the disease in wild porcine animals;
- the effectiveness of measures and actions taken to prevent the disease from spreading outside the infected area via live pig movements, fresh meat, meat preparations or meat products from domestic or feral pigs and animal by-products;
- the effectiveness of measures and actions taken to prevent the spread of infection in case of outbreaks in domestic pigs;
- the supervision and verification of the effectiveness of the measures and actions taken;
- the implementation of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 laying down special control measures for ASF, applicable as of 21 April 2023; up to this date, the implementation of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/605.

The audit also followed-up the implementation of the proposed actions in response to the seven recommendations from the previous audit DG(SANTE)/2023-7733 (hereafter “previous audit”).

The scope of the audit covered all the aspects aimed at eradicating ASF. It focused on evaluating, in particular:

- the registration of pig holdings, identification of pigs, their traceability (national database) and related official controls;
- preventive measures (management of wild porcine animal population, biosecurity measures in hunting grounds, pig holdings and relevant establishments, and surveillance for ASF in domestic pigs and wild porcine animals);

- the animal health certification system and controls on the movement of domestic pigs, and the controls on fresh pig meat, meat preparations and meat products from production to sale to the consumer. The scope does not include controls on passengers' personal consignments;
- controls on the movement of feral pig carcasses and on their fresh meat, meat preparations, meat products and hunting trophies;
- controls on animal by-products of domestic and feral pigs;
- measures and restrictions in case of suspicion of, or outbreaks in domestic pigs, including ASF contingency planning and emergency preparedness;
- the ASF laboratory;
- the supervision and verification of the effectiveness of the measures and actions taken.

The audit criteria included:

- the legal references contained in Annex 1;
- Commission Notice on the guidelines on the prevention, control and eradication of ASF in the Union ("ASF guidelines") (C/2023/1504) available at: [African swine fever guidelines](#);
- the EU co-funded ASF programme for 2024.

In pursuit of these objectives, the audit team completed the following remote meetings:

Meetings	No.	Description
Competent authority (central and regional)	3	Opening, and two other videoconferences.

and performed the following on-site visits:

Visits / meetings	No.	Description
Regional and local competent authority	2	A veterinary office in two different regions (Restricted Zones II & III)
Hunting grounds	2	One in two different regions (Restricted Zone II)
Domestic pig holdings	2	A large establishment in two different regions (Restricted Zone II)
Pig slaughterhouse, cutting plant, meat preparation/product establishment	2	A Pig slaughterhouse (Restricted Zone II) A wild game handling establishment
Carcass collection centre	1	1 centre for the collections of carcasses of wild porcine animals
Central competent authority (Regional offices connected via videoconference)	1	Closing meeting
Official laboratory	1	regional laboratory (Experimental Zooprophyllaxis Institutes)

3 LEGAL BASIS

The audit was carried out under the general provisions of EU legislation and in particular Articles 116, 117 and 119 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Full legal references are provided in Annex 1. Legal acts quoted in this report refer, where applicable, to the last amended version.

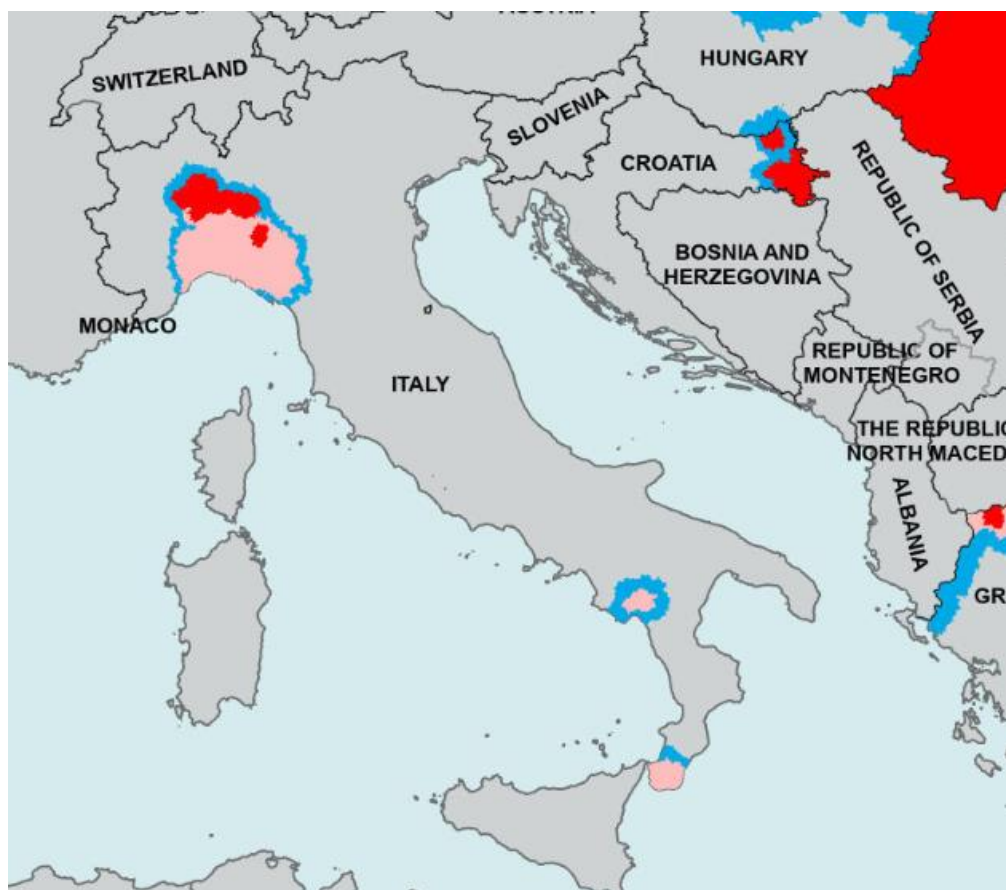
4 BACKGROUND

The first outbreak of ASF in mainland Italy was confirmed in January 2022, and the number of outbreaks is provided in the following table (data from the Animal Disease Information System of the European Commission):

Year	Outbreaks in wild porcine animals	Outbreaks in domestic pigs
2022	269	1
2023	1,046	15
2024	1,204	31
2025 Up to 15/09/25	528	1

There was an unrelated ASF epidemic in Sardinia since 1978, the last outbreak of which was confirmed in September 2023. Official freedom from ASF was recognised in September 2024.

Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 lists in its Annex I the restricted zones established in Italy in which the special control measures foreseen by EU legislation against the disease apply. The following map provides an indicative representation of restricted zones in Italy at the time of the audit:



last

updated 25/08/25

- **Restricted zone I** (areas listed in Part I of Annex I) – areas with a precise geographical delimitation subject to special disease control measures and bordering restricted zones II (coloured in blue).
- **Restricted zone II** (areas listed in Part II of Annex I) – areas with a precise geographical delimitation subject to special disease control measures (coloured in pink).
- **Restricted zone III** (areas listed in Part III of Annex I) - area with a precise geographical delimitation subject to special disease control measures (red).

An overview of how control systems are organised in Italy is provided in the Multi-annual National Control Plan (MANCP), which can be found under the 'Member State Links' tab on the following web page: <https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/country/profile/details/IT>

The Commission services have carried out a number of audits of Italy related to the implementation of animal health controls for African swine fever, including DG(SANTE)2016-8764, DG(SANTE)2021-7344 and DG(SANTE)2023-7733, which are available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit-report>.

A range of information and scientific advice related to ASF is available on the European Commission's website: https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-diseases/diseases-and-control-measures/african-swine-fever_en and on the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) website: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/african-swine-fever>.

5 MAIN CONCLUSIONS

1. Italy has built a solid organisational structure for the management of ASF, supported by IT systems, trained staff and advisory expert groups. This enables coordinated actions between levels of authority and promotes an efficient flow of information and decision-making.
2. Robust traceability and registration systems provide a strong basis for surveillance and response to outbreaks. Up-to-date movement data and automated processes facilitate fast tracing and support disease containment during a crisis. The reduction of farm numbers in affected areas lowers the risk of the spread of disease but also reflects the pressure that ASF placed on producers.
3. Improvements in farm prevention capacity have been driven by biosecurity rules and checks, particularly where inspection coverage is high. However, weaknesses in daily operational biosecurity persist on some farms, and repeated shortcomings contribute to clusters of outbreaks. Inspection results indicate that strengthened verification and follow-up could further enhance resilience.
4. Wild boar management strategies are in place and operational, and local coordinated culling has reduced population density and slowed the spread in several areas. However, incomplete population data and difficulties in achieving reduction targets limit accurate planning and slow down the progress in high-risk regions.
5. Biosecurity measures in hunting areas and control over carcass handling reduce the risk of the virus spilling over to domestic pigs. Testing and traceability systems support the safe management of hunted animals, helping to protect nearby farms and communities.
6. Early detection is achieved by awareness campaigns and surveillance systems. Where surveillance sampling or reporting is inconsistent, early detection is reduced, particularly around pig movements.
7. Enhanced surveillance in wild boar, including active carcass searches and dog teams, increases detection and reduces environmental viral load. In some areas, low carcass reporting and resource shortages limit the power of surveillance, creating uncertainty in the epidemiological picture.
8. The laboratory network provides rapid and reliable diagnostic support for surveillance, confirmation of outbreaks and authorisation of safe movement.
9. The response to outbreaks in domestic pigs is generally well structured, and efficient tracing has limited wider spread. However, when several outbreaks occur simultaneously, depopulation and disposal slow eradication and increases the risk of onward transmission.
10. Movement controls and designation systems for meat and products are comprehensive, allowing safe trade while controlling risk. The overall effectiveness of movement authorisations depends on solid biosecurity and continuous surveillance in farms. However, weaknesses in these areas may increase risks during high-pressure periods.
11. Multiple layers of supervision help track real-time progress and adjust measures where necessary, although delays in auditing certain regions might limit operational consistency.

6 ORGANISATION OF THE OFFICIAL CONTROL SYSTEM

Italy has developed a robust national framework to control ASF, supported by appropriate organisation, updated legislation, regularly updated administrative provisions, coordinated action at national and regional levels, and expert groups. Staff instructions, guidance, training and awareness campaigns are contributing to coherent implementation.

The authorities rely on a well-structured network of official laboratories and several effective and reliable IT systems that support planning, monitoring, analysis and verification. These elements contribute to effective coordination between services and to timely surveillance and response.

- | | |
|---|---|
| | 1. The structure and organisation of the competent authorities is described in the previous audit report. |
| The authorities supported by technical experts | 2. An ASF expert group has been active for many years, comprising of representatives from the Ministry of Health, regional veterinary services, the NRL, as well as pig breeders and hunters associations. The Group provides expertise and regularly advises the authorities on measures to combat ASF. |
| Well-defined Guidance and coordination role of ASF Commissioner | 3. In 2022, Italy appointed an Extraordinary Commissioner for ASF (hereafter “ASF Commissioner”) at national level. The ASF Commissioner’s primary role is to guide and coordinate regional efforts to contain and prevent the spread of ASF. This initiative is reinforced by several ASF Commissioner orders issued since 2022, which outline specific measures to address ASF. |
| Available detailed legislative framework | 4. In addition, the Ministry of Health has issued several notes and guidance documents detailing the implementation of these orders and measures, particularly for domestic pigs. These are further supplemented by regional implementing rules. Relevant stakeholders, such as hunters and farmers, can find a wide range of information and guidance through leaflets and posters on the authority's website ¹ . |
| Trainings and IT systems improving and facilitating work of authority staff | 5. The competent authorities have organised numerous ASF-related training sessions for staff and stakeholders. Additional information can be found at: https://fondiz.it/pillole/ . |
| | 6. In their work, the authorities use several informatics systems, such as VetInfo, an Italian veterinary portal providing access to animal health data, disease surveillance systems, and regulatory updates for veterinary professionals and public health authorities. It offers several applications that assist competent authorities in data entry and monitoring. The portal also includes dashboards that enable authorities to quickly analyse available data. |

¹ <https://www.vetinfo.it/> and <https://www.salute.gov.it/new/it/tema/peste-suina-africana/>.

7. SIMAN is the national outbreak registration platform that supports data collection by local authorities during critical outbreaks. Laboratories use SINVSA to receive samples, perform analyses, and upload results. The analysis results are linked to the sampling data via the form's unique code, ensuring accurate traceability.

7 PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The national traceability system for pigs is robust and, in some ways, goes beyond EU requirements. Together with stricter movement rules in ASF- restricted areas, it improves the sensitivity of ASF surveillance and supports fast and reliable tracing during outbreaks. Pig numbers have decreased in recent years, particularly in areas affected by ASF.

A risk-based inspection programme for biosecurity at farms and hunting grounds has also led to gradual improvements in pig farms. However, the quality and consistency of these inspections remain insufficient, particularly in restricted zones. Recurrent shortcomings often go unresolved and have played a role in recent outbreaks, as shown by epidemiological investigations and targeted controls at high-risk farms. The national wild boar management plan is regularly adapted, and generally well delivered, but results vary across regions.

Delays in reporting analysis results, unrealistic depopulation targets and limited knowledge of wild boar density slow decision-making and weaken preparedness in ASF-free areas.

There are adequate administrative arrangements and verification activities in hunting grounds, and stakeholders show good awareness of biosecurity, which contributes to protecting pig farms and reducing the risk of infection.

Pig identification, registration and movement controls

Up-to-date
central
database
assures pig
traceability

8. The system for registering establishments that keep pigs, as well as the identification of pigs, is described in the previous audit report. The national animal database contains comprehensive and up-to-date information on pig holdings and movements, including records of all registered establishments and herds, the number of pigs at each location, their movements, and mortality data. The data are updated through an annual census, electronic reporting of pig movements, and official veterinary inspections. The database complies with Article 109(1)(c) of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
9. Since the previous audit, the authorities have developed a new system to replace the current practice of conducting annual pig censuses on farms. Under the new system, the number of pigs on each farm will be automatically updated whenever an event affecting the count occurs, such as reports of births, deaths, and movements on the farm. This feature will be fully operational from 1 January 2026, and the reporting of an annual

census will gradually be abolished.

Reduced density of pig farms in regions affected by ASF	10. Data in the database indicate a decrease in the number of pig farms since ASF infection affected the country (see Table 1 in Annex II). This decline was particularly evident in regions and provinces impacted by the disease. For instance, in Pavia, the province visited during the audit, the number of commercial farms fell from 170 in January 2024 to 28 in September 2025. The number of pigs decreased from 167,322 to 86,041. Similar trends were noted in other provinces visited. 11. The authorities pointed out that many farms in the restricted zones have been left empty due to economic reasons or non-compliance with biosecurity requirements. The remaining farms either complied with the requirements for movement derogations or sent pigs for slaughter as non-compliant, and the meat was accordingly marked. This was confirmed by the audit team during reviews in the provinces visited.
Mortality reports enhance the traceability system	12. Pigs must be identified with an ear tag or tattoo in compliance with EU requirements. Deaths must be reported within 48 hours in areas with ASF restrictions and within seven days in other parts of the country. The farms visited by the audit team complied with the reporting obligations and notified events appropriately.
Official controls on pig traceability implemented	13. The traceability of pigs is ensured through movement documents. Operators at the place of origin generate an electronic movement document in the database, which includes details about the establishments of origin and destination, the transporter, and health-related information. If the operator of the destination establishment does not object, the pigs are automatically registered at that location. In ASF-restricted zones, these documents are used to authorize movements, and their automated issuance is blocked. Instead, local authorities validate and issue the documents before movement to ensure that all conditions for movement derogation are met. 14. Operators have free access to information related to their establishments and the database complies with the requirements outlined in Articles 3-6 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/520. 15. In 2023, the authorities inspected 1,397 pig farms to verify their compliance with identification and registration rules, and in 2024, they inspected 1,117 pig farms, thus meeting their targets to inspect at least 1% of pig holdings annually in compliance with Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/160. In 2023, 176 farms (12.59%) were found to have non-compliances, compared to 242 farms (21.66%) in 2024. A higher level of non-compliance was noted in the Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna regions, with 38.57% and 32.5% of farms non-compliant, respectively. The authorities attribute this higher level of non-compliance to an effective risk-based system for selecting farms for inspection.

16. The non-compliances, such as delays in reporting to the database, lack of pig identification, and failures in pig registration, resulted in several corrective actions and sanctions, including fines, movement restrictions, animal seizures, and even culling.

Biosecurity on pig establishments

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Biosecurity measures for pig farms defined by the national legislation</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none">17. Italy has comprehensive biosecurity measures for both establishments moving pigs and establishments keeping pigs for own consumption, set at national level in addition to the EU legislative ones.18. Since the early stages of the ASF epidemic in Italy, the ordinances issued by the ASF Commissioner have required the scheduled depopulation of pig farms in restriction zones II and III and imposed a ban on restocking. The resumption and continuation of farming activities depends on the implementation and verification of enhanced biosecurity measures by the local authorities, in accordance with the previous Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/605 and now Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. |
| <p>Risk-based official control system in place to verify farm compliance with biosecurity requirements complies with the EU requirements</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none">19. For commercial farms, the outcome of the inspections on enhanced biosecurity measures is recorded in the Classyfarm system². The system ranks farms by risk, which authorities use to prioritise official inspections. This aligns with the requirements set out in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 regarding risk-based controls.20. In general, at central level, the Ministry of Health sets annual biosecurity control targets for pig farms: inspecting 30% of large commercial farms and 10% of small commercial farms in both 2024 and 2025. Additionally, per the ASF Commissioner's order, biosecurity checks must prioritize semi-free-range holdings.21. The Classyfarm system allocates 60% of inspections in regional plans to the highest-risk establishments, with a further 35% allocated at the discretion of regional authorities, and the remaining 5% allocated randomly.22. Additionally, according to the ASF Commissioner Ordinances for 2024 and 2025, all pig farms in restriction zones must undergo biosecurity inspections by the end of the calendar year. Priority is given to farms in the highest-risk areas before authorizing pig movements or re-stocking. Farms located in ASF-restricted zones that move pigs must comply with enhanced biosecurity measures, which are regularly checked during inspections, with a frequency that at least meets the requirements of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. Starting from 23 May 2025, inspections must continue every 90 days in Restriction Zones II and III, according to national provisions. In Restriction Zone I, inspections are required at least twice a year, with a minimum interval of four months. Therefore, |

² <https://www.classyfarm.it/index.php>

recommendation No. 1 from the previous audit to ensure that official controls on appropriate frequency of biosecurity checks on pig establishments has been addressed.

- Trend of improvement of biosecurity on pig farms detected in regular inspections by local authorities
23. Local authorities conduct official biosecurity inspections on farms using Classyfarm checklists, while private veterinarians assist farmers by identifying and addressing gaps in their biosecurity systems.
 24. The data on conducted inspections show that the competent authorities adhered to the inspection plan. The results show a gradual and steady improvement of the level of prevention in pig farms. In 2023, the authorities inspected a total of 4,307 farms, exceeding the planned 1,356 checks. This increased number of inspections resulted from many inspections being carried out in ASF-restricted zones not originally included in the annual plan. They found 3,095 farms to be compliant, representing a compliance rate of 71.85%. For semi-free-range farms, the authorities inspected 1,703 farms, surpassing the planned 1,042 inspections, and found 762 farms compliant, representing a compliance rate of only 44.74%.
 25. In 2024, the authorities checked biosecurity on 4,660 farms. They found 4,003 farms compliant, leading to a compliance rate of 85.9%. Within this total, they inspected 676 semi-wild farms, surpassing the planned 597 inspections, and found 551 to be compliant, with a compliance rate of 81.5%. This trend of improving compliance with biosecurity requirements on pig farms was noted in regions and all the provinces visited.
 26. In Lombardy, one of the regions visited, the inspection plan has been expanded. As a result, inspections are now conducted annually in at least 50% of intensive farms, as well as in all semi-wild farms. Additionally, authorities in this region conducted official inspections every 90 days for farms located within restricted zones. Furthermore, farms in disease-free areas that receive pigs from restricted zones have also been prioritised for biosecurity inspection to verify their compliance with enhanced biosecurity measures.
 27. According to the 2023 data, 707 inspections were carried out in Lombardy, exceeding the originally planned 44 inspections. Of these, 593 farms were found to be compliant, resulting in a compliance rate of 78.96%. In 2024, authorities conducted 1,269 inspections, surpassing the planned 574, and discovered 1,150 farms compliant, which equates to a compliance rate of 90.62%. They also inspected 29 semi-wild farms, exceeding the 11 planned, with 22 found to be compliant, making a compliance rate of 75.86%.
 28. In the Emilia Romagna region authorities also adhered to the frequency of biosecurity inspections as per national rules, therefore in line with ASF regulation.

Enforcement of biosecurity in place. However, inspections by NAS detecting several deficiencies in operational biosecurity not identified in regular controls

29. Once the authorities detected non-compliances on the farm, they implemented various sanctions and penalties to enforce compliance with legislation. Article 7 of the current Order of the ASF Commissioner No 5/2024 provides that in holdings in a restricted area where there is a structural or management deficiency in biosecurity requirements that cannot be remedied within a maximum period of fifteen days, the local competent authority shall block these holdings with a view to their prompt emptying.
30. The available data show that not all non-compliances automatically result in the blocking of pig movements from the inspected farm. In such cases, the local authority assesses the risk posed by the non-compliance and, if they determine the risk from the farm's movements is limited or negligible, they continue to allow movement derogations.
31. The Carabinieri Anti-Adulteration and Health Unit (NAS), mandated by the ASF Commissioner, are also conducting a series of inspections, jointly with the Veterinary Services of the Veterinary Departments of local health authorities, on pig farms in ASF-restricted areas to ensure compliance with enhanced biosecurity measures as required by Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. The farms checked are selected on the basis of a risk analysis, considering various ASF risk factors.
32. The NAS reports from 2024 and 2025 highlight several deficiencies on all farms inspected, particularly in daily operational biosecurity. They detected a lack of routine compliance with rules for farm clean zones, suggesting that, although these rules are outlined in the farm biosecurity plans, they are either insufficiently detailed, do not reflect actual farm conditions, or are not adequately implemented in daily operations. This undermines the overall protection of the farms and weakens measures to prevent the spread of infection. The local inspectors have either not identified these deficiencies during biosecurity inspections or some of those non-compliances had been persistent on the farms. This is not in line with Articles 10(1)(a)(iii) and (b), (4) and (5), and 11(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 ; Article 16(1), point (b)(i) and Annex III to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 on operator responsibilities on disease prevention and biosecurity; and Articles 5(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 on general obligations of the competent authorities to have procedures and/or arrangements in place to ensure the effectiveness of official controls.
33. The local health authorities in the area are responsible for ensuring that these non-conformities are fully resolved within the deadlines specified in the NAS inspection reports. In two instances, non-compliances led to the initiation of depopulation and the imposition of additional penalties as stipulated by the legislation. In one of those instances, a further joint inspection confirmed that the required measures had been successfully reinstated. In the instances reviewed by the audit team, follow-up on those inspections was adequate and resulted in corrective actions. This was also confirmed on the two farms visited by the audit team.

Wild porcine animal population management

Adopted national plan	34. As required by Article 56 and Annex IV of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, Italy, via the ASF Commissioner, has published a national action plan for wild porcine animals to help prevent the spread of ASF, covering the period from 2023 to 2028.
A lack of accurate estimates of density of wild boar population	35. The Italian strategic plan to combat ASF is based on five main pillars: surveillance in both domestic pigs and wild boars, containment (fencing) around clusters of ASF outbreaks in wild boars, training to raise awareness, reduction of the wild boar population, and biosecurity on pig farms. 36. The authorities reported difficulties in estimating the wild boar population. They indicated that no density or absolute wild boar population size estimates are available for Italy. Instead, they provided the trend of the total number of wild boars shot in Italy, which shows an increased number of wild boars shot in recent years compared to the previous period (see Table 2 in Annex II for more details). 37. Field studies conducted in Lombardy showed a dramatic decrease in the wild boar population in the ASF-infected area. The estimated density values fell from 6.73 wild boars/km² ($\pm$ 2.56) in November 2022 to 0.76 wild boars/km² in September 2024.
Ambitious targets for reduction of density of wild boars not achieved in first year of its implementation	38. For the period 2023–2028, the national action plan aims to significantly reduce the wild boar population by removing 60% to 80% of the population each year over a timeframe of 3 to 5 years. With an estimated wild boar population of 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 animals in Italy, achieving this reduction target requires a substantial increase in the number of animals culled each year compared to previous averages. Specifically, it calls for a 150% increase in the annual number of hunted wild boars compared to the average from 2019 to 2021, reaching up to 600,000 in the first year. However, an annual report on the plan's implementation, as mandated by Article 56(5) of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, has not yet been issued because not all regions have submitted data on their wild boar population reduction efforts. 39. Incomplete data on wild boars harvested from previous hunting season by regions show that the target for reducing the wild boar population in the first year was not achieved in any of the regions (see Table 3 in Annex II for more details). This is not in line with Article 70 of Regulation (EU) 2016/429, and Article 56 and Annex IV, points (e) and (g) of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. 40. Authorities attribute this to a decline in the number of hunters in recent years, decreasing motivation among hunters to actively participate, and, in ASF-restricted zones, a lower number of wild boars culled using permitted

methods compared to the numbers achieved through large-scale drive hunting in ASF-free areas (see Table 4 in Annex II). They stated that even before adopting the plan, the hunting bag was already at its upper limits, with little opportunity for further increase. They emphasized the need to recalculate the targets for upcoming seasons to make them realistic and reflective of local conditions. However, at the time of the audit, this recalculation had not yet begun, partly due to the lack of data from the first year of implementation. Therefore, the authority had not addressed recommendation No 3 from the previous audit on reduction of wild porcine animal population.

41. The incentives provided by the authorities, such as €50 or €90 for each wild boar killed in the Lombardy region and support for marketing meat from ASF-free areas, have not produced the desired effect. Hunters found some measures cumbersome, such as the reimbursement processes for hunted wild boar, and others counterproductive, like restrictions on the number of wild boars they can retain for personal use in ASF-restricted zones.
42. Available data show that authorities did not meet their targets for the age and gender distribution of culled wild boars. Instead of the planned 60% to 65% females, only 49% were achieved (despite financial incentives for each hunted female), and rather than the planned 60% young animals, only 29% were culled.
43. The wild boar hunting season varies by region and hunting method. Large-scale drive hunting is allowed from 1 October to 31 January 31, while individual hunting and culling activities (selective shooting, including at night, and captures) can be practiced year-round.
44. Hunting activities targeting wild boar have been largely restricted in ASF-restricted zones following the entry into force of the ASF Commissioner's Ordinances; instead, culling has been used as a form of wildlife control.
45. In restricted Zones II and III, authorities prohibit collective hunting activities for all species, and wild boar hunting is banned. Authorities only permit wild boar control through trapping, selective shooting, and the hunting method known as "girata", limited to a maximum of three dogs and 15 people per management unit. In Zone I, hunters can use all methods to hunt wild boar, aiming for a 150% increase over the previous year's culling numbers. Improvements in the implementation of these activities in recent years have resulted in an increased number of wild boars shot, trapped, and killed in the restricted zones (see Table 5 in Annex II for more details).
46. Local operational groups coordinate depopulation activities in restricted zones. These groups comprise technical staff from local health authorities, regional directorates of veterinary public health, agriculture and the environment, provincial police, and others. In the region visited, all activities were conducted under the strict control of the provincial police.
47. In restricted zones in Lombardy, authorities conduct control and culling

Only the culling of wild boar is allowed in ASF-infected areas, thus limiting the handling of carcasses and the risk of spreading the disease

operations two to three times a week to reduce the wild boar population as much as possible, thereby lowering density and eradicating the disease. A similar situation was noted in the provinces of Piacenza and Parma in the Emilia-Romagna region.

In general, well organised culling activities in ASF-infected areas, with some areas not achieving their targets	48. In most cases, the level of cooperation between all relevant authorities and stakeholders is excellent, which contributed to the rapid reduction or stabilization of the wild boar population in many affected areas (e.g. south of Lombardy, northwest of Emilia-Romagna, zones II in Campania and Calabria). However, this process seems to have deteriorated in some affected areas (e.g. southeast of Piedmont, south of Liguria), hindering progress with the control and eradication of ASF. 49. Efforts are ongoing to create a system that can accurately estimate the wild porcine animal population throughout Italy. Once available, this population data will be used to calculate hunting quotas in each area to achieve the stated density target of 0.15 wild porcine animals/km².
--	--

Biosecurity in hunting grounds

Biosecurity in hunting grounds implemented and officially controlled	50. Current national legislation on biosecurity requirements for wild boar management in affected areas is based on the Ordinance of the ASF Commissioner. 51. Bioregulators conducting culling activities in restricted zones include companies specifically appointed for this task, provincial police, and qualified wildlife control operators, with the authorisation of the ASF Commissioner. All personnel involved in depopulation activities in restricted and Viral Expansion Control (CEV) areas³ must undergo special biosecurity training in wild boar management. Operators active in restricted zones II and III are not permitted to hunt wild boar in restricted zone I, the CEV area, or unaffected areas. 52. Within the restricted zones in the Lombardy region, , the local authority has designated five storage centres that comply with Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council. These centres have facilities, areas, and equipment for sampling, storage, and the administrative processes required to manage wild boar carcasses. The provincial police or an authorised company delivers the carcasses to these storage centres for sampling. Subsequently, the carcasses are transported to a disposal facility as Category I animal by-product material. Similar structures are also in place in the Emilia Romagna region. 53. Hunting management areas implement a biosecurity management plan, detailing authorised personnel (bioregulators such as hunters and operators), designated carcass handling and storage facilities, and specific
--	--

³ For more on CEV, see finding no. 86

biosecurity procedures. Implementing this plan was a prerequisite for the authorisation of the visited hunting lodge to operate in the ASF restricted zone. The hunting lodge stored carcasses from restricted zones while awaiting laboratory results. Once results confirmed a negative outcome, the meat was used for personal consumption. In the Emilia-Romagna region, meat from wild boars shot in restricted zone I was also permitted for direct supply.

54. Carcasses must be transported under strict biosecurity conditions. Field evisceration and on-site organ disposal is prohibited. Entire carcasses are placed in leak-proof, rigid containers made from metal or plastic. Sampling and evisceration are only allowed in authorised facilities and performed by a veterinarian or supervised trained personnel. The centre and hunting lodge visited by the audit team complied with these requirements. Each carcass was individually tagged and sampled under the strict supervision of the provincial police.

Wild boar carcasses traceable and tested for ASF in the restricted zones

55. The audit team also visited a game-handling establishment that collects wild boars from restricted zone I. This establishment operates under local authority supervision and control, complies with the relevant hygiene requirements, and adheres to the rules for wild boars from ASF-restricted zones. It maintains appropriate traceability records, and the harvested meat is used solely for the hunters' personal consumption.

8 EARLY DETECTION AND SURVEILLANCE

The authority runs regular ASF awareness activities and maintains good communication with farmers and hunters, which results in early reporting. Most outbreaks in domestic pigs were detected through prompt notification or continuous surveillance. However, some operators still hesitate to report suspicion, and the implementation of continuous surveillance is sometimes insufficient. On some farms, sampling rules were not followed, or movements were authorised without the required tests, which weakens early detection of the disease.

Wild boar surveillance is generally well organised. Testing of found-dead animals and targeted carcass searches with trained dogs have increased sensitivity and reduced environmental contamination in several areas. But in parts of restricted zone II, too few carcasses are found due to limited staff and the lack of incentives to report. This lowers surveillance sensitivity and creates uncertainty about the real disease situation.

The network of designated official laboratories provides timely, reliable and accredited support for ASF surveillance, with short turnaround times. It also provides technical support for surveillance and eradication.

Awareness

Targeted awareness campaigns

56. The competent authority has invested significant resources into information campaigns/meetings with farmers, hunters, and the general public. The competent authority's website contains information and guidance for relevant groups, e.g., hunters and farmers. <https://www.salute.gov.it/new/it/tema/peste->

57. There is regular communication with other relevant authorities and with hunting associations.

Surveillance in domestic pigs

Passive surveillance further enhanced in ASF restricted zones

58. The authorities rely on passive surveillance for both kept pigs and wild boars. Consequently, all planned ASF controls in domestic pigs - including surveillance, enhanced surveillance, and pre-movement tests - are conducted on deceased or suspected animals.
59. According to the eradication plan, the authorities systematically sample animals that have died spontaneously. This involves sampling at least two dead animals per week from each region or autonomous province, particularly from holdings with up to 50 animals. These samples are evenly divided between family and commercial farms or are taken from holdings identified as higher risk. The available data confirms the implementation of this surveillance. Therefore, recommendation no 2 from the previous audit was addressed.
60. The surveillance plan in infected territories includes enhanced passive surveillance measures, with regular sampling and testing of dead animals. Moreover, farms are permitted to move pigs only if they meet the requirements for continuous surveillance and prior movement testing.
61. Awareness campaigns and the implementation of continuous surveillance on pig farms have improved the effectiveness of surveillance and early disease detection (see Tables 6 and 7 in Annex II for more details).

Continuous surveillance on pig farms implemented with some weaknesses

62. The available data show a good level of compliance with continuous surveillance on farms. IT systems enhance record-keeping and monitoring of implementation. Official veterinarians exclusively collect samples, ensuring their traceability. The authorities have not reported any delays in the notification of suspicions by business operators or private veterinarians, except for one instance in 2023, which resulted in the spread of infection between farms and a subsequent cluster of outbreaks.
63. The audit team reviewed the implementation of continuous monitoring on several randomly selected farms. Generally, farms adhered adequately to the required scheme. However, at one farm, the official veterinarian frequently sampled only one carcass instead of the required two, despite mortality records indicating more than one pig death during the same monitoring period. Additionally, the same official veterinarian certified the consignment of pigs moved under derogation without sampling any pigs within the 72-hour window required by national rules. The decision to allow these movements was based on a sample taken a week earlier, despite reports of several dead pigs during that time.
64. Furthermore, there were instances where official veterinarians permitted the movement of pigs without any samples taken or tested in the weeks preceding movement. Records in the central database confirmed no mortality during that

period on the farms. However, the authorities have not made use of the opportunity to issue instructions requiring pathogen identification tests to be conducted before the movement of consignments from the establishment of dispatch, as stipulated in Article 15(1)(c) of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594⁴.

65. Most outbreaks were detected through active continuous surveillance and enhanced passive surveillance in protection and surveillance zones around the outbreaks, highlighting their importance in overall surveillance, particularly at the early stages of infection on farms when the signs of the disease are not obvious.

Surveillance in wild porcine animals

- | | |
|--|---|
| Passive surveillance in wild boar strengthened in ASF restricted zones | <ol style="list-style-type: none">66. All found dead wild porcine animals in Italy are tested for ASF by PCR tests. In addition, all hunted and culled wild boar in restriction zones are tested for ASF with PCR tests.67. In the restriction zones, the authorities apply enhanced passive surveillance, based on raised awareness, and intensive active searches for wild boar carcasses. |
| Active search for carcasses using trained dogs proved to be effective | <ol style="list-style-type: none">68. Active carcass searches using dogs are planned and conducted in restricted zones, following a harmonised methodology. The active search targets high-risk areas, focusing on CEV zones, areas with a dynamic epidemiological situation, and in 2025 also the 1 km radius around pig farms with more than 500 pigs, located within 10 km of the confirmed ASF cases in wild boar population. The data showed that this enhanced surveillance using dogs increased sensitivity and resulted in the detection of more carcasses (for more see Table 5 in Annex II). In addition, this active search helps reduce environmental contamination in the areas, thereby decreasing the virus load and the likelihood of further infections in wild boars and, subsequently, domestic pigs.69. The authorities reported limited effectiveness in conducting carcass searches using only manpower, without trained dogs. They acknowledged that these searches have recently yielded fewer carcasses compared to searches with trained dogs and have been more difficult to organize due to a shortage of human resources, particularly with fewer volunteers than at the beginning of the epidemic. It also impacts effectiveness of enhanced passive surveillance, as was acknowledged by colleagues from the regions. In addition, no financial incentives were put in place to report found-dead wild boar to further motivate the public and professionals, and increase passive surveillance, as witnessed in some Member States. This led to fewer wild boar carcasses being found in |

⁴ In its response to the draft report, the authority stated that all movements to and from ASF restricted zones are subject to evaluation and approval by the local authorities of departure and destination. The required health requirements are verified for each individual movement, as verified during the audit. If there is no mortality, and therefore pre-movement sampling is not possible, the official veterinarian will verify the absence of mortality during the pre-movement clinical examination, recording this information in the documentation accompanying the consignment of animals, as verified during the audit.

Passive surveillance in certain areas suffers from lack of resources and is not sufficiently sensitive	certain areas and reduced the overall sensibility of the surveillance, such as in the restricted zones in the Calabria and Piedmont region (see Maps 2 Graphs 1 and 2 in Annex II for more details). This is not in line with Articles 26(2) and (4), and 27 of Regulation (EU) 2016/429, and Article 4(1)(b) of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689. 70. In areas free of ASF, the authorities rely on passive surveillance. No tests were conducted for wild boars hunted in these areas. In September 2025, authorities began conducting tests within the 10 km border of restriction Zone I. Authorized hunters perform sampling under supervision to ensure proper sample handling, data entry into the veterinary system, and meat traceability. The results for the Lombardy region confirmed an increase in the number of wild boars tested under passive surveillance over the past three years.
--	--

Laboratories	
Network of official designated laboratories under adequate control	71. The NRL for ASF is located at the Experimental Zooprophyllaxis Institute (<i>Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale</i>) in Perugia. It is accredited by ISO/IEC 17025:2018, and all ASF testing methods fall under this accreditation. 72. Recently, the NRL has achieved satisfactory results in the annual proficiency tests organized by the EU Reference Laboratory for ASF, including polymerase chain reaction (PCR), enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), and virus isolation in cell culture.
Reliability of laboratory results assured via regular participation in proficiency tests	73. Twenty laboratories within the Experimental Zooprophyllaxis Institute network perform PCR testing for ASF. Nineteen of these laboratories are accredited for the ASF Real-Time PCR method. The remaining laboratory, covering a non-infected area, will begin the accreditation process next month. 74. All 20 laboratories participate in annual interlaboratory comparison tests organized by the NRL. In 2023 and 2024, they achieved satisfactory results, except for three laboratories in 2023 that each produced one non-compliant result. These laboratories addressed the issues by taking corrective actions and retesting with a second set of samples, which yielded compliant results. 75. The NRL supervises laboratories through regular audits. It conducted a survey in 2023, and in 2024 it performed a gap-analysis exercise in all laboratories to assess the management of biosafety systems. 76. The turnaround time from sampling to final results is generally very short. Laboratories aim to provide results on the same day they receive the samples. This is confirmed by data analysis available from the Commission's animal disease information system. 77. Recommendation no. 6 from the previous audit required all laboratories conducting confirmatory ASF tests to be accredited for the relevant method. This recommendation has been addressed: according to the competent authority, the only laboratory not accredited for the PCR method does not conduct ASF

confirmations and will not do so until it obtains accreditation.

9 DISEASE CONTROL AND ERADICATION MEASURES

Appropriate contingency plans and other procedures help ensure the correct response to, and control of ASF outbreaks.

During recent clusters of outbreaks in domestic pigs, procedures were correctly applied, and tracing was effective. However, delays in culling and carcass disposal at larger farms showed that resources were not always sufficient when several outbreaks occurred simultaneously. Failures in daily biosecurity practices also contributed to the spread within affected areas. Authorities limited the geographical spread of ASF by prioritising outbreak management based on risk assessment.

Measures to contain the disease in wild boar populations have had mixed results. In several regions, coordinated management, rapid detection and the use of natural or artificial barriers have slowed the spread and, in some southern areas, brought the disease under control or close to eradication. In other regions, delays in installing barriers, challenging terrain and high wild boar density have limited progress. In parts of Piedmont, Liguria and Emilia-Romagna, the epidemiological situation remains uncertain, increasing the risk of further spread to neighbouring areas.

ASF contingency planning - national plan and operations manual, and resources available

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Updated contingency plan and operational manuals in place</p> | <p>78. The veterinary authorities at all administrative levels drew up contingency plans and operational manuals with suitable measures to contain and control the disease in domestic pigs and in wild boar. These are adapted and applied according to their responsibilities, in the event of confirmed ASF outbreaks.</p> <p>79. Plans and operation manuals were updated based on changes to EU legislation and the experience gained combatting ASF. For example, instructions for ASF were updated in February 2025.</p> |
|--|---|

Suspected and confirmed ASF outbreaks in domestic pigs and wild porcine animals

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>The ASF outbreaks are well controlled</p> | <p>80. The audit team reviewed several outbreak files from 2023 and 2024, including epidemiological investigation reports, and noted that authorities followed the appropriate procedures and legal requirements. However, during outbreaks at larger pig farms, resource shortages delayed culling and carcass disposal for up to 31 days. This resulted in authorities prioritising outbreaks with a higher risk of spreading infection⁵.</p> |
|--|--|

⁵ In its response to the draft report, the authority stated that regarding outbreak management timelines, it is specified that the resources identified as lacking are not those deployed by local authorities, but are linked to the lack of companies on the market capable of providing necessary services (culling and carcass disposal). Furthermore, outbreak management timelines are also linked to a risk assessment and spatial analysis, which have led to the activation of culling procedures that are not necessarily coherent with the chronological progression of the outbreaks.

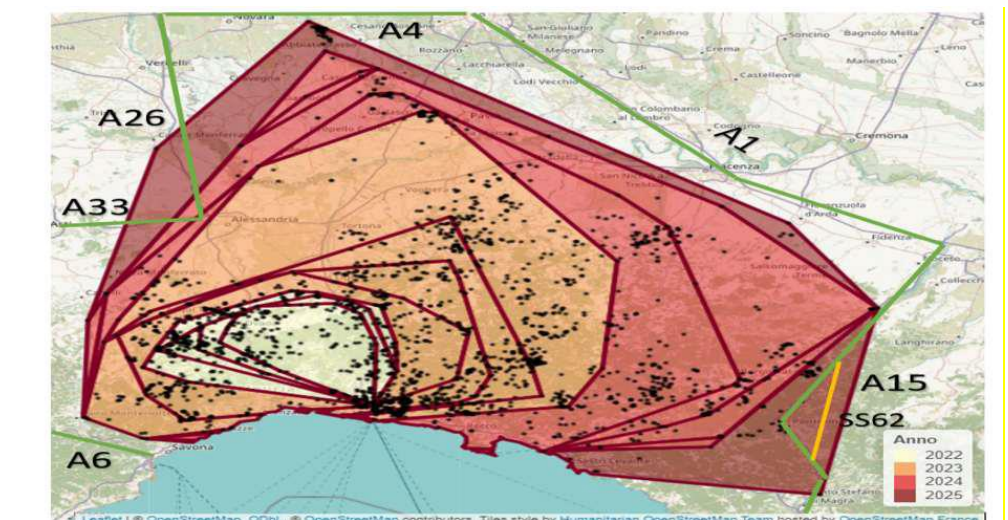
Professional and detailed epidemiological inquiries confirmed weaknesses in biosecurity on affected farms

81. During the summers of 2023 and 2024, epidemiological investigations in the Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna regions showed that initial cases originated from infected wild boars. Outbreaks in both years clustered due to several risk factors, primarily frequent contact with people and vehicles. Many of the infected farms were either owner-operated by the same individual or were part of the same supply chain. Failures in daily biosecurity practices, especially in cleaning and disinfection, facilitated the disease's spread. Improper positioning and use of mandatory hygienic filters and the inadequate separation of farms into 'dirty' and 'clean' zones were noted. Similar issues were noted in the NAS reports mentioned in section 7 "Preventive Measures". Tracing was performed quickly and efficiently. Another significant risk factor was the increase in agricultural activities in the area, such as grass cutting and cereal harvesting.

82. To contain the infected wild animal population and restrict the movement of potentially infected animals, authorities are reinforcing existing natural and artificial barriers and installing new ones. These barriers are placed along routes identified through risk analyses and predictive models that highlight areas at risk of infection.

Ongoing activities related to the containment of infection in wild boars have not yet prevented the spread of infection to new areas

83. The map below illustrates the containment efforts in northern Italy since 2022, showing the extension of fenced areas and the further spread of infection southwest of existing barriers. The spread is attributed to delays in the installation of barriers, the proximity of the infection to these barriers at the time, the high density of wild boar, and the challenging mountainous terrain. Authorities are actively working to construct new barriers to prevent further spread.



84. Although there are initiatives at central level to limit the spread of the disease in specific areas, such as towards Tuscany, the evolution of ASF in some regions is still concerning. This is not in line with Article 70 of Regulation (EU) 2016/429, and Article 56 and point (g) of Annex IV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. The epidemiological situation in parts of Piedmont, Liguria, and Emilia-Romagna remains uncertain despite commendable control efforts, posing a potential risk of the disease re-emerging in areas of Lombardy. The authority had not fully addressed recommendation no. 3 of the previous

audit on the confinement of the infected wild porcine animal meta population.

85. Fencing and other barriers were also used to contain ASF outbreaks in southern Italy, helping to slow the spread and protect nearby regions. The disease is under control or nearly eradicated in some areas thanks to coordinated efforts to quickly detect the disease and significantly reduce the wild boar population, as well as through artificial geographic barriers.
86. In addition to the barriers, authorities have established CEV areas where wild boar hunting is prohibited (see Map 1 in Annex I for details). The aim is to create 'white zones' by reducing the wild boar population and preventing the further spread of infection. Within the CEV areas, wildlife control activities were authorized such as cages or traps. These activities also include the use of vehicles for searches and selective shooting from fixed positions.
87. Depopulation activities in the CEV areas are conducted by appointed companies, the armed forces, the provincial police, specialized companies, and qualified wildlife control operators in designated areas. Additional personnel authorized by the ASF Commissioner can also participate. Everyone involved must receive appropriate biosecurity training from the local competent authority.
88. All wild boars testing positive for ASF are disposed of under veterinary supervision, typically collected by rendering plants.

10 CONTAINMENT MEASURES AND TRADE RESTRICTIONS

While the authorisation and monitoring systems for pig movements within and outside ASF restriction zones are robust and stricter than EU regulatory requirements, their effectiveness is limited by deficiencies in biosecurity and inconsistencies in continuous surveillance at some farms.

Authorities implement comprehensive control measures for meat and meat products, including risk-based inspections and supervision. This reliable system ensures that all meat and meat products, whether for personal consumption or commercial supply, comply with EU and national requirements and minimise the risk of the spread of ASF.

Control of movement of live pigs, semen, ova and embryos

Detailed written procedures to check the implementation of the requirements of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594

89. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 was published on 17 March 2023 and outlines conditions that establishments in restricted zones must meet to move live pigs and their meat: a) outside the restricted zone, which was already regulated as per Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/605, and b) within the restricted zone, which was added per Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594.
90. Italy started implementing of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 in phases, experiencing some delays. The process began with a circular letter announcing major changes from Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/605 to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, published in June 2023.

are implemented with some delays

91. In October 2023, the two competent Directorates General for Animal Health and Food Safety created guidelines and decision-making schemes for movement derogations and special authorisations under Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. This initiative supported the competent authorities in issuing derogations to move pigs, products, and byproducts of animal origin from ASF restriction zones. It also ensured clearer and more uniform procedures for designating plants, marking, certification, and the destination of these products according to the general and specific requirements of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594.

Strengthening movement restriction during high-risk period

92. Following the outbreaks in domestic pigs in 2023 and 2024, authorities implemented extraordinary control and surveillance measures on pig movements. Emergency measures were regularly updated based on risk levels. During the epidemic's initial phase, restrictions on the movement of pigs and pig products were enforced, including additional pre-movement testing and further restrictions. These measures imposed stricter conditions on movements, exceeding the requirements of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. As the epidemiological situation improved, bans were gradually lifted, and movement derogations were allowed.

Movements of live pigs are only allowed from establishments that comply with the relevant requirements of Regulation 2023/594

93. To authorize pig movements as detailed in section 7, "Preventive Measures", local authorities inspect farms to ensure they meet the movement derogation requirements of the ASF regulation. During these inspections, compliance with biosecurity requirements set out in national legislation and the ASF regulation is verified. The frequency of farm inspections complies with requirements outlined in the ASF regulation; inspections are more frequent in restriction zones I and II, occurring every 90 days rather than twice a year.

94. Not all commercial farms in the ASF restricted zones have biosecurity plans approved by authorities, and not all conduct continuous surveillance. However, movements outside of derogations are allowed solely for depopulation purposes and must comply with Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 rules for meat originating from protection or surveillance zones surrounding the outbreak. As mentioned in previous sections, ASF has significantly reduced the number of commercial farms operating in the restricted zones, as many ceased their production due to outbreak challenges.

95. Authorities verify the implementation of continuous surveillance before movements. This involves testing the first two pigs over 60 days old that have died, or, if none are available, any pigs over 20 kg that have died in each epidemiological unit. In breeding establishments, all dead boars and sows must be sampled. However, these instructions differ from the ASF regulation, which mandates weekly testing of at least the first two dead pigs over 60 days old, or, if none are available, any weaned pigs that die, regardless of weight, in each epidemiological unit. Authorities implemented the 20 kg limit for practical record-keeping reasons.

96. Movements depend on a favourable outcome of pre-movement checks, which include assessing mortality data recorded in the national database, a favourable clinical inspection within 24 hours before movement, and a negative ASF test result on spleens collected within the 72 hours preceding movement. The audit

team noted good compliance with pre-movement checks, except for instances described earlier in the report.

97. Since May 2024, the Lombardy Region has used a dedicated portal to efficiently manage requests for derogations related to the movement of pigs within and outside restriction zones. This portal records and oversees all such movements, enabling local authorities at both departure and destination points to verify derogation requests and ensure compliance with the relevant Articles of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. The farmer receives the derogation authorisation by email once local and regional authorities have completed the necessary checks and authorized the movement.
98. Through this portal, users can track animal movements and numbers for breeding or slaughter and review the requirements for each movement according to the protocol shared with the Ministry of health and other regions. The data show an increasing number of derogations granted in the Lombardy region (see also Table 8 in Annex II).
99. The audit team reviewed several movement derogations and the conditions under which they were granted. In the Lombardy region, the information systems facilitated effective and efficient verification. The records demonstrated adequate adherence to the rules.
100. In Emilia-Romagna, movement derogations are granted by email. Local authorities issue these derogations once the conditions stipulated in Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, national legislation, and instructions are met.
101. However, as discussed in Section 7 "Preventive Measures", compliance with biosecurity requirements remains a significant issue not fully addressed by authorities. The outbreaks clustered in the summer of 2023 and 2024 due to insufficient farm protection, and evidence of continued non-compliance particularly noted during NAS inspections, undermine progress in improving biosecurity, especially for daily operations on pig farms. Furthermore, weaknesses also exist in implementing continuous surveillance. Granting derogations for pig movements from farms lacking full protection or adequate ASF surveillance increases the risk of spreading infection. This is not in line with Articles 9(3) and 22 to 31 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. Therefore, the authority had not fully addressed recommendation No 4 from the previous audit on specific prohibitions of movements of consignments of porcine animals kept in restricted zones I, II and III within and outside those restricted zones.

An unknown number of pig establishments in restricted zones are being incorrectly approved as complying with all the relevant requirements of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594

Control of fresh meat, meat preparations, meat products and animal by-products from domestic pigs

There is a system to designate establishments in accordance

102. The authorities have introduced and regularly implemented effective measures and strict official controls according to plan, to prevent the spread of ASF through the marketing of meat and meat products, including trade with other Member States.

with Articles 16 and 44 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594

103. In the visited establishments, operators applied for designation under Articles 16 and 44 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 by submitting applications to the competent authority. The authority then inspected the establishments based on written procedures. Current lists of all designated establishments (separated into lists for Articles 19(6) and 44(1)) are available on the authority's website⁶.

104. To maintain these requirements, each local authority schedules and conducts documented, periodic risk-based inspections of designated facilities within its jurisdiction. These inspections ensure the ongoing compliance with the technical and management requirements established in the ministerial note. Therefore, the authority has addressed the deficiencies under recommendation no. 5 from the previous audit.

Control of carcasses, fresh meat, meat preparations and meat products from feral pigs

There is a control system in place regarding meat from hunted wild porcine animals

105. A reliable system ensures that all hunted or culled wild porcine carcasses are tested for ASF as required before leaving the hunting grounds. The audit team verified this at several locations during the audit.

106. Operators adhere to the rules for private domestic use and the supply of small quantities of wild boar meat to final consumers or local retail establishments. They comply with EU restrictions and derogations for restricted zones I, II, and III.

107. In Lombardy, only meat for personal consumption is allowed; commercialisation is prohibited in restricted zones. In Emilia-Romagna, meat from restricted zone I can be supplied directly after obtaining a negative ASF result, which is line with the requirements of the ASF Regulation.

108. The hunting lodges and wild game handling establishments visited are authorised or designated according to relevant national rules and Regulations (EC) Nos 852/2004 and 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and Article 44 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594.

⁶ <https://www.vetinfo.it/>.

11 SUPERVISION AND VERIFICATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

Multiple layers of supervision and monitoring support the understanding and timely adaptation of measures and actions taken. Daily reviews of data, regional reporting, technical meetings, and coordination with the NAS help verify implementation of official controls.

However, delays in conducting audits on regional activities limit transparency, hinders harmonised implementation of strategies and policies (e.g. biosecurity checks and movement derogations), and reduce insight into regional preparedness and coordination, particularly for activities affecting shared wild boar populations.

Internal audits conducted in 2023	109. Following the 2023 audit, the central authority conducted internal audits in Lombardy, Piedmont, and Tuscany. Two more audits were planned for 2024 in Lazio and Calabria. However, the ongoing emergency has halted further audits, hindering the thorough verification of measures and implemented actions.
On-going meetings of central authorities with the affected regions	110. The central office has started a series of technical meetings with each region affected by ASF, to discuss the status of regional eradication plans and broader ASF management activities. The minutes from these meetings highlight a wide range of discussions and major challenges faced in combating the disease. 111. Additionally, the central authority monitors measures and actions against ASF daily by reviewing data through specialised information systems. Various surveillance activities are checked, and regions and local authorities report this information using the formats and systems developed by the central authority.
Daily monitoring of ASF activities	112. As mentioned earlier, the central authority and the ASF Commissioner collaborate with the NAS to combat food fraud, ensure biosecurity in pig farms, and verify the health standards of pig farms in ASF-restricted areas. 113. Regions and local authorities schedule annual biosecurity inspections in establishments as part of the official control framework, using the methodology developed by Classyfarm. The central authority oversees these control activities via the Classyfarm system dashboard. 114. During their visits, the audit team noted that regional authorities closely monitor the activities of local authorities.
Inter-regional communication not always effective for daily activities, in particular for the management of wild boars in ASF-restricted zones	115. Therefore, based on findings 109 to 114, the authority has acted on recommendation no. 7 from the previous audit. 116. As noted in finding 47, cooperation between all relevant authorities and stakeholders is adequate. However, the audit team noted limited communication on wild boar culling activities between provinces in different regions that border each other in restricted zones. The central authorities and the ASF Commissioner plan to improve coordination through inter-regional meetings. Nonetheless, direct and frequent communication among key actors in areas sharing the same wild boar population could make the measures more effective.

12 CLOSING MEETING

The audit team held a closing meeting with the competent authority, including relevant regional offices, on 29 September 2025. The audit team presented the main findings and preliminary conclusions of the audit. During this meeting, the competent authority did not indicate any disagreement with them.

13 RECOMMENDATIONS

The competent authorities are invited to provide, within 25 working days of receipt of the report, details of the actions taken and planned, including deadlines for their completion (“action plan”), aimed at addressing the recommendation set out below.

No.	Recommendation
1	To take appropriate actions to improve the effectiveness of the biosecurity measures applied by operators of pig establishments, by a) evaluating their suitability to mitigate the prevailing risk factors, and b) applying official controls to verify their proper application. Thus, they will be able to prevent the introduction and minimise the spread of ASF, particularly in ASF-restricted areas. Articles 10(1)(a)(iii) and (b), (4) and (5), and 11(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2016/429; Article 16(1), point (b)(i) and Annex III to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. Articles 5(1)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625. Recommendation based on conclusions 3 and 10, and associated findings 32, 81, and 101.
2	According to Article 56 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, to ensure that the targets of the national action plan for wild porcine animals are set considering the actual numbers and reflecting “reality”, thus being able to achieve them, particularly concerning the reduction of the wild porcine animal population and the confinement of infected wild porcine animal meta population. Article 70 of Regulation (EU) 2016/429. Articles 56 and points (e), (g) and (l) of Annex IV to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. Recommendation based on conclusion 4 and associated findings 36, 38 to 42, and 84.
3	The competent authority should ensure that movements of live pigs from establishments in ASF-restricted zones are only taking place when compliant with all the relevant requirements of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, including those for movement derogations. Articles 9(3) and 22 to 31 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. Recommendation based on conclusion 10 and associated finding 101.
4	To design and implement surveillance for ASF in wild boars in a way that is appropriate and proportionate to the pursued objectives and to the risk factors involved to ensure the timely detection of the disease. Articles 26(2) and (4), and 27 of Regulation (EU) 2016/429. Article 4(1)(b) of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689. Recommendation based on conclusion 7 and associated finding 69.

ANNEX 1 - LEGAL REFERENCES

Legal Reference	Official Journal	Title
Reg. 2016/429	OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1–208	Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law')
Reg. 2020/2002	OJ L 412, 8.12.2020, p. 1–28	Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2002 of 7 December 2020 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union notification and Union reporting of listed diseases, to formats and procedures for submission and reporting of Union surveillance programmes and of eradication programmes and for application for recognition of disease-free status, and to the computerised information system
Reg. 2020/686	OJ L 174, 3.6.2020, p. 1– 63	Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/686 of 17 December 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the approval of germinal product establishments and the traceability and animal health requirements for movements within the Union of germinal products of certain kept terrestrial animals
Reg. 2021/520	OJ L 104, 25.3.2021, p. 39–51	Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/520 of 24 March 2021 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to the traceability of certain kept terrestrial animals
Reg. 2018/1882	OJ L 308, 4.12.2018, p. 21–29	Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/1882 of 3 December 2018 on the application of certain disease prevention and control rules to categories of listed diseases and establishing a list of species and groups of species posing a considerable risk for the spread of those listed diseases
Reg. 2019/2035	OJ L 314, 5.12.2019, p. 115–169	Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/2035 of 28 June 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards rules for establishments keeping terrestrial animals and hatcheries, and the traceability of certain kept terrestrial animals and hatching eggs
Reg. 2017/625	OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, p. 1– 142	Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products, amending Regulations (EC) No 999/2001, (EC) No 396/2005, (EC) No 1069/2009, (EC) No 1107/2009, (EU) No 1151/2012, (EU) No 652/2014, (EU) 2016/429 and (EU) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulations (EC) No 1/2005 and (EC) No 1099/2009 and Council Directives 98/58/EC, 1999/74/EC, 2007/43/EC, 2008/119/EC and 2008/120/EC, and repealing Regulations (EC) No 854/2004 and (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Directives 89/608/EEC, 89/662/EEC, 90/425/EEC, 91/496/EEC, 96/23/EC, 96/93/EC and 97/78/EC and Council Decision 92/438/EEC (Official Controls Regulation)
Reg. 2023/594	OJ L 79, 17.3.2023, p. 65–150	Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 of 16 March 2023 laying down special disease control measures for African swine fever and repealing Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/605

Legal Reference	Official Journal	Title
Reg. 2021/605	OJ L 129, 15.4.2021, p. 1–64	Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/605 of 7 April 2021 laying down special control measures for African swine fever
Reg. 2020/687	OJ L 174, 3.6.2020, p. 64–139	Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 of 17 December 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and the Council, as regards rules for the prevention and control of certain listed diseases
Reg. 1069/2009	OJ L 300, 14.11.2009, p. 1-33	Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 (Animal by-products Regulation)
Reg. 2020/689	OJ L 174, 3.6.2020, p. 211–340	Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689 of 17 December 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards rules for surveillance, eradication programmes, and disease-free status for certain listed and emerging diseases

ANNEX 2 – STATISTICAL DATA

Table 1. Data on the number of registered establishments keeping pigs in Italy

		31/12/2022	31/12/2023	31/12/2024
Commercial establishments	Number of establishments ¹	29.398	27.079	26.056
	Number of kept pigs	8.441.377	8.131.841	7.861.965
	Number of kept wild boar	7.202	6.538	8.255
Non-commercial establishments (<i>Family establishment*</i>)	Number of establishments ²	86.628	70.636	66.958
	Number of kept pigs	33.411	29.835	29.289
	Number of kept wild boar	120	121	117
Total numbers	Establishments	116.026	97.715	93.014
	Kept Pigs	8.474.788	8.161.676	7.891.254
	Kept wild boars	7.322	6.659	8.372
'Outdoor farms' establishments (<i>Semi-free-range farm**</i>)		7.768	6.570	6.266
Number of pigs/wild boar kept in 'outdoor farms' establishments		133.711	125.256	122.375

* Family Establishment: non- commercial establishments which are allowed to keep up to four pigs for fattening purposes and for their own consumption. This category includes establishments keeping pigs not designated for food production ("non-DPA"), with a maximum of two pigs.

** Semi-free-range farms: animals kept mainly outdoors in the most favourable seasons and fed mainly by natural resources.

Table 2. The total number of wild boars shot in Italy between February 1, 2015, and January 31, 2024.

Year	Hunting	culling	total
2015	205.891	34.757	240.648
2016	242.739	39.622	282.361
2017	246.427	45.535	291.962
2018	223.632	41.023	264.655
2019	253.705	39.824	293.529
2020	227.227	43.940	271.167
2021	319.681	56.161	375.842
2022	281.531	57.673	339.204
2023	288.013	70.241	358.254
2024*	167.109	46.033	213.142

* Data is only available for 11 out of 20 regions: Calabria, Emilia-Romagna (ER), Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG), Liguria, Piedmont, Tuscany, Trento, Bolzano, Umbria, Aosta Valley, and Veneto

Table 3. Data on wild boars harvested between February 1, 2024, and January 31, 2025 by regions.

Region	Plan	Hunting	Culling	total
Abruzzo	28,000			14.157
Basilicata	27,000			12.086
Bolzano	Not defined			8
Calabria	43,000			38.383
Campania	38,000			1264
Emilia Romagna	52,000			18.091
Friuli Venezia Giulia	9,100			5.132
Latium	48,000			1.542
Liguria	42,000			10.505
Lombardy	27,000			18,161
Marches	42,000			321
Molise	10,500			0
Piedmont	58,000			28.932
Apulia	4,000			489

Sardinia		473
Sicily	9,500	2.843
Toscana	113,000	74.460
Trento	1,500	504
Umbria	44,000	29.147
Aosta Valley	2,000	385
Veneto	13,400	7.519
Total	612,000	

Table 4. The number of wild boars culled in the different restriction zones during the two hunting seasons (1 October to 31 January).

	2023 / 2024 hunting season			2024 / 2025 hunting season		
	Restricted Zone I	Restricted Zone II	Restricted Zone III	Restricted Zone I	Restricted Zone II	Restricted Zone III
Number of culled wild boars	6 481	3 581	144	5 113	4 323	245

Table 5. Total number of wild boars found dead/hunted/culled on an annual basis in restricted zones

Year	Restriction Zone	Found Dead	Hunted	Total
2023	I	402	6 218	6 620
	II	942	4 709	5 651
	III	24	52	76
Total		1 368	10 979	12 347
Year	Restriction Zone	Found Dead	Hunted	Total
2024	I	564	8 886	9 450
	II	1 844	10 537	12 381
	III	56	331	387
Total		2 464	19 754	22 218

Map 1. Viral Expansion Control Areas (CEV Areas) in Northern Italy where wild boar hunting is prohibited.

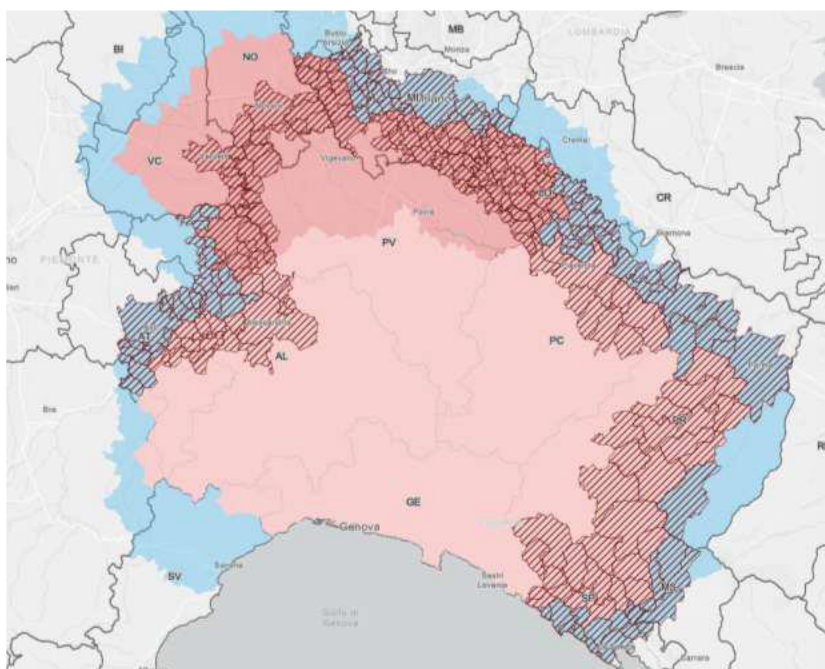


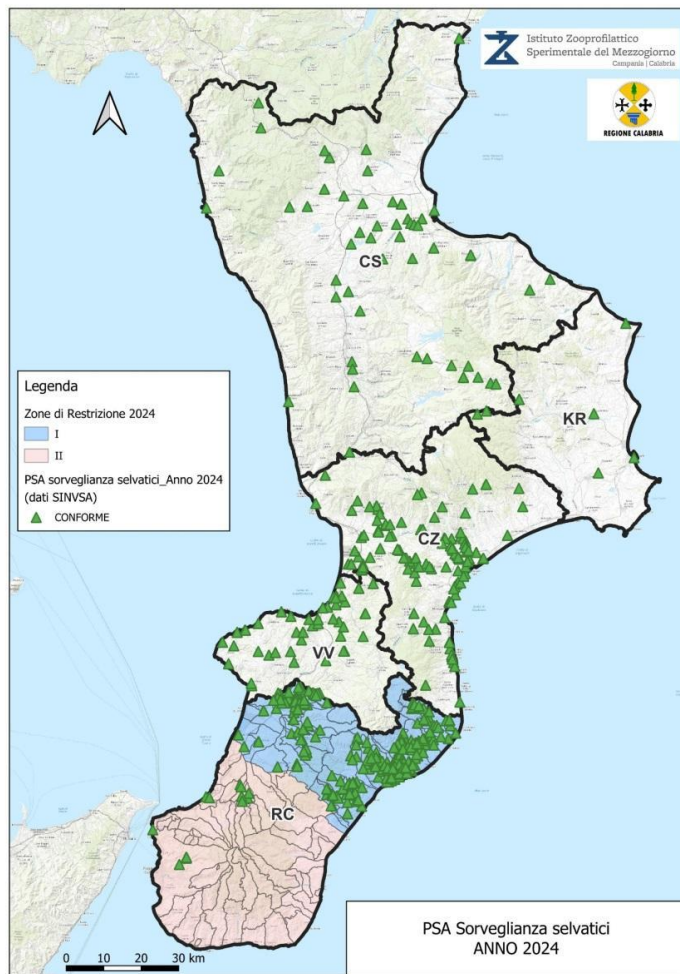
Table 6. Results of Surveillance for ASF in 2023 and 2024 in Italy

	Surveillance (suspects)			
	Number of establishments tested	Number of pigs tested	Number of positives establishments	Number of positives tests
2023	45	162	16	51
2024	38	348	31	76

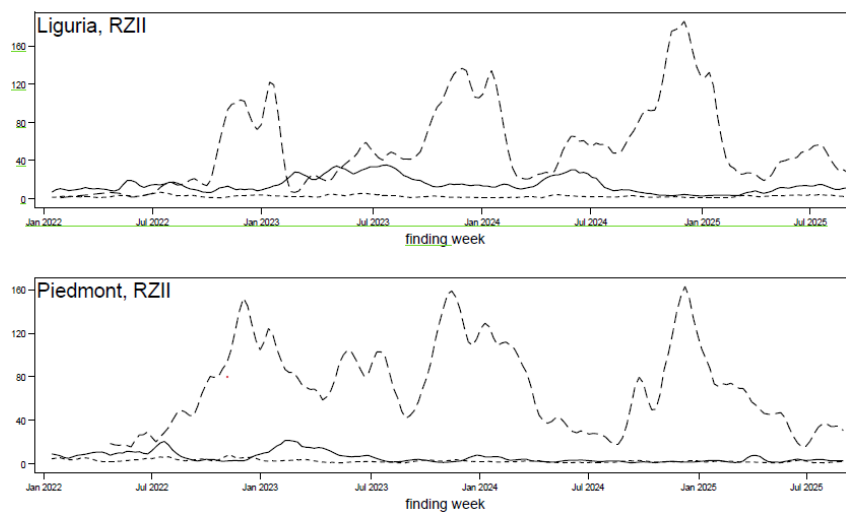
Table 7. The number of establishments and dead pigs tested for ASF in passive surveillance activities, including continuous surveillance as per Article 16.c.ii of Regulation 2023/594.

		Carcasses tested under Article 16(c)(ii) of 2021/ 605		
	Number of establishments tested	Number of carcasses tested	Number of positives establishments	Number of positives tests
2023	2 179	11 493	16	51
2024	1 988	22 751	31	76

Map 2. ASF surveillance in wild boars in the region of Calabria in 2024.



Graphs 1 and 2. ASF surveillance in Liguria and Piedmont



Dash = culled/hunted
Short dash = road kills
Solid line = found dead.

Table 8. Number of derogation requests and approvals in Lombardy

	Numbers of requests of derogation for pig movements			Numbers of granted derogations		
	To Slaughterhouses	To other establishments	TOTAL	To Slaughterhouses	To other establishments	TOTAL
2023	39	56	95	38	44	82
2024	2 312	1 291	3 603	1 985	950	2 935
2025	4 255	1 137	5 392	2 857	970	3 827