

## **KEYNOTE: CURRENT SITUATION AND METHODS OF CONTROL OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER**

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African Swine Fever (ASF) is an infectious viral disease that causes high economic losses due to necessity of depopulation of pigs in affected areas, sanitary measures, trade restrictions etc. The virus (ASFV) is relatively stable in the unprocessed meat products and environment, thus, large territories are at risk due to free movement of people and products. The ASFV does not affect people and animals except wild and domestic pigs. Some ticks can become infected and carry the virus for years. Adaptation of the virus by changing into less virulent form would mean the threat of an endemic situation in the area. The disease is endemic in domestic and wild pigs in most of sub-Saharan Africa and Sardinia/Italy. There is no treatment for ASF, and no vaccine has been developed. In case of infection with less virulent ASFV strains, recovered pigs could spread the virus as long as they live. By clinical symptoms, ASF is very similar to Classical Swine Fever. Methods of laboratory diagnostics are well developed and efficient for identification of ASFV and virus-specific antibodies. Experience of eradication of ASF in Spain suggests the importance of serological monitoring of pigs.

In the spring of 2007 the ASF was detected in Caucasus region. Same virus was detected in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia. The ASFV circulating in the Caucasus and the Russian Federation is a highly virulent virus. No reduction of virulence was observed since the first outbreak in Georgia. In the year of 2011, the ASF remained in the Caucasus, southern parts of Russia and appeared occasionally as far as St. Petersburg and region, and in the area of N. Novgorod. Domestic pigs play important role in ASFV spread; they transfer the virus to wild boars. The virus circulates in the population of wild boars depending on their density in the area. Occasionally, the disease is spread from wild to domestic pigs. There is no evidence of ticks being involved in the process. Thus, human activity in raising pigs is largely responsible for continuous spread of the disease. Despite vigorous monitoring and sanitary measures, the disease has not been stopped. The control strategy for ASF should consider international (especially Spanish) experience and local situation. The strategy is based on number of important steps including rapid localization of the disease by trained specialists, setting up buffer zones, constant monitoring of swine population and farms, improvement of diagnostic facilities, training of veterinary personnel, development of system of information and international collaboration.