



African swine fever (ASF) virus in wild boars in Belgium: Update of the situation

I. History

The presence of the ASF virus on the Belgian territory has been confirmed by the identification of the virus in 2 wild boar in the Southern part of Belgium, close to the French border, on 13 September 2018. Before this re-emergence, ASF had only been found in Belgium once before, in 1985.

Since 13 September 2018, a total of 833 wild boar has been tested positive for the ASF virus.

The last positive case confirmed on a fresh carcass dates from the 11th of August 2019. The search for dead carcasses of wild boar has been intensified since the beginning of autumn 2019. The 6 cases identified after the 11th of August 2019 have all been confirmed on the remains (only bones) of wild boar:

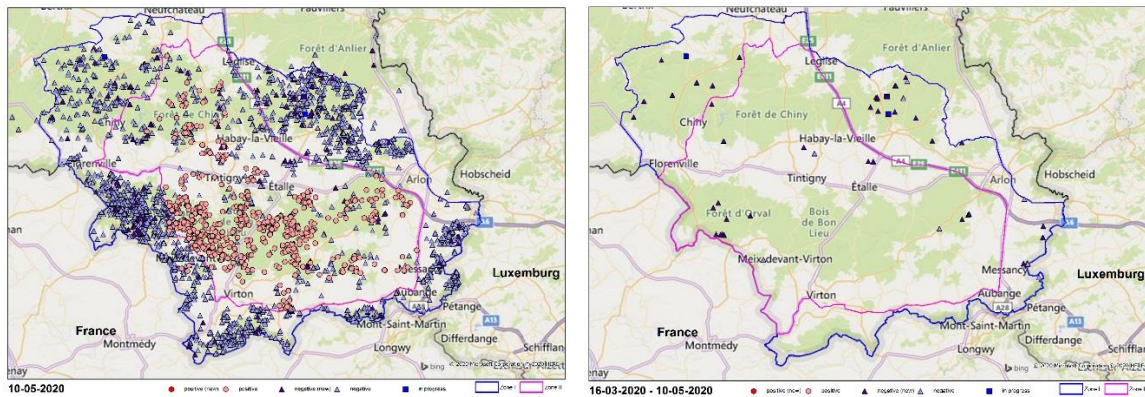
- September 2019 : 0 cases
- October 2019: 1 case
- November 2019: 1 case
- December 2019: 1 case
- January 2020: 1 case
- February 2020: 1 case
- March 2020 : 1 case

The said bones were dry and completely emaciated when found. The age of the bones was evaluated by testing for remnant DNA¹ and the results of the analysis performed by the NRL indicate that the wild boar they originate from died several months before the dates the bones were found. (cf. literature ²).

The following map details the situation on the field since the beginning of the outbreak and during the months of March and April 2020:

¹ by means of a qPCR test for beta-actin

² J. Samsuwan, T. Somboonchokepisal, T. Akaraputtiporn, T. Srimuang, P. Phuengsukdaeng, A. Suwannarat, A. Mutirangura, N. Kitkumthorn – “A method for extracting DNA from hard tissues for use in forensic identification”, Biomed Rep. 2018 Nov; 9(5): 433–438.



Since September 2018, when the first cases of African swine fever were discovered in wild boar in the south of Belgium, the regulated zones I and II, that were put in place as one of the measures of ASF containment, have been adapted several times.

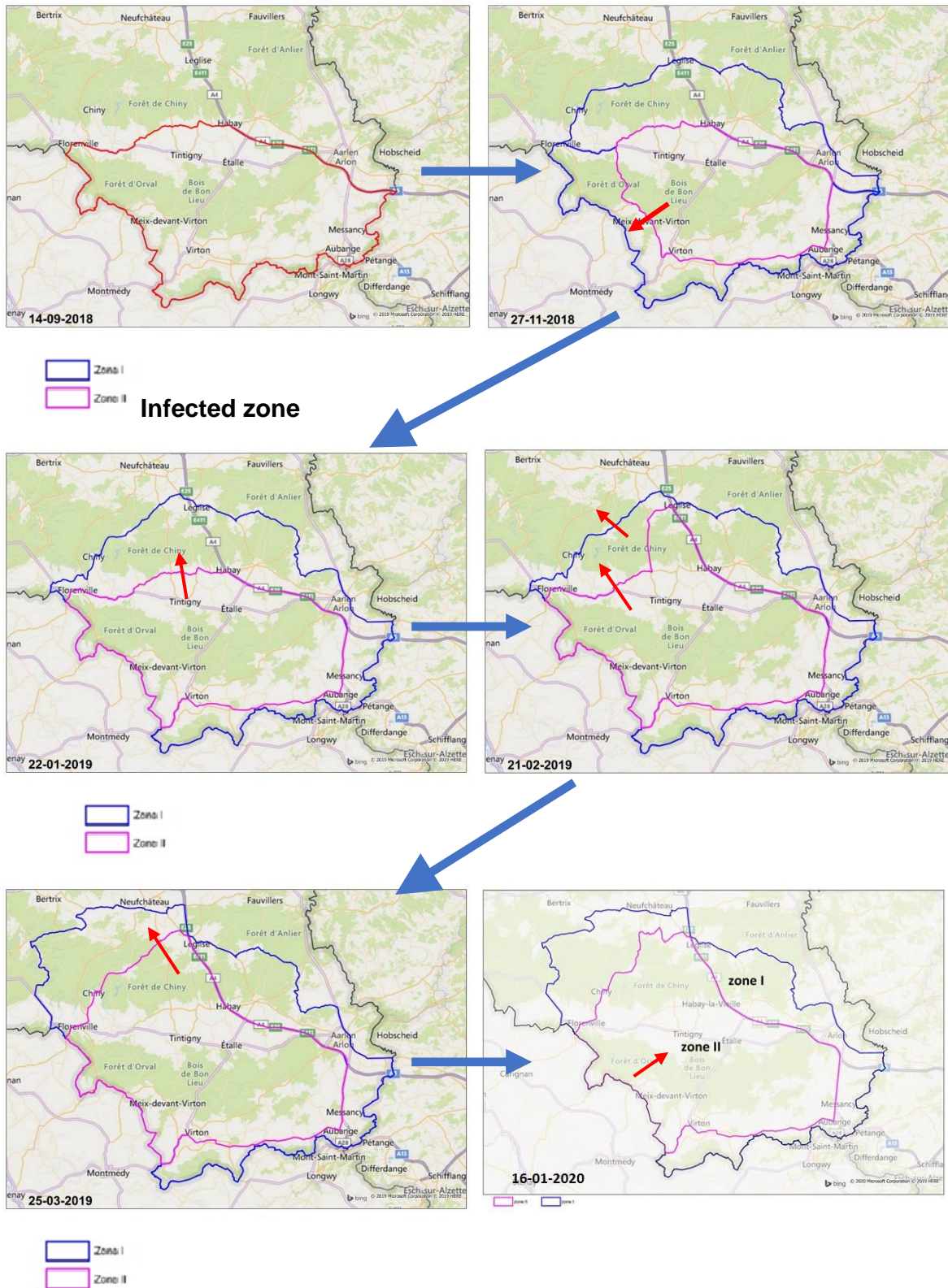
Following the discovery of the first ASF cases in wild boar, an initial infected zone was set. In November 2018, the European regulated zones were put in place: zone I (buffer zone) and zone II (infected zone).

As it can be seen in the map hereunder, the zones concerned by the ASF outbreak occupy a small territory in the south of Belgium:



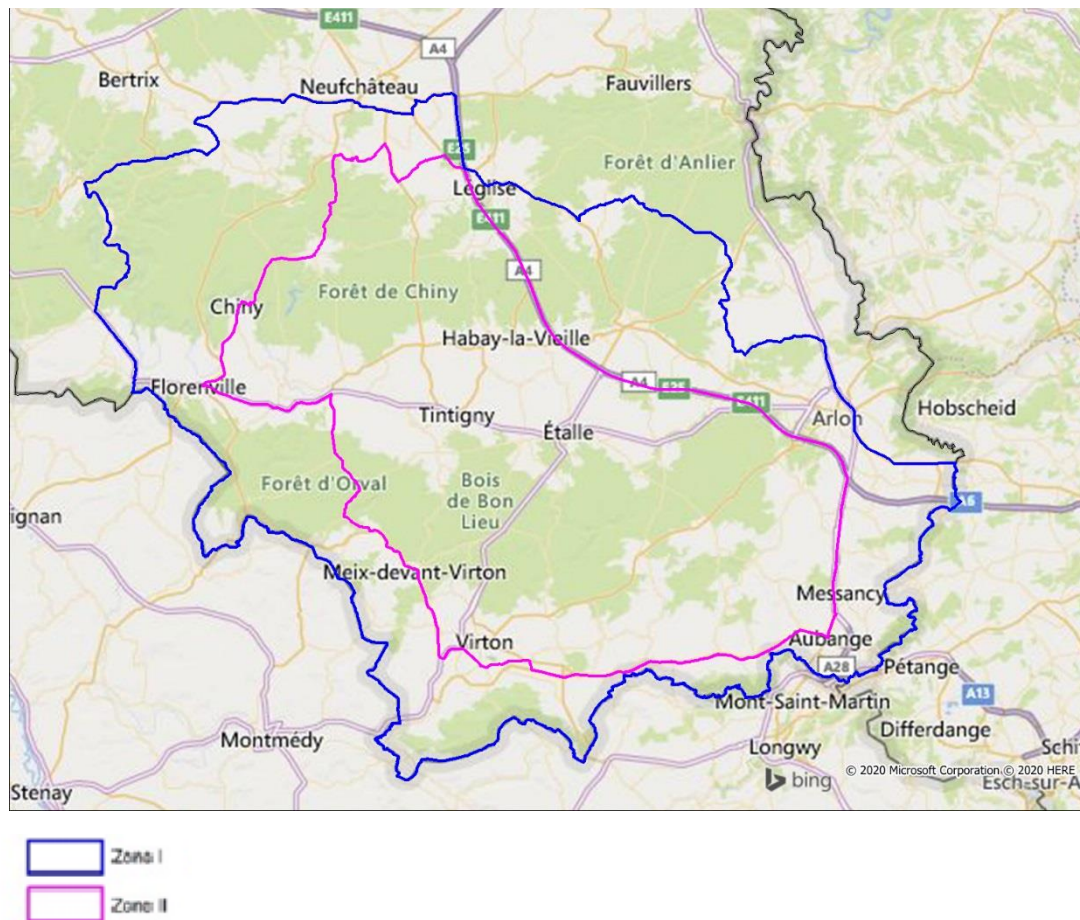


The maps hereunder show the evolution of these zones over the time, starting from September 2018 up until May 2020.





Since the 18th of May 2020, the regulated zones were adapted as shown on the map hereunder:



Several criteria were taken in account when the decision of reducing the zone II was made:

- Last positive case dates back to 17th of February 2019
- The efforts of passive and active surveillance have been maintained, and all will boar found dead or culled tested negative for ASF
- No domestic pigs remain in this area of Part II, as all holdings have been emptied in September 2018 and are not allowed to restock.



The source of the ASF virus introduced on the Belgian territory remains unknown so far and is under investigation. Human activity may be involved, as the genetic characteristics of the identified strain indicate an East European origin.

The disease is strictly limited to wild boar. So far, the virus has not been found in domestic pigs nor in captive wild pigs: Belgium thus remains free of the disease in its domestic pig and captive wild pig population (see [Article 15.1.3 of the Terrestrial OIE Code](#) for the different possible free statuses for ASF).

To formally reconfirm the ASF-freedom status of domestic pigs, a self-declaration has been submitted to the OIE for approval on the 5th of April. The OIE has published it on its website and it can be consulted on the following web links:

- <http://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/self-declared-disease-status/>.
- http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Animal_Health_in_the_World/docs/pdf/Self-declarations/2019_04_Belgium_ASF_ANG.pdf



II. Control measures

1. Strategy

The goal of the measures implemented in Belgium is to limit as much as possible the spread of ASF virus in wild boar, to prevent the spread to the domestic pig population and, on the longer term and in line with the applicable harmonized EU law, to eradicate the ASF virus in Belgium.

Different Belgian authorities are involved in the implementation of the measures.

- The federal authorities (Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain – FASFC) are responsible for implementing measures in the domestic pig and captive wild pig population.
- The regional authorities (one for the Walloon region, one for the Flemish region and one for Brussels) are responsible for implementing measures relating to the wildlife and the hunting activities.

2. Delimitation of zones

2.1. Zoning according to European legislation

Following the initial confirmation of ASF virus in wild boar, an “infected zone” of 63 000 ha has immediately been delimited, according to the principles described in article 15 of Council Directive 2002/60/EC of 27 June 2002 laying down specific provisions for the control of African swine fever.

After 2 months, this provisional “infected zone” has been replaced by two regulated zones, that were delimited according to the “principles and criteria for geographically defining ASF regionalization”, implemented by the EU (see [Working document SANTE/7112/2015/rev.3 of the EU Commission](#) and Commission implementing Decision 2014/709/EU and subsequent amendments). The principles of zoning are in line with chapter 4.3 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code.

Two different regulated zones were defined:

- Zone I: zone surrounding zone II, considered to be a higher risk area, where no cases nor outbreaks of ASF have been identified, and where a higher surveillance (in particular passive) is applied → this zone I is equivalent to the protection zone (buffer zone) described in the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code;
- Zone II: zone in which the ASF virus has been identified only in wild boar → this zone II is equivalent to the infected zone described in the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code.

The zones are adapted on a regular basis to match the evolution and spread of the disease in wild boar. New cases have so far only been found in zone II and I (close to the border with zone II). This shows that the applied zoning principles are relevant and that zone I acts as an effective buffer zone.

An overview of the evolution of the zones since the delimitation of the initial infected zone is available under point 1 of this document.

2.2. Additional zoning for operational purposes

The regional authority of the Walloon region, which is competent for wildlife and hunting, has delimited its own zones, purely for operational purposes:

- a “kernel zone” and a “buffer zone” grossly correspond to zone II,
- a “reinforced observation zone” and a “increased vigilance zone” grossly correspond to zone I.

Since July 2019, the “kernel zone” and the “buffer zone” have been merged in a single zone named “infected zone” that corresponds to zone II.

This additional zoning is necessary for the implementation of the measures provided for in Article 15 of Directive 2002/60/EC and is intended to facilitate the operational management of the activities related to wildlife (monitoring, search and destruction of wild boar, hunting) and to forests (professional activities and tourism).

This additional zoning is adapted on a regular basis to match the evolution and spread of the disease in wild boar.

An overview of the evolution of the zones since the delimitation of the initial infected zone is available in Annex 1.

3. Control measures implemented in wild boar

The regional authorities are competent for the implementation of measures in wildlife.

3.1. Measures in the Walloon region

The control measures implemented by the Walloon region are intended to avoid the spread of the ASF virus and to achieve its eradication. These measures are implemented in the additional zones delimited by the Walloon region.

Measures in place in the infected zone

- Prohibition of lumbering (derogations can be given for urgent forest works in bark beetle infected woods, provided an active search for fresh dead boar is carried out beforehand and strict biosecurity measures – planning of the works and disinfection of the equipment – are met)



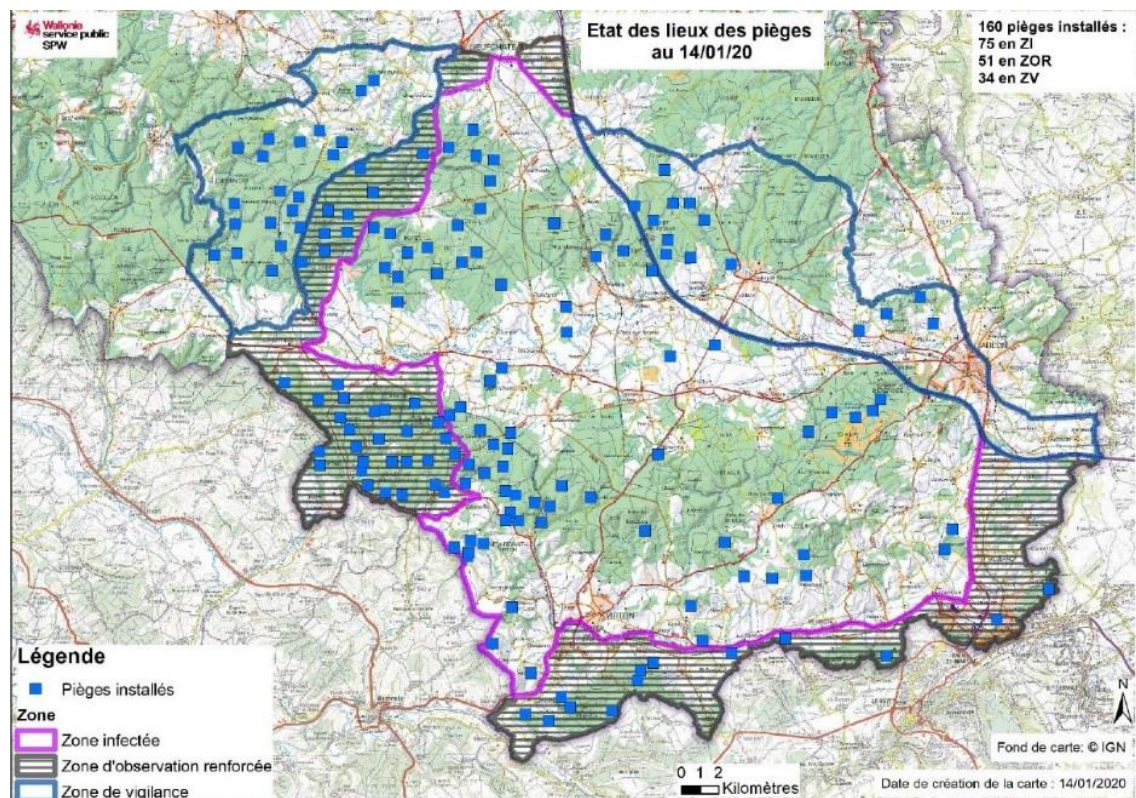
- Limitation of circulation in the forests (prohibition to leave the paths)
- Prohibition to feed wild boar



- Hunting regulated (wild boar and other wildlife): single hunting on baiting point is allowed since the 1st of July 2019
- Eradication of wild boar: all means authorized provided destruction is carried out under the supervision of the Walloon authorities



Example of traps used to catch wild boars in the frame of eradication activities



Infected zone

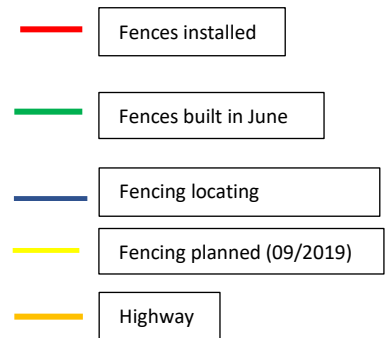
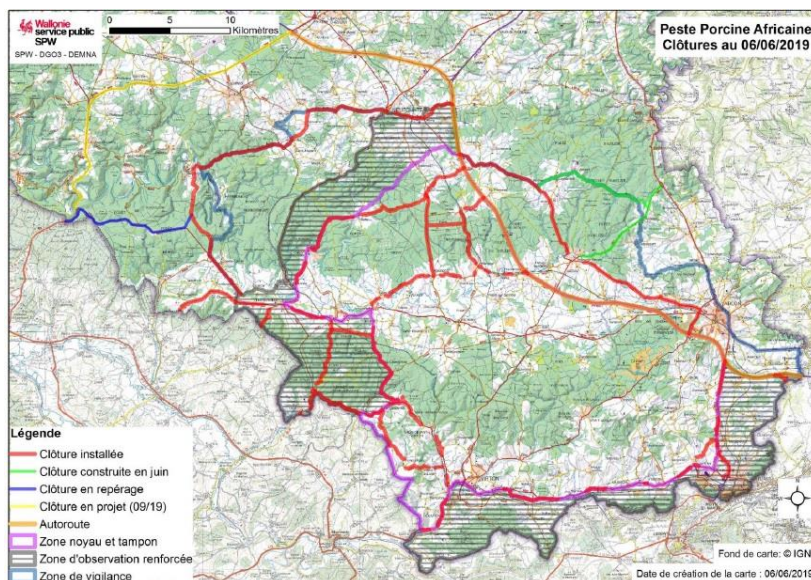
Reinforced observation zone

Increased vigilance zone

Traps installed up until the 14th of January 2020

- Enhanced passive surveillance: active search for dead wild boar, which are all collected and tested for the ASF virus (see further below under point III. for results)

- Installation of a network of fences on the border of and within the regulated zones I and II → these fences are intended to fragment the natural environment of the wild boar in order to restrict their movements and facilitate their trapping and killing; they serve, together with the different highways in the area, as physical barriers. The fences are inspected daily.

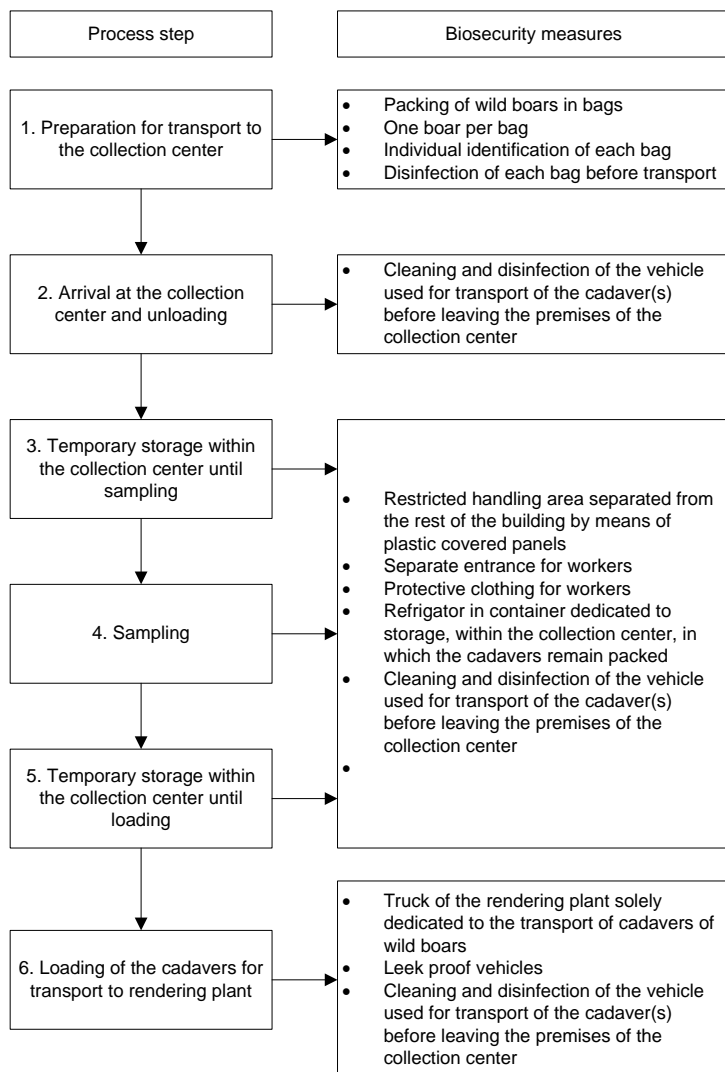


3.1.1. Measures in place in the “reinforced observation” and the “increased vigilance” zones

- Prohibition to feed wild boar
- Regulation of hunting activities: hunting of all species allowed, with the emphasis on wild boar to decrease population density
- Eradication of wild boar by culling
 - o all means authorized
 - o carried out by trained hunters and forests guards
 - o rendering of the carcasses of all boar shot
- Enhanced passive surveillance: active search for dead wild boar, all of which are collected and tested for the ASF virus (see further below under point III. for results)
- Active surveillance: collection and testing for the ASF virus of wild boar shot – initially part of the boar shot, nowadays all boar shot (see further below under point III. for results)

3.1.2. Establishment of collection centers for wild boar found dead or shot in the zones

Three specific centers have been established for handling and disposal of the wild boar found dead in all zones and wild boar shot in the “kernel zone”, the “buffer zone” and the “reinforced observation” zone. Sampling of the wild boar for testing for the ASF virus is performed in these centers. Strict biosecurity measures are in place from collection to final disposal of these wild boar.



3.1.3. Measures in place in the rest of the Walloon region

- Raising of awareness of hunters and forest visitors (by means of the organization of informative sessions, flyers, publication of information on the internet,...)
- Passive surveillance: notification of wild boar found dead to the Walloon authority is made possible by the establishment of a public hotline, and all notifications are followed up by the collection, sampling and analysis of the dead wild boar (see further below under point III. for results)



- Reduction of the wild boar population by hunting (a target of 150% compared to the number of boar shot in 2017 has for example been imposed to hunters in the reinforced observation zone).

3.2. Measures in place in the Flemish and the Brussels Region

The Flemish and Brussels Regions implemented the same measures as those described in point 3.1.3.

The Flemish region also carries out an active surveillance: on average, 40% of the hunted wild boar are sampled for ASF analysis (see further below under point III. for results).

4. Preventive measures implemented in domestic pigs and captive wild pigs

The Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) is responsible for implementing measures in the domestic pig and captive wild pig population.

General measures to prevent the spread of diseases in the pig population are implemented at all times in Belgium, also when there is no epizootic disease present in the country. These general measures include:

- Prohibition to access pigs holding for persons that have been in contact with wildlife in the prior 48 hours ;
- Prohibition to introduce wild boar or (part of) carcasses thereof in pig holdings;
- Prohibition of swill feeding;
- Strict biosecurity measures (limited access, disinfection baths at the entry of the stables, dedicated clothing, etc...);
- No outdoor access allowed for pigs, except if an effective double fencing preventing any contact with wild boar is in place around the outdoor area;
- Prohibition of movement during the 4 weeks following the introduction of pigs into a holding, except if the pigs are moved for immediate slaughter or when using a quarantine facility on the holding;
- Mandatory cleaning and disinfection of vehicles dedicated to the transport of pigs, after each transport;
- Mandatory additional cleaning and disinfection of vehicles dedicated to the transport of pigs that are entering Belgium and originate from third countries or risk areas within the EU;
- Mandatory notification to the FASFC of clinical signs in pigs suspected of having been caused by ASF.

These general measures are considered to be efficient to avoid the spread of diseases (and have so far proven to be).

Nevertheless, the FASFC has decided to take the following additional preventive measures since the appearance of the ASF virus in wildlife, so as to limit the risk of transmission of ASF to the pig population and to detect a contamination in an early stage, should such a transmission occur.



4.1. Prohibition of assembly of pigs

The Belgian Ministerial Decree of 26 September 2018 laying down emergency measures to control African swine fever, prohibits assembly of pigs on the whole Belgian territory, including assembly of pigs of different origins within the same means of transport. In practice, pigs can thus only be loaded in an empty vehicle and must be transported directly to their final destination.

A first possibility to derogate to this prohibition was introduced in February 2019. It concerns the assembly of pigs of different origin on the same means of transport. Following conditions need however to be met:

- the final destination of the pigs after loading is a slaughterhouse,
- strict biosecurity measures are met.

A second possibility to derogate to this prohibition was introduced in May 2019. It concerns the assembly of pigs for slaughter in special authorized assembly centers. Following conditions need however to be met:

- with regard to the assembly center:
 - o the assembly center must be fully enclosed
 - o the facilities of the assembly center must be easy to clean and disinfect
 - o the assembly center is supervised by an approved veterinarian that ensures at least a weekly epidemiological surveillance of all animals present in the center
- with regard to the assembly itself:
 - o the gathering period can't exceed 6 days
 - o only one operator may assemble pigs at the same time

4.2. Preventive culling of domestic pigs

The Ministerial Decree of 26 September 2018 also imposed the preventive culling of all domestic pigs and captive wild pigs present in the provisional “infected zone” that was initially delimited following the first confirmation of ASF in wild boar.

This preventive culling was intended to avoid any risk of transmission of the ASF virus from the infected wild boar to the domestic pig population. It has been followed by a prohibition to repopulate the farms that had their pigs culled.

The domestic pig and captive wild pig population density in the initially delimited “infected zone” was quite low, and the measure led to the preventive culling of a total of 5222 pigs.

This preventive culling was a one-off measure; it was not repeated thereafter, neither when the initial provisional “infected zone” was replaced by the slightly bigger zones I and II, nor when these zones were further extended. As indicated before, the density of domestic pig holdings in the zone I and zone II is very low, and the risk for transmission of ASF from wild boar to any of the few holdings currently present in the zones has been estimated to be very low (see urgent advice 16-2018 given by the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on the risk of spreading of the African swine fever virus in the Belgian wildlife and of spill-over in the Belgian swine sector – [full 16-2018 advice](#) available in French, [summary](#) available in English).

4.3. Enhanced passive surveillance

The Ministerial Decree of 26 September 2018 also prohibits the treatment of sick pigs, as long as samples have not been taken for the detection of the ASF virus, whatever the symptoms are.



This applies to all pig holdings, whether they are located in a regulated zone or not. Any pig holder is thus obliged to contact his veterinarian, who will take the samples and send them to the laboratory for analysis.

This enhanced passive surveillance allows the FASFC to gather samples from all over Belgium, and to assess the situation with regard to ASF in the domestic pig population, and should help in detecting a contamination in its early stage. See further below under point III. for the results of this passive surveillance.

5. Measures relating to the trade of pigs and pig derived products

The Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) is responsible for the implementation of measures relating to the trade of pigs and pig derived products. Therefore, the FASFC applies the EU legislation, and more specifically:

- [Directive 2002/60/EC](#) laying down specific provisions for the control of African swine fever and amending Directive 92/119/EEC as regards Teschen disease and African swine fever
- [Decision 2014/709/EU](#) concerning animal health control measures relating to African swine fever in certain Member States

The measures take into account the zones delimited according to EU legislation (zone I and zone II).

5.1. Measures applying to the trade of pigs

5.1.1. Pigs originating from zone II

According to the applicable legislation (articles 2, 3 and 8 of Decision 2014/709), live pigs (other than slaughter pigs) originating from zone II:

- may not be involved in national trade, unless they comply with the conditions for derogation, which are
 - o the pigs have remained on the holding of dispatch since birth or at least for the last 30 days,
 - o the pigs have undergone a negative ASF laboratory test within the 7 days of their departure and have undergone a favorable clinical examination by an official veterinarian on the day of departure,OR
 - the farm of dispatch implements biosecurity measures applicable to ASF, is at least inspected twice a year by the competent veterinary authority at intervals of minimum 4 months, and is subjected to a sampling for ASF of at least 2 dead animals older than 60 days in each production unit each week;
- may not be involved in intra-Community trade, unless they are destined to a farm / establishment located in a zone II or III in another EU Member State ([Working document SANTE/7112/2015/rev.3 of the EU Commission](#) for the characteristics of a zone III) and
 - o the conditions for derogation mentioned above are met,
 - o a channeling procedure has been agreed upon between the Member States of origin, transit and destination so as to ensure safe transport of the pigs;
- may not be involved in export.

According to the applicable legislation (article 3b of Decision 2014/709), live pigs (for immediate slaughter) may only be involved in national trade, provided they comply with the following conditions:



- the pigs have remained on the farm of dispatch since birth or at least for the last 30 days;
 - the pigs have undergone a negative ASF laboratory test within the 7 days of their departure and have undergone a favorable clinical examination by an official veterinarian on the day of departure,
- OR
- the holding of dispatch implements biosecurity measures applicable to ASF, is at least inspected twice a year by the competent veterinary authority at intervals of minimum 4 months, and is subjected to a sampling for ASF of at least 2 dead animals older than 60 days in each production unit each week;
- the pigs in the holding of dispatch were moved from the breeding holding under an authorization granted by the competent authority;
 - each movement between the breeding holding and the holding of dispatch must be notified to the competent authority;
 - the holdings of dispatch and breeding implement biosecurity measures applicable to ASF;
 - the competent authority verifies at least every 3 months the correct implementation of the biosecurity measures applicable to ASF;
 - the consignment of slaughter pigs is notified to the competent authority;
 - the consignment of slaughter pigs is transported directly to a slaughterhouse designated by the competent authority;
 - the transport occurs according to a route defined in advance;
 - the means of transport are cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible after unloading;
 - the means of transport must be individually registered with the competent authority for that purpose.

From a practical point of view, the risk of having such pigs involved in national / Intra-Community trade is quite low, for the following reasons.

- The domestic pig population in this area has been reduced drastically with the preventive culling carried out by the FASFC in early October 2018 in the initially delimited “infected zone” and with the prohibition to repopulate.
- With the subsequent delimitation of zone I and zone II, and their regular adaptation to match the evolution and spread of the disease in wild boars, there are again a few commercial pigs holdings in the zones. But holders are generally no longer interested in keeping animals in these holdings because of the trouble they encounter to market their pigs and because of the costs involved with the testing requirements.

From a practical point of view, the risk of having such pigs involved in international trade is inexistent.

It should also be emphasized that pigs involved in such trade present minimal risk of spreading the disease as :

- the domestic population remains free of ASF so far;
- the animals involved in such trade are tested negative for ASF prior to departure.

5.1.2. Pigs originating from zone I

According to the applicable legislation (articles 2 and 8 of Decision 2014/709), live pigs originating from zone I:

- may be involved in national trade;
- may not be involved in intra-Community trade, unless they comply with the conditions for derogation, which are
 - o the pigs have remained on the holding of dispatch since birth or at least for the last 30 days,
 - o the holding of dispatch implements biosecurity measures applicable to ASF,



- the pigs have undergone a negative ASF laboratory test within the 7 days of their departure and have undergone a favorable clinical examination by an official veterinarian on the day of departure,
OR
the holding of dispatch is at least inspected twice a year by the competent veterinary authority at intervals of minimum 4 months, and is subjected to a sampling for ASF of at least 2 dead animals older than 60 days for each inspection unit each week;
- may not be involved in export, unless the conditions for intra-Community trade mentioned above and the conditions required by the third country of destination can be met.

From a practical point of view, the risk of having such pigs involved in national / Intra-Community is quite low, for the following reasons.

- The domestic pig population in this area has been reduced drastically with the preventive culling carried out by the FASFC in early October 2018 in the initially delimited provisional “infected zone” and with the prohibition to repopulate the culled holdings.
- With the subsequent delimitation of zone I and zone II, and their regular adaptation to match the evolution and spread of the disease in wild boar, there are again a few commercial pigs holdings in the zones. But holders are generally not interested on keeping animals in the holdings because of the trouble they encounter to market their pigs and because of the costs involved with the testing requirements.

From a practical point of view, the risk of having such pigs involved in international trade is almost non-existent for the reasons mentioned above, but also because Belgium exports almost no pigs to third countries.

It should be emphasized that pigs involved in such trade present minimal risk of spreading the disease as they originate from a zone where ASF is neither present in the domestic pig population nor in the wild boar population.

5.1.3. Pigs originating from the rest of Belgium

According to the applicable legislation (article 8 of Decision 2014/709) live pigs originating from the rest of Belgium may be traded on national / intra-Community / international level.

However, a specific condition applies for intra-Community trade and export: during the 30 days immediately prior to the date of dispatch, the holding of dispatch may not have introduced pigs originating from a regulated zone.

Compliance with the above-mentioned requirement and the regular requirements mentioned in the intra-Community certificate or the export certificate is verified at time of certification.

5.2. Measures applying to the trade pig meat, pig meat preparations and pig meat products

5.2.1. Pig meat, pig meat preparations and pig meat products originating from zone II

According to the applicable legislation (articles 2, 8, 11 and 13 of Decision 2014/709), pork and pork meat products originating from zone II:

- may be put on the national market;
- may not be involved in intra-Community trade, unless



- they are derived from live pigs that originate from holdings located in the non-regulated zone or in zone I, and they have been produced, stored and processed in designated establishments, OR
- they are derived from pigs that comply with the conditions for derogation in the frame of national trade of live pigs originating from zone II (see point 5.1.1 of this document), OR
- they are derived from pigs that comply with the conditions for derogation in the frame of national trade of live pigs for immediate slaughter originating from zone II (see point 5.1.1 of this document), OR
- they are derived from live pigs that do not originate from infected holdings or holdings suspected of being infected, have been obtained, handled, transported and stored separately from regular products, have undergone a treatment sufficient for the elimination of the animal health problem in an establishment approved by the competent authority for that purpose, and are accompanied by a sanitary certificate stating that they conform to Decision 2014/709/EU;
- may not be involved in export, unless the conditions for intra-Community trade mentioned above and the conditions required by the third country of destination can be met.

From a practical point of view, there are one slaughterhouse and one cutting plant located in zone II: these establishments handle only pigs / meat originating from outside the regulated zone, and are dedicated to the local market. There is thus no risk of having pork or pork products originating from zone II involved in international trade.

It should also be emphasized that such products present minimal risk of spreading the disease as they are:

- either derived from pigs originating from zones where the disease is not present in domestic pigs nor in the wild boar,
- or derived from pigs tested negative for ASF,
- or subject to a treatment that destroys the virus.

5.2.2. Pig meat, pig meat preparations and pig meat products originating from zone I

According to the applicable legislation (articles 2, 8 and 11 of Decision 2014/709), there are no restrictions applying to the trade of pork and pork products originating from zone I.

From a practical point of view, there is one cutting plant located in zone I. Pork or pork products originating from zone I could be involved in national / Intra-Community / international trade provided they comply with the above-mentioned requirements.

It should be emphasized that such products present minimal risk of spreading the disease as they are:

- produced in a zone/region where the disease is not present,
- derived from pigs originating from zones/regions where the disease is not present or from pigs tested negative for ASF.

5.2.3. Pig meat, pig meat preparations and pig meat products originating from the rest of Belgium

There are no restrictions for the national / intra-Community / international trade of such pork and pork products.

From a practical point of view, with regard to export, compliance with the requirements mentioned in the export certificate is verified at time of certification. If needed, products can be traced back to the farm of origin of the animals the products have been derived of. This way,



guarantees can be given that the pork and pork products are not derived from animals originating from restricted zones.

Then again,

- should products be derived from pigs originating from zone II, they shouldn't be a source of concern, as pigs in zone II may only be dispatched from that zone if they comply with strict measures, under which testing for ASF;
- should products be derived from pigs originating from zone I, they shouldn't be a source of concern, as the virus has not been identified in zone I.

Also, it needs to be emphasized that Belgium so far remains free of ASF in its domestic pig and captive wild pig population, as confirmed by the results of the passive surveillance that is implemented in this population.

III. Surveillance

1. Surveillance in wild boar

1.1. Surveillance in the Walloon region

1.1.1. Passive surveillance

An enhanced passive surveillance of wild boar is implemented in the delimited zones, by means of an active daily search for dead wild boar, which are all collected and tested for the ASF virus.

Enhanced passive surveillance of wild boar in delimited zones	
Number of dead wild boar found and collected	Number of wild boar tested positive for the ASF virus
2114	820

A regular passive surveillance of wild boar is implemented in the rest of the Walloon region, by means of notification of wild boar found dead through a hotline, and subsequent collection and testing of these wild boar.

Regular passive surveillance of wild boar in Wallonia with the exception of delimited zones	
Number of dead wild boar found and collected	Number of wild boar tested positive for the ASF virus
280	0

1.1.2. Active surveillance

An active surveillance of wild boar is implemented in the delimited zones, by means of collection and testing for the ASF virus of all shot wild boars.



Active surveillance of wild boars in delimited zones	
Number of wild boar shot and collected	Number of wild boar tested positive for the ASF virus
3021	13

1.2. Surveillance in the Flemish region

1.2.1. Active surveillance

An active surveillance of wild boars is implemented in the Flemish region, by means of collection and testing for the ASF virus of on average 40% of the wild boar shot.

Active surveillance of wild boars in the Flemish region	
Number of shot wild boar sampled	Number of wild boar tested positive for the ASF virus
1904	0

2. Surveillance in the domestic pig and captive wild pig population

An enhanced passive surveillance of the domestic pig and captive wild pig population is implemented at national level by means of sampling of sick pigs before initiating a medical treatment.

Enhanced passive surveillance of domestic pigs and captive wild pigs in Belgium	
Number of samplings in holdings with sick pigs	Number of pigs tested positive for the ASF virus
22840	0

IV. Communication and coordination between parties

1. Belgian ASF Task Force

With the spread of ASF in East Europe, Belgian authorities decided to bring all stakeholders possibly involved in / impacted by ASF together within a “task force” in March 2018. The goal of this task force was to enhance preparedness of all stakeholders and create a very strong network with all of them, should the disease be introduced in our country.

2. Coordination between Belgian federal and regional authorities

The regional authorities (Walloon, Brussels and Flemish Regions) are competent for wild life and hunting and the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) is competent for animal health of domestic animals.



As the contamination is occurring in the Walloon region, the Walloon authorities are the regional authorities mostly involved in defining the strategy for controlling the disease.

A Technical Committee, in which the Walloon regional authorities and experts participate, meets weekly to evaluate the data collected on the field and to propose new or adapted measures destined to control ASF in wild boar.

A Strategic Committee, in which the Walloon regional authorities, the federal authorities (FASFC), the CVO, technical experts and scientists of the Veterinary University of Liege and of the Belgian National Reference Laboratory for animal diseases Sciensano participate, meets at least once a month to evaluate and adapt the control strategy and the zones. When necessary, the meeting frequency is increased to the epidemiological needs.

3. Coordination between Belgian authorities and authorities of neighboring Member States

As the contamination is occurring close to the borders, the Walloon regional authorities are in close contact with the competent authorities of France and Luxemburg: on a weekly basis, by videoconference.

The goal is to keep each other informed on the latest developments: spread of the contamination, control measures in place, ...

4. Coordination between Belgian and EU authorities

The Belgian authorities are regularly in contact with the ASF experts of the European Commission.

- Zones are delimited by the Belgian authorities, subjected to the evaluation of the European commission ASF experts, and adapted if needed following their evaluation. The zones agreed upon are validated at EU level during the PAFF Committee, and transposed into a Commission Decision that amends Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU.
- The European Commission sends ASF experts on the field in Belgium to evaluate the control measures in place and to advise the Belgian experts and authorities on possible adaptations thereof.

5. Communication channels

The FASFC has developed a webpage dedicated to the ASF contamination, so as to keep the public, the food business operators and the authorities of other countries informed of the latest developments.

The webpage is available in [French](#), [Dutch](#) and a summary is available in [English](#).

The FASFC also regularly transmits an update of the situation to its major trade partners, by means of official communications involving the Belgian embassies in the said countries.

The regional authorities have also developed webpages to address the ASF contamination. As these webpages are more dedicated to inform the Belgian public and the Belgian stakeholders, these webpages are only available in the official languages of the said regions: French for the [Walloon Region](#), in Dutch for the [Flemish Region](#), and in French and Dutch for the [Brussels Region](#).



And the regional authority of the Walloon region has placed posters on the fences installed in zones I and II, and edited brochures for the public (available in tourism offices and on highway resting areas).

V. Conclusions

Belgium is facing cases of ASF in its wild boar population since September 2018. Control measures have immediately been implemented for wild boar (eradication, fragmentation of the environment, etc...) and for domestic pigs (preventive culling, enhanced passive surveillance, increase bio-security measures, etc...), and have allowed Belgium to remain free of ASF in its domestic pig population.

To formally reinforce the ASF-freedom status of domestic pigs, a self-declaration has been filled in to OIE for approval on the 5th of April. OIE has published it on the website and it may be consulted on the following web links:

- <http://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/self-declared-disease-status/>.
- http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Animal_Health_in_the_World/docs/pdf/Self-declarations/2019_04_Belgium_ASF_ANG.pdf

Belgium has delimited regulated zones around the cases of ASF identified in wild boar. These zones are intended to facilitate the implementation of control measures to limit the spread of the disease on the short term and to eradicate it on the long term and are intended to minimize the impact of the contamination on the rest of the country. This zoning has so far proven to be efficient, as new cases in wild boar have only been identified in the regulated zones, and not outside of these regulated zones.

Belgium so far remains free of ASF in its domestic pig population: Belgian pigs and products derived from Belgian pigs thus remains safe. Nevertheless, the FASFC understands the need of trading partners to be reassured on the safety of the pigs and products derived from pigs they trade with Belgium. In this regard, the FASFC proposes to regionalize Belgium and to use the zoning according to the European legislation (regulated zones I and II) as the reference for regionalization.

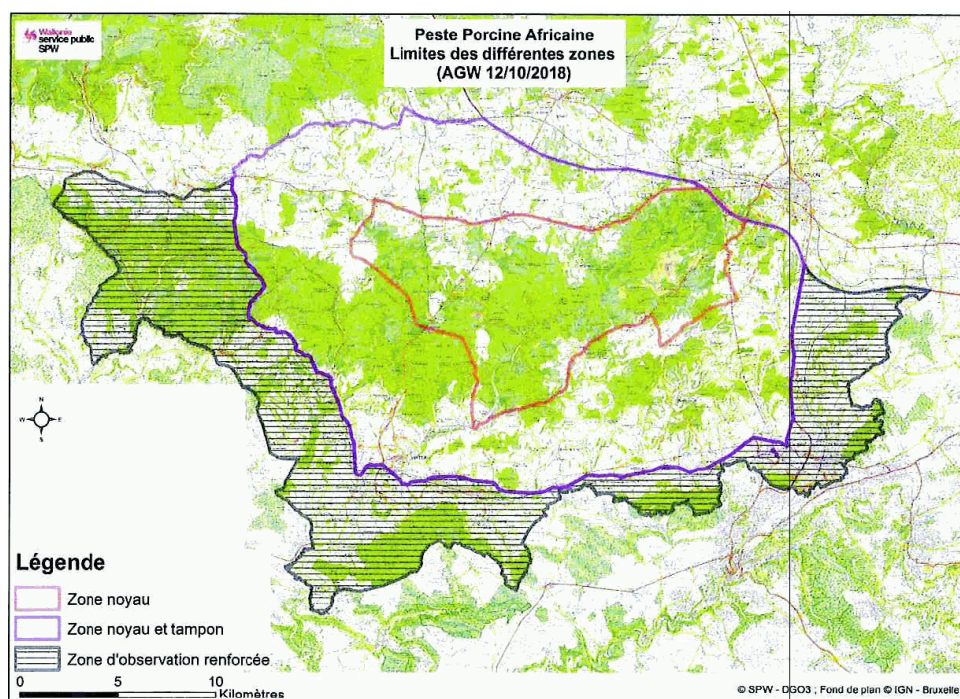
Annex 1

ASF in wild boars in Belgium

Evolution of the delimitation of the additional zoning

Additional zoning for operational management of activities related to wild boars and forests

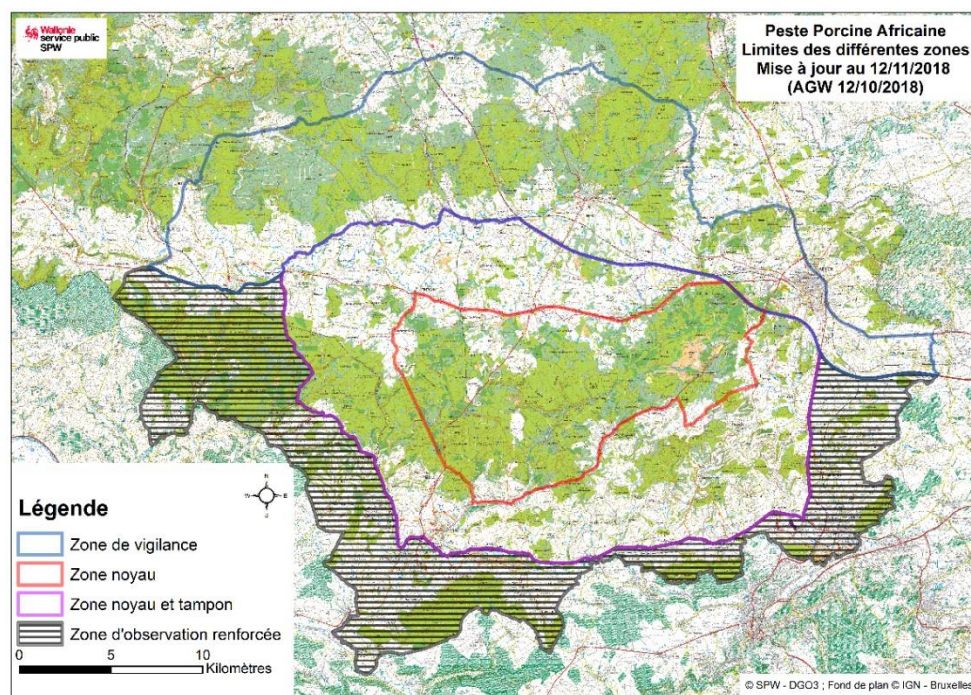
1. October 2018: delimitation of additional zones within the infected zone



Kernel zone - Buffer zone - Reinforced observation zone

2. November 2018: adaptation of additional zones

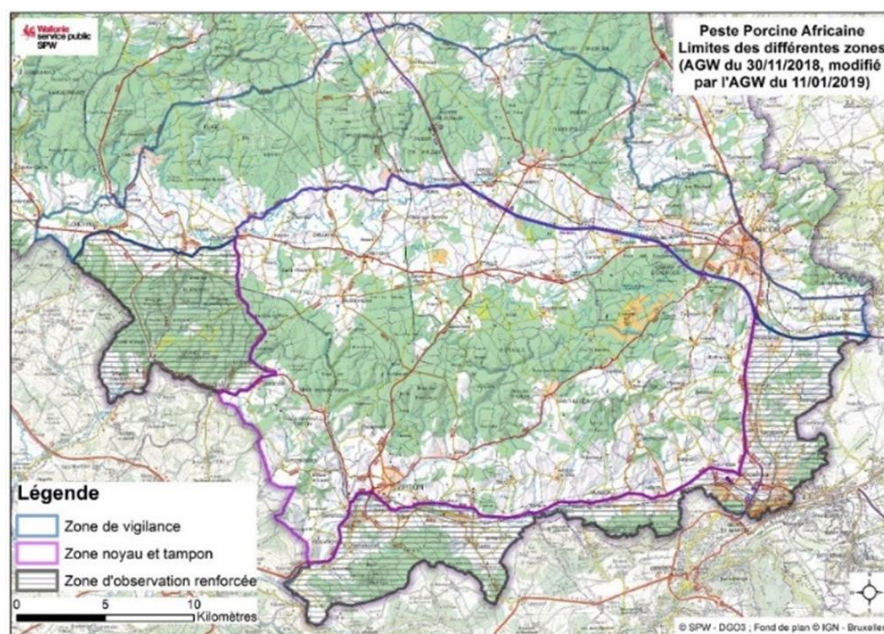
Adaptation of the zones, taking into account the zones I and II delimited according to EU legislation.



Kernel zone – Buffer zone – Increased vigilance zone – Reinforced observation zone

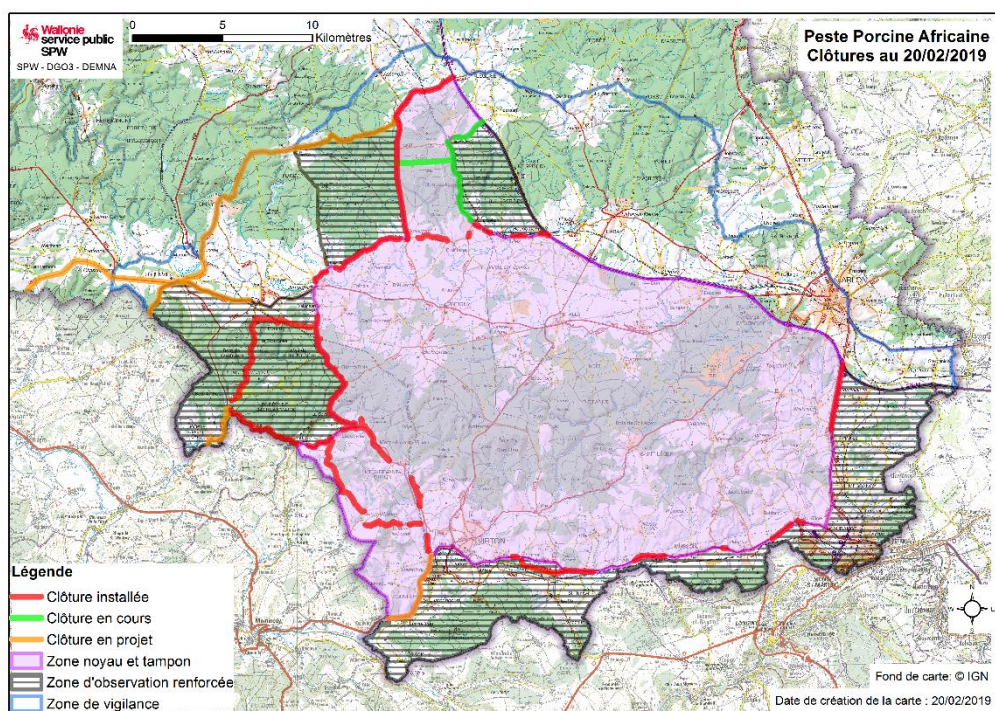
3. January 2019: adaptation of additional zones

Adaptation of the additional zones delimited by the Walloon region for operational purposes, following the confirmation of new cases in wild boars.



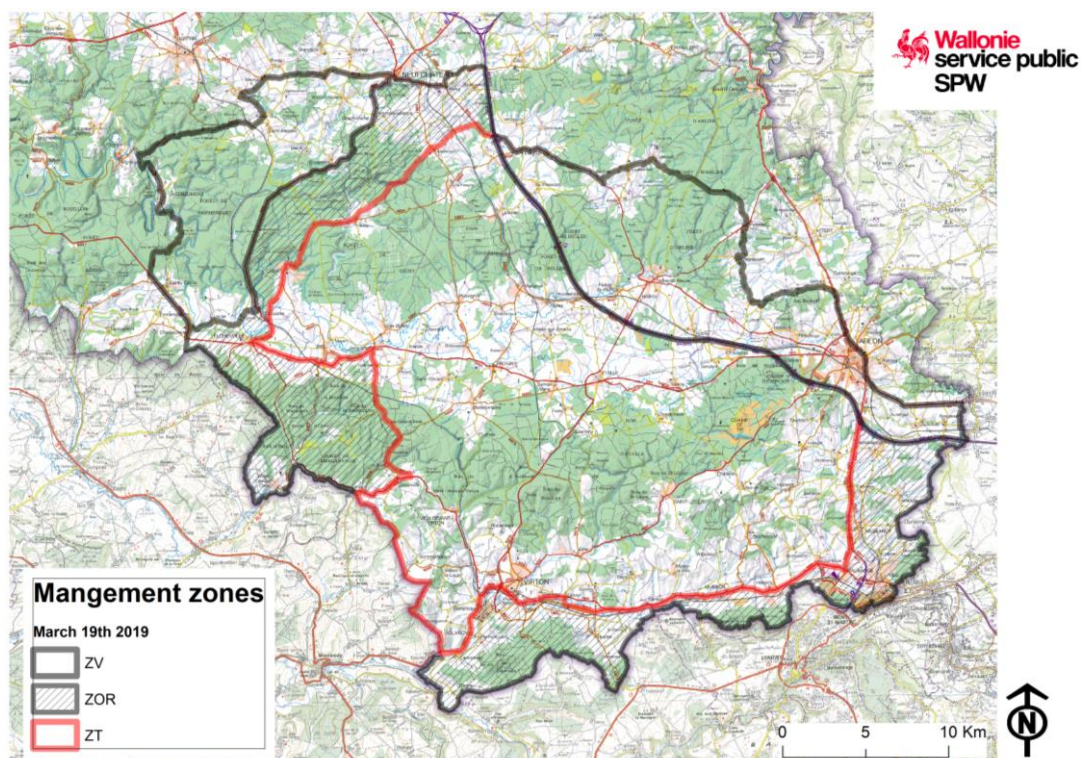
Kernel and buffer zone – Increased vigilance zone – Reinforced observation zone

4. February 2019: adaptation of additional zones



Kernel and buffer zone – Increased vigilance zone – Reinforced observation zone

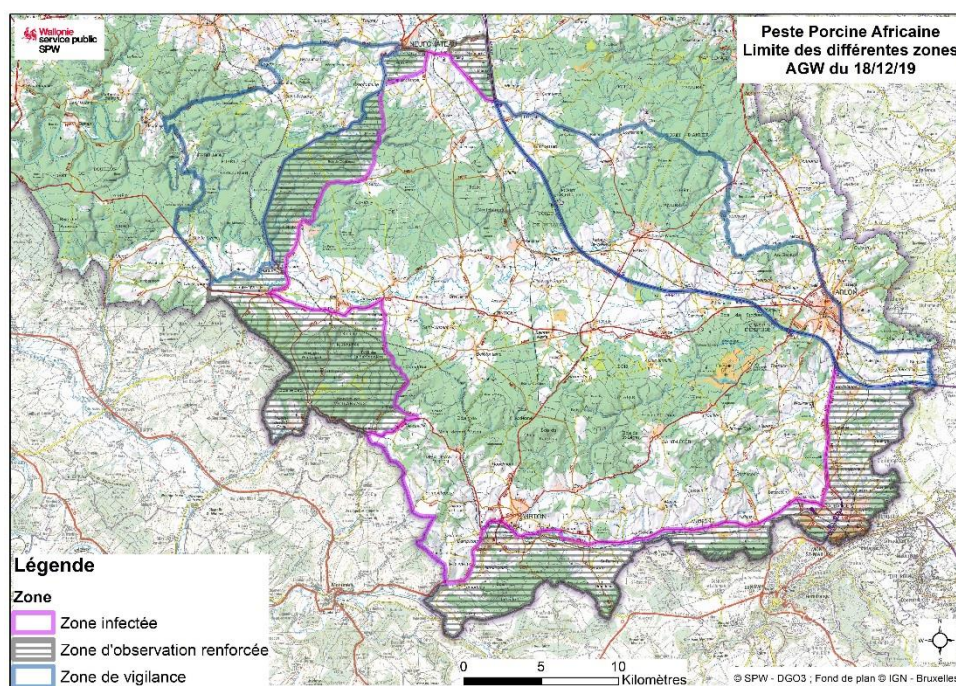
5. March 2019: adaptation of additional zones



Reinforced observation zone
 Increased vigilance zone

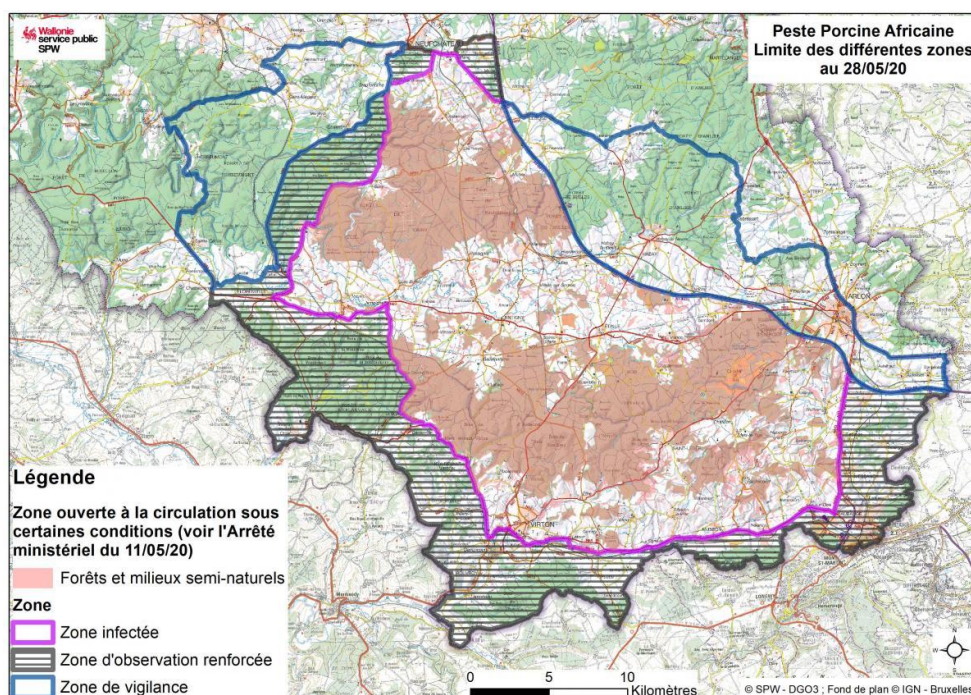
Kernel and buffer zone

6. January 2020: adaptation of additional zones



Infected zone Reinforced observation zone Increased vigilance zone

7. May 2020: adaptation of additional zones



Infected zone Reinforced observation zone Increased vigilance zone