In response to information provided by the competent authority, any factual error noted in the draft report has been corrected; any clarification appears in the form of a footnote.
Executive Summary

This report describes the outcome of an audit in Latvia carried out from 23 to 27 April 2018, as part of the published Directorate-General Health and Food Safety audit programme.

The objectives of the audit were to assess:

- the effectiveness of measures and actions taken to prevent African swine fever from spreading outside the infected area via 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; and,
- the supervision and verification of the effectiveness of the measures and actions taken.

The audit also followed-up the implementation of the proposed actions in response to recommendations from DG(SANTE)/2016-8766.

Overall, the report concludes that the authorities have successfully implemented movement controls for live pigs from the infected area through a system of approved holdings and processing establishments. The official controls are well organised. The combination of traceability in place for both live pigs and their products provides assurances that fresh meat, meat preparations and meat products from domestic pigs are correctly health marked for placing on the market and contributes to reducing the risk of spread of infection.

The current arrangements for collection and transport of animal by-products from the infected area reduce the risk of spreading disease through potentially contaminated products.

All measures taken at time of suspicion and confirmation of African swine fever outbreaks in 2017 were in line with EU requirements and were performed in a timely manner.

The audit team noted some weaknesses related to biosecurity in hunting grounds and storage of wild boar carcases. In 2017, the vast majority of hunted wild boar were used for own consumption by the hunters. The storage of these wild boar carcases in hunting grounds is poorly controlled. Despite extensive African swine fever publicity and awareness campaigns directed at hunters, not all requirements for handling of wild boar carcases and movement restrictions on wild boar meat are respected. The authorities estimate that seventy percent of hunting grounds had primary processing facilities (including access to chills) with the remainder of hunting grounds using home storage for carcases awaiting African swine fever test results. Consequently, this increases the potential risk of spreading infection. The authorities have very recently adopted biosecurity rules for hunting grounds which set standards and provide enforcement powers. However, while these new measures will help address the issues, their implementation will take time.

The absence of routine official inspection of pigs slaughtered on non-commercial holdings for own consumption weakens the surveillance on these farms.

The report makes recommendations to the competent authorities aimed at addressing areas in which further improvements are required.
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction ....................................................................................................................................1
2. Objectives and scope ......................................................................................................................1
3. Legal Basis .....................................................................................................................................2
4. Background ....................................................................................................................................2
5. Findings and Conclusions ..............................................................................................................4
   5.1 Traceability and trade restrictions ...........................................................................................4
      5.1.1 Control of movement of pigs to slaughterhouses .............................................................4
      5.1.2 Control of fresh meat, meat preparations and meat products from domestic pig ..........5
      5.1.3 Control of carcases, fresh meat, meat preparations and meat products from feral pigs ..7
      5.1.4 Control of ABPs of domestic and feral pigs .....................................................................9
6. Measures in case of suspicion/confirmation of ASF in domestic pigs ...........................................10
7. Verification and supervision ..........................................................................................................11
8. Follow-up of previous audit .........................................................................................................12
9. Overall Conclusions .....................................................................................................................13
10. Closing Meeting ..........................................................................................................................13
11. Recommendations .......................................................................................................................14
### ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Abbreviation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Explanation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABPs</td>
<td>Animal by-products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADC</td>
<td>Agricultural Data Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASF</td>
<td>African Swine Fever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASF strategy</td>
<td>The strategy for African Swine fever in Eastern Part of EU, summarised in Document SANTE/7113/2015[^1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 INTRODUCTION

The audit took place in Latvia from 23 to 27 April 2018. The audit team comprised two auditors from the Commission services.

An opening meeting was held on 23 April with the Food and Veterinary Service, the central competent authority. At this meeting the objectives and itinerary for the audit were confirmed by the audit team and the control systems were described by the authorities.

The audit team was accompanied by representatives of the Food and Veterinary Service throughout the audit.

2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objectives of the audit were to assess:

- the effectiveness of measures and actions taken to prevent African swine fever (ASF) from spreading outside the infected area via fresh meat, meat preparations or meat products from domestic or feral pigs and animal by-products (ABPs);

- the effectiveness of measures and actions taken to prevent the spread of infection in case of outbreaks in domestic pigs; and,

- the supervision and verification of the effectiveness of the measures and actions taken.

The audit also followed-up the implementation of the proposed actions in response to recommendations from DG(SANCO)/2016-8766.

The scope of the audit included:

- the controls on movement of domestic pigs to slaughterhouses, and the controls on pig fresh meat, meat preparations and meat products from the production to the sale to final consumer. The scope did not include controls on passengers' personal consignments;

- the controls on movement of feral pig carcasses, and the controls on their fresh meat, meat preparations, meat products and hunting trophies;

- the controls on ABPs of domestic and feral pigs;

- the measures and restrictions in case of outbreaks in domestic pigs; and,

- the actions proposed by the competent authority in response to recommendations of the previous audit (ref. DG(SANCO)/2016-8766).
In pursuit of these objectives, the following sites were visited:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visits / meetings</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central authority</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Food and Veterinary Service (central authority) opening and closing meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional/county authority</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regional authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting ground</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic pig holding</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 commercial and 1 non-commercial holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig slaughterhouse, cutting plant,</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 slaughterhouse and 1 meat processing establishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat preparation/product establishment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game processing plant, cutting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Game processing establishment handling wild boar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plant, meat preparation/product</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establishment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 **Legal Basis**

The audit will be carried out under the general provisions of EU legislation and in particular:


The audit criteria will be the legal references contained in Annex and, where relevant to reach the objectives of the audit, the ASF Strategy for Eastern Part of the EU (SANTE/7113/2015 - Rev 7), the Latvian Programme for the control and eradication of ASF (approved by Grant Decision Number SANTE/VP/2018/LV/S12.774140) and the eradication plan for African swine fever in wild boar in Latvia approved by Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2015/570.

4 **Background**

Since January 2014, ASF has spread to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The Commission has audited these affected Member States. More recently, the disease has been confirmed in the Czech Republic and Romania (2017) and Hungary (2018). In 2015, the Commission developed an ASF strategy\(^2\) for the affected Member States and for those with a
higher risk of introduction of the disease. This strategy aims at preventing the further spread of the disease and eventually at eradication from the affected territories. The strategy has been updated taking into account the latest opinions from the European Food Safety Authority.

The first case of ASF in Latvia was confirmed in June 2014. Up until April 2018, a total of 53 outbreaks in domestic pigs and 3,013 cases in wild boar have been confirmed, with the last outbreak in domestic pigs in October 2017.

Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU defines the infected areas in Latvia in which measures foreseen by EU legislation apply. For the purposes of ASF control, Latvia is divided into four areas:

- Free area (grey).
- Part I - Area adjacent to the infection in the feral pig population (blue).
- Part II - Area with infection in the feral pig population (pink).
- Part III - Area with infection in the domestic pig and feral pig population (red).

The regionalisation, as of 18 May 2018, can be seen on the following map:

---

2 Updated document at time of audit SANTE/7113/2015 – Rev 7 ASF Strategy for Eastern Part of the EU
5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 TRACEABILITY AND TRADE RESTRICTIONS

5.1.1 Control of movement of pigs to slaughterhouses

Legal requirements


Findings

1. The Food and Veterinary Service issued Procedure KR.10.P.277 to provide guidance to official staff on the movement of live pigs and derived products from the ASF infected areas. This document was last revised on 09/03/18 as version 3.

2. Order No 131 of the State Chief Food and Veterinary Inspector establishes guidance and instruction for official staff to ensure food business operators comply with the laws and regulations corresponding to the consignments from the areas listed in Parts III, II and I of Decision 2014/709/EU, as well as from the ASF free areas.

3. When live pigs are despatched from areas listed in Part II or Part III of the Annex to Decision 2014/709/EU, this is carried out in accordance with the derogations provided for in Article 3, Article 3b and Article 4 of the Decision. The competent authority has established a system of holding approval and establishment approval.

4. Holdings wishing to use the derogations outlined in Articles 3, 3b and 4 of the Decision must first apply to the territorial structural unit for authorisation. This requires an on-site inspection with report of findings and the issue of a permit to authorise movement of pigs. This movement authorisation can be valid for 3 months (holding using Article 3b derogation), 6 months (holding using Article 3 derogation) or can be for a one off movement. Each renewal of movement permit requires an on-site inspection from the territorial structural unit.

5. At the time of issue of movement authorisation, the herd owner signs an affidavit to respect 30 day residency and standstill requirements.

6. Approved holdings are listed on the Food and Veterinary Service's website. The audit team visited a slaughterhouse in Part II- they confirmed that its suppliers were all approved holdings.

7. To move pigs to slaughter using Article 3b derogation, the slaughterhouse operator applies via the Agricultural Data Centre (ADC) database to move the pigs. The official veterinarian in the slaughterhouse assesses the application e.g. checks holding status, ASF regionalisation status and food chain information prior to authorising the individual movement event.
8. Once movement is authorised, the slaughterhouse operator generates two movement documents from ADC database. One of them accompanies pigs to slaughterhouse and the other one is retained at holding of origin.

9. The audit team visited a holding using Article 3b derogation and noted:

- The permit to move pigs from this holding to slaughterhouses was issued quarterly (five separate movement permits were available as the holding supplied five different abattoirs and each movement permit requires a route plan).

- The holding is inspected at least four times per annum by the territorial structural unit who, inter alia, review biosecurity plans. The common biosecurity plan (breeding holding and fattening unit) is not approved in advance by competent authority, which is not in line with Article 3b of Decision 2014/709/EU.

- There is official sampling for ASF, as required by Article 3b(b). The official veterinarian confirmed they select pigs to be sampled to ensure sick pigs and samples from all age groups and stables within holding are included.

- In addition, the business operator carries out regular surveillance for ASF. Records of post mortem examinations and sampling / test results for ASF were available with samples taken throughout the month e.g. 19 samples tested in January, 14 in February and 14 in March (2018). The audit team noted delays of up to 10 days between sampling and test results being available. The authorities confirmed this was due to the business operator collecting samples over a number of days before submitting them for laboratory testing.

- The audit team reviewed movements of pigs into this herd for the period January to March 2018 and confirmed all pigs originated from a single, separate breeding holding.

- For holdings using the derogation provided by Article 3b of Decision 2014/709/EU, the authorities confirmed they did not carry out a complete risk assessment related to the risk mitigation measures in place in both the breeding holding and the holding of dispatch. This is not in compliance with Article 3b(d) of Decision 2014/709/EU.

10. On the large commercial pig holdings visited, business operators had recently made significant investments in biosecurity e.g. enhanced disinfection points for transport vehicles and hygiene sluices for staff.

5.1.2 Control of fresh meat, meat preparations and meat products from domestic pig

**Legal requirements**

Findings

11. The authorities have provided guidance for officials on the approval of slaughterhouses, cutting plants and meat processing establishments under article 12 of Decision 2014/709/EU (Order 131, Section VI). At the slaughterhouse visited, the audit team saw the pre-approval inspection report. The report confirmed that the authorities had evaluated the operator's procedures which specified, inter alia, that pigs could only be slaughtered from Part II if the holdings complied with Article 3 or 3b of Decision 2014/709/EU. In addition, the operator had a policy to slaughter pigs from Part II on a separate day from pigs originating in Part I and the free area.

12. The authorities carry out four official inspections each year to each slaughterhouse, which include an assessment of traceability and application of measures related to ASF - the reports for slaughterhouse visited showed compliance. The audit team selected a consignment of pigs presented for slaughter and the operator demonstrated their ability to forward trace carcases.

13. The audit team reviewed conformity with the 30 day standstill requirement in a random selection of pig herds, supplying the slaughterhouse visited, and found them all compliant. In one consignment, pigs had moved to the slaughterhouse despite pig movements in to the consigning herd within the previous 30 days. The authorities explained this was one of the two holdings in the country using Article 3(1)(b) of Decision 2014/709/EU which permits the competent authority to define production units within a holding.

14. The audit team visited an operator producing minced meat, meat preparations and meat products. The procedures in place indicated the food business operator only accepted meat eligible for the EU market. For a product selected by the audit team, the operator demonstrated an adequate internal traceability system.

15. The competent authority performs one detailed official check on traceability per annum in all cutting plants and processing establishments in Latvia. This is in addition to traceability forming part of the inspection they carry out in all processing establishments at a minimum frequency of three times per annum. The recent official reports on traceability, for processing establishment visited, confirmed the reliability of their system. One report recorded a national health marked carcase (beef) being detected & rejected which confirms the implementation of operator's procedures.

16. The ADC database stores individual slaughter numbers for pigs which allows their tracing back to the holding of origin. Both competent authority and food business operator can access this information.

17. The authorities confirmed there is no routine post-mortem inspection for home slaughtered pigs on non-commercial holdings. On the non-commercial holding visited by audit team, the herd owner indicated they would inform the authorities of any
abnormalities observed during slaughter. On this non-commercial holding, located in Part II, the audit team noted two pigs slaughtered in 2017/18 with no input from the official veterinarian which is contrary to Article 16, of Directive 2002/60/EC (the eradication plan) and to the ASF strategy for Eastern Part of the EU (SANTE/7113/2015 - Rev 7) which requires home slaughtering only under veterinary supervision in Part II.

5.1.3 Control of carcases, fresh meat, meat preparations and meat products from feral pigs

Legal requirements


Findings

18. Food and Veterinary Service is the authority responsible for controls on animal health in both domestic and wild animals. At the time of audit, their responsibility for wild boar mainly included the receipt and processing of surveillance samples from hunters and supervision of stored wild boar carcases awaiting test results.

19. The State Forest Service is the authority responsible for hunting controls and collection of wildlife population data. Information provided by the State Forest Service shows a decrease in wild boar population over the past 5 hunting seasons (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hunting season</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wild boar population</td>
<td>74,107</td>
<td>55,354</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting bag</td>
<td>37,576</td>
<td>44,871</td>
<td>50,956</td>
<td>34,084</td>
<td>23,275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Order No. 77 of 7 May 2015 outlines national biosecurity measures for hunters. These include rules on disposal of animal by-products derived from wild boar, use of disinfectants in hunting grounds and the requirement to sample hunted wild boar for ASF testing. In order to strengthen biosecurity in hunting grounds, the competent authority confirmed the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 226 was published on 19 April 2018. The Regulation will be monitored and controlled by the Food and Veterinary Service in co-operation with the State Forest Service. Practicalities have yet to be agreed between Food and Veterinary Service and State Forest Service e.g. drafting of checklists and authorities anticipate it will be towards the end of 2018 before implementation begins.

---

3 In their response to the draft report the Competent Authority noted that the Food and Veterinary Service and State Forestry Service have agreed that implementation of the new rules for hunting ground biosecurity could start in January 2019.
21. The authorities estimate that seventy percent of hunting grounds have primary processing facilities (including access to chills) with the remainder of hunting grounds using home storage for carcases awaiting ASF test results. In hunting ground visited by audit team, facilities for dressing wild boar, chill storage and a dedicated pit for disposal of animal by-products were available.

22. State Forestry Service has a control plan in place which requires each hunting ground to be inspected at least once per year. A standardised checklist is used which does not allow for a detailed assessment of effectiveness of measures applied e.g. biosecurity. During the most recent inspection of the hunting ground visited (Part II), there was no indication on the checklist that biosecurity was evaluated.

23. All wild boars found dead, across the country, are tested for ASF.

24. All wild boars hunted in Part II and Part III are tested for ASF. Samples are taken by hunters who deliver them to a territorial structural unit and generally get the results by e-mail. A standardised sample submission form must be completed by hunters and includes, inter alia, the unique identification number allocated to carcase, geographical co-ordinates for place of shooting, name of hunter, address where carcase is stored and a declaration from hunter to confirm they will store carcase until test results are available. A fee of 30 euro is paid to hunters for sampling and an additional 50 euro if sample is from a female wild boar. The audit team observed there was a quick turnaround for test results and hunters / hunter representatives met were satisfied with service provided.

25. In one territorial unit visited, the competent authority confirmed they had no plan to perform official controls in hunting grounds. Instead, their inspections were mostly reactive e.g. to a positive ASF test result in hunted wild boar or a request to organise a driven hunt which requires a joint inspection and approval by the territorial unit and the Forest Service.

26. For carcases with positive results to ASF, the territorial structural unit seizes and destroys the carcase, supervises cleansing and disinfection of storage area and pays hunter 50 euro compensation for loss of carcase. In one territorial unit visited, the authorities confirmed there had been two instances when positive ASF results had been notified by the laboratory and carcases were not available for seizure and destruction. At closing meeting, officials confirmed sanctions had been taken against these two hunters.

27. In hunting ground visited (Part II), hunting leader confirmed members lived both locally and in Riga (free area). Hunting leader confirmed in 2017 -18 hunting season approximately 50 wild boar were shot and all were used for own consumption by all hunters. Therefore, some wild boar meat left Part II and hunting leader was not aware this was prohibited. This movement of wild boar carcases / fresh wild boar meat from Part II is not in accordance with Article 15(1)(b) of Decision 2014/709/EU.

28. The authorities confirmed there is one game handling establishment processing wild boar carcases in Latvia (Part II) with the remainder of wild boar carcases used for "own
consumption" by the hunters. The establishment processed 108 wild boar carcases in 2017 and 15 wild boar carcases to April 2018. The carcases arrive at the establishment with a hunter declaration confirming e.g. initial examination of carcase by trained hunter, date, time and place of hunting and generally fulfils the requirements of Annex III, Section IV, Chapter II of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004.

29. Wild boar carcases in this game handling establishment are only sourced from the free area. The food business operator and official veterinarian confirm this using the Food and Veterinary Service's interactive map for ASF regionalisation. The official veterinarian performs post mortem examination and samples carcase for trichinella. On receipt of negative trichinella result, oval health mark is applied to wild boar carcase. This is not in compliance with Article 15(1)(b) of Decision 2014/709/EU which prohibits consignments of fresh meat of feral pigs from the areas listed in the Annex being dispatched to other Member States or to other areas in the territory of the same Member State. This risk is mitigated by the fact that all carcases despatched from this game handling establishment are heat treated.

5.1.4 Control of ABPs of domestic and feral pigs

Legal requirements

Articles 2 and 7 of Commission implementing Decision 2014/709/EU.

Findings

30. For domestic pigs, there is a proforma for the movement of ABPs from Part III. The staff at the territorial structural unit visited explained that currently there is only one company responsible for collection and processing ABPs from part III. All the trucks had Global Positioning System (GPS), had an authorised route within Part III, and were sealed at a designated exit point where they were also disinfected. At the rendering plant, the competent authority opens the seal and ensures that trucks are cleaned and disinfected. Each consignment is accompanied by the proforma document.

31. The transport company had a contingency for breakdown e.g. a plan to tow broken truck to rendering establishment rather than unloading it.

32. In the hunting ground visited by audit team, evisceration of wild boars was done in a processing facility and ABPs disposed of in a closed pit.
Conclusions on traceability and trade restrictions

33. There is a comprehensive set of measure to ensure traceability of pigs moving to slaughterhouses and they work well.

34. Storage of wild boar carcasses and biosecurity in hunting grounds is poorly controlled and not all restrictions applicable to wild boar meat are respected. This increases the potential risk of spread of ASF infection.

35. Home slaughter of pigs, on non-commercial farms, is not carried out under veterinary supervision which weakens the surveillance for ASF on these farms.

36. The requirements of Article 3b of Decision 2014/709/EU, which derogates from the need for a 30 day standstill, are not fully implemented and may increase the risk of spread of ASF infection.

5.2 Measures in case of suspicion/confirmation of ASF in domestic pigs

Legal requirements

Articles 4-5 and 8-11 of Directive 2002/60/EC; Decision 2003/422/EC.

Findings

37. The authorities confirmed that all sick or dead pigs, for which ASF cannot be excluded on clinical signs, will be inspected by an official veterinarian and tested for ASF in accordance with Commission Decision 2003/422/EC.

38. The competent authority confirmed that in 2016 there were 17 suspicions of ASF notified in domestic pigs of which three were positive. In 2017 there were 14 suspicions of ASF reported of which eight were confirmed as outbreaks.

39. In one Regional office, the audit team reviewed an ASF outbreak file for a commercial farm with more than 5,000 pigs at the time of the outbreak. The documentation confirmed that the herd owner made the notification following the death of seven pigs over the previous two days. Officials from the territorial structural unit visited the holding on the day of notification, sampled both dead and sick pigs and submitted samples to national reference laboratory for ASF. An animal movement restriction was entered on the ADC database for the suspect holding on the day of notification. In addition, officials performed a preliminary epidemiological investigation when visiting the farm. The laboratory confirmed ASF on the day of notification.

40. The following day, the central competent authority issued three Orders directed at the infected premises, responsible territorial unit office and holdings in the protection and surveillance zones. The Order on infected premises included, inter alia, prohibition on hindering killing of pigs, advice on cleansing and disinfection of holding and movement prohibition on movements of animals off holding and restrictions on vehicle...
movements. The Order addressed to the territorial unit outlined their duties while the Order related to protection and surveillance zone detailed the restriction zones as determined by the central authority. Once the Orders are published, holdings in protection and surveillance zones are flagged as restricted on the ADC database. A text or e-mail is then automatically forwarded to herd owners notifying them of restrictions.

41. The competent authority confirmed that official visits to all holdings in the protection zone were performed within 7 days and visits to all holdings in surveillance zone within 10 days. The audit team reviewed one inspection report. It contained details on, inter alia, animal identification, biosecurity, details of the number of animals present and their health status and that biosecurity had been discussed with herd owner and an advisory biosecurity information leaflet had been left.

42. In addition to visiting all registered holdings, authorities confirmed they visited all houses in the protection and surveillance zones. In this particular outbreak, this activity led to the identification of four unregistered pigs. The authorities confirmed they applied sanctions on owners.

43. Depopulation of infected premises began the day after ASF was confirmed and was completed within 5 days. Expertise and advice on depopulation was provided on site by central authority staff and staff from another Member State who had recent experience in depopulation. Transport of carcases to rendering establishment and cleaning and disinfection of transport vehicles was under the supervision of competent authority.

44. The competent authority takes appropriate and timely measures (as required by EU legislation) following the suspicion and confirmation of ASF in order to control the spread of the disease.

Conclusions on measures in case of suspicion/confirmation of ASF in domestic pigs

44. The competent authority takes appropriate and timely measures (as required by EU legislation) following the suspicion and confirmation of ASF in order to control the spread of the disease.

5.3 Verification and supervision

Legal requirements

Articles 4 and 8 of Regulation No 882/2004; Directive 2002/60/EC (Articles 15, 16 and 22)

Findings

45. There is an expert group established which meets regularly and provides advice to the Food and Veterinary Service. An example of an agenda was made available to audit team and issues discussed included incentives for hunting female wild boar, removing restrictions on the number of wild boar hunted per season and the new biosecurity rules applicable in hunting grounds.

46. In 2017, the central competent authority carried out biosecurity audits on the 40 largest pig holdings in Latvia (with more than 1000 pigs) and provided advice to business operators at the time of inspection. In addition, they requested Ministry of Agriculture to
amend biosecurity requirements on holdings and met with Latvian pig associations and provided advice on how biosecurity on pig farms could be upgraded. Subsequently, Latvian pig breeders' association in cooperation with the Food and Veterinary Service and the Ministry of Agriculture developed comprehensive guidance on biosecurity.

47. There was an internal audit on ASF performed in 2015 and a further audit is planned for 2021.

48. During a large outbreak in 2017, the central competent authority was present on the infected premises to provide expertise and support.

49. The ASF expert group has not received results related to compliance with biosecurity in hunting grounds. The checklist used by State Forest Service does not allow for any detailed assessment of the effectiveness of the measures. Not all hunting grounds comply with biosecurity advice (see point 21) as many considered to have sub-standard facilities. The central authority estimate it will be October 2018 when official controls, related to the new rules for hunting ground biosecurity, will commence. At the time of audit, no plan for these official controls had been established.4

**Conclusions on verification and supervision**

50. The existence and contributions of the ASF expert group provide support for official control activities related to ASF. However, they cannot exercise their full role as they do not have all relevant data to verify the effectiveness of measures put in place.

### 5.4 FOLLOW-UP OF PREVIOUS AUDIT

The table below summarizes the follow-up to the relevant recommendations made in the report of DG(SANTE)/2016-8766 audit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To ensure that the expert group provides assistance in all areas covered by the sub-indents of Article 15.2(a) of Directive 2002/60/EC and in particular, in the verification of effectiveness of all control measures, as required by the last sub-indent.</td>
<td>Not addressed. See finding No. 49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 In their response to the draft report the Competent Authority noted that implementation of the new rules for hunting ground biosecurity could start in January 2019.
6 **OVERALL CONCLUSIONS**

The authorities have successfully implemented movement controls for live pigs from the infected area through a system of approved holdings and processing establishments. The official controls are well organised. The combination of traceability in place for both live pigs and their products provides assurances that fresh meat, meat preparations and meat products from domestic pigs are correctly health marked for placing on the market and contributes to reducing the risk of spread of infection.

The current arrangements for collection and transport of animal by-products from the infected area reduce the risk of spreading disease through potentially contaminated products.

All measures taken at time of suspicion and confirmation of ASF outbreaks in 2017 were in line with EU requirements and were performed in a timely manner.

The audit team noted some weaknesses related to biosecurity in hunting grounds and storage of wild boar carcases. In 2017, the vast majority of hunted wild boar were used for own consumption by the hunters. The storage of these wild boar carcases in hunting grounds is poorly controlled. Despite extensive ASF publicity and awareness campaigns directed at hunters, not all requirements for handling of wild boar carcases and movement restrictions on wild boar meat are respected. The authorities estimate that seventy percent of hunting grounds had primary processing facilities (including access to chills) with the remainder of hunting grounds using home storage for carcases awaiting ASF test results. Consequently, this increases the potential risk of spreading infection. The authorities have very recently adopted biosecurity rules for hunting grounds which set standards and provide enforcement powers. However, while these new measures will help address the issues, their implementation will take time.

The absence of routine official inspection of pigs slaughtered on non-commercial holdings for own consumption weakens the surveillance on these farms.

7 **CLOSING MEETING**

A closing meeting was held with the central competent authority on 27 April 2018 when the audit team presented the main findings and preliminary conclusions of the audit to the competent authority. During this meeting the competent authority provided certain clarifications and did not indicate any major disagreement with the findings and preliminary conclusions.
8 **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 recommendations set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. | To ensure home slaughter of pigs in Part II and Part III takes place under official supervision.  
SANTE/7113/2015-Rev 7 – ASF Strategy for Eastern Part of the EU.  
Recommendation based on conclusion No. 35  
Associated finding No.17 |
| 2. | Measures should be introduced to ensure that hunted wild boar do not leave the hunting ground before ASF test results are available.  
SANTE/7113/2015-Rev 7 – ASF Strategy for Eastern Part of the EU.  
Recommendation based on conclusion No. 34  
Associated finding Nos.21 |
| 3. | Biosecurity in hunting grounds should be improved. Collaboration between FVS and SFS should be strengthened at central and county level to ensure minimum biosecurity requirements are met by hunters – to include the availability of adequate primary processing facilities and chill facilities.  
SANTE/7113/2015-Rev 7 – ASF Strategy for Eastern Part of the EU.  
Recommendation based on conclusion No. 34  
Associated finding Nos.21 and 49 |
| 4. | CA to take measures to approve the common biosecurity plan for holdings using the derogation provided for by Article 3b of Decision 2014/709/EU.  
Commission Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU Article 3b(e).  
Recommendation based on conclusion No. 36  
Associated finding Nos.9 |
| 5. | CA to take measures to ensure that prior authorisation for the movement of pigs is based on a risk assessment related to risk mitigation measures for holdings using the derogation provided for by Article 3b of Decision 2014/709/EU.  
Commission Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU Article 3b(d).  
Recommendation based on conclusion No. 36  
Associated finding Nos.9 |

The competent authority's response to the recommendations can be found at:  
## ANNEX 1 – LEGAL REFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Reference</th>
<th>Official Journal</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>