G7 Chief Veterinary Officers' meeting

Conclusions on prevention and control of swine fevers (both African and classical) and consequences for international trade

Paris, 24th May 2019

BACKGROUND

1. Both African swine fever (ASF) and classical swine fever (CSF) are on the rise with new cases being diagnosed in Europe and Asia. ASF and CSF are caused by different viruses although they share pathogenic characteristics. This explains why they are often compared to each other, in particular when it comes to disease control, while their differential diagnostic can only be done with laboratory testing.
2. Both affect domestic and wild pigs and lead to the implementation of stringent contingency plans. While there is no transmission to human, the economic consequences of these diseases are of paramount importance, leading to the closure of many live pig, germplasm and pig meat markets throughout the world, and impact on other agricultural commodities.
3. Building upon the conclusions and commitments on transboundary animal diseases (TADs), shared during the G7 CVOs meeting held in **Japan in November 2016** and in **Italy in October 2017**, the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of G7 countries met on the 24th May 2019 in Paris. They shared their respective experiences regarding prevention and control of swine fevers and discussed a common approach in the view of limiting their consequences on the global trade, with due consideration to the OIE standards.

CONSIDERATIONS

4. *Whereas:*
   - *The prevention, control and eradication of CSF and ASF are a matter of high priority as these diseases are of high impact to swine production and trade;*
   - *Wild pig populations can play an important role in spreading and maintaining the disease;*
   - *A high level of preparedness including farm biosecurity and wild pigs management is essential;*
   - *Good governance of veterinary services, following the provisions of section 3 (Quality of veterinary services) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code ("OIE Code"), is key. It is also essential that neighbouring countries coordinate their strategies in preventing and controlling TADs;*
   - *Unjustified trade disruption should be avoided and the OIE standards, adopted by consensus by all OIE members that define safe trade conditions for pigs and their commodities, must be applied and respected;*
   - *Public-private partnership can be useful to implement all relevant actions, considering the multiplicity of actors involved and the necessary sharing of responsibilities.*

RECOMMANDATIONS ON PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF SWINE FEVERS

A. Sanitary governance

5. Full access to the relevant information, in particular through OIE notification of outbreaks (WAHIS), is needed to build trust and cooperation.

6. The Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) plays a crucial role and should be promoted even between countries free from the diseases. The FAO and the World Bank may assist and support countries in enhancing their management capacities, as well as the OIE through the PVS pathway.

B. Biosecurity and traceability

7. Biosecurity is of crucial importance to prevent the entry and spread of swine fevers in pig holdings, even in the smaller ones. Biosecurity is essential for a country whose wild pigs are affected in order to maintain a free status for domestic pigs. Swill feeding should be banned unless appropriately heat treated and authorized by the competent authority. Appropriate biosecurity measures should also be implemented during transport. There should be sharing of best practices on biosecurity and as far as possible harmonised standards.
8. All premises and animals should be registered and identified in a centralized database to ensure a correct traceability for any movement or to manage movement restrictions.
9. Exercises need to be conducted to challenge and improve preparedness plans.

C. Surveillance

10. In view of defining an efficient surveillance strategy, a risk assessment including the identification of risk areas in the country and if appropriate in adjacent territories, with a good understanding of the wild pig populations, should be carried out.
11. Passive enhanced surveillance of found dead wild pigs, routine surveillance of morbidity/mortality in pig holdings and testing samples from high-risk animals are needed for early detection of swine fevers. Targeted active surveillance should come into play in affected or threatened zones.

D. Wildlife management and hunting practices

12. Hunters are the main actors involved in the management of wildlife. They should be aware of the risks related to swine fevers, actively contribute to passive surveillance, be trained in biosecurity, share information and adapt their practices to the epidemiological situation. Cooperation between hunting organisations from contiguous countries should be encouraged.

D1. Wild pigs management in disease free areas

13. The risk of introduction of swine fevers should be minimized through preventive and long-term management of wild pigs in order to reduce their density (hunting management, ban of supplementary feeding). Long-term management and regulation of wild pig populations require an enhanced coordination and cooperation (including awareness raising) between all involved stakeholders (environmental and veterinary services, hunters, farmers, forestry management bodies, etc.).

D2. Wild pigs management in infected areas

14. The eradication of ASF or CSF is a challenging process because of the potentially high number of infectious wild pigs present. During the first steps of the disease management, any attempt to hunt or depopulate should be banned to avoid the spread of the disease following the escape of animals.
15. Prompt removal of the contaminated carcass should be carried out systematically, under strict biosecurity conditions and by trained staff, to avoid the persistence of the virus in the environment.
16. Any dispatch of wild pig or feral pigs must be banned because of the high risk for transmitting the disease.
17. Wild pig proof fencing, over adequate distances, is an effective way to contain wild pigs and disease in a defined area. The disease eradication can be achieved during the enzootic phase through a well-designed active wild pig depopulation within the fenced area.

E. Vaccination

18. Vaccination of domestic and wild pigs is a proven mean to prevent or reduce spread and losses in countries where **CSF** is enzootic. The effectiveness of a vaccination policy is based on a combination of prophylactic mass vaccination in a protection zone (perifocal vaccination) and culling of infected domestic pigs in the outbreak zone.

19. Scientific and technical collaborations, at regional or international level, as well as adequate funding, should be encouraged to further progress develop a vaccine against **ASF**.

F. Border protection

20. Risk analysis and risk profiling should be carried out for control at borders (personal luggage, vehicles, etc) to enhance borders biosecurity.
21. Sharing of intelligence data and best practices on illegal trade and personal luggage interceptions and virus detections will support targeted effective controls. Cooperation with relevant authorities is also important to prevent prohibited items to enter the country.

G. Awareness campaigns

22. Proper communication guidance and awareness campaigns towards all stakeholders[1] and general public should be deployed by the competent authorities on main transport routes, including working with multi-national airlines, and entry points at borders to prevent introduction and dissemination of swine fevers through the human factor. Those who travel to hunt should be specifically targeted with common communications.

CONCLUSIONS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE ISSUES

23. We consider that the implementation of the relevant chapters of the OIE Code, illustrated by the good practices described above, should enable a country with an adequate governance, as appropriate to prevent, control or even eradicate swine fevers while ensuring business continuity.

24. We stress the importance of animal disease zoning, enshrined in the OIE Code as well as in the case law of the WTO SPS Agreement. An exporting country affected by ASF or CSF should be able to continue to export from zones deemed as disease-free, as well as from free compartments, provided all the sanitary guarantees required by the importing country are given.

25. We note the provision given by the OIE Code for a country to be recognized as free of ASF or CSF in the domestic pig population kept in farms while having cases in wildlife.

26. We strongly support the work of the Observatory to monitor and evaluate the implementation of OIE standards. It will provide a greater understanding of the challenges that countries may face in their implementation.

This document was endorsed during the meeting of the G7 Chief Veterinary Officers in Paris on 24th May 2019

Attached : list of participants

[1] Policy makers, border inspection posts and customs officials, traders, farmers, travellers, hunters, consumers, non-governmental organizations, transporters, environmental and leisure stakeholders and any other groups that could positively influence eradication.