

## **Current situation on the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza**

(02/01) In **Germany**, the outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) of the subtype H5N1 was officially detected on 9 January 2024 in Bavaria on a farm with around 19,000 turkeys in Dattenhausen/Ziertheim, in the district of Dillingen. On 5 January, the outbreak of avian influenza (subtype H5N1) was officially detected in Schleswig-Holstein in a laying hen farm in the municipality of Wangels in the district of Ostholstein. On 3 January 2024, the outbreak of avian influenza of subtype H5N1 was officially detected in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania on a farm with approx. 31,600 laying hens in the municipality of Poseritz on Rügen. The corresponding exclusion zones have been established.

**France** has detected bird flu on a duck farm in the Vendee region in the west of the country, the farm ministry said on its website on 2 January, the first such outbreak since France started vaccinating against the virus last year. As is well known, France launched a vaccination campaign early last October, targeting ducks only as they can easily transmit the virus without showing symptoms. The vaccine is not supposed to fully protect birds from catching the disease but to limit its spread and thus avoid massive preventive culls. It comes in addition to standard biosecurity and control measures. France had raised the risk level of bird flu to 'high' from 'moderate' last month after new cases of the disease were detected, forcing poultry farms to keep birds indoors to stem the spread of the highly contagious virus.

The Philippine Department of Agriculture has imposed an indefinite ban on imports of poultry and related products, including wild birds, from the two countries following recent bird flu outbreaks in Belgium and France. The Philippine import ban also applies to Belgian and French poultry products such as poultry meat, day-old chicks, hatching eggs and poultry semen. In 2023, the Philippines imported 426,620 tons of poultry meat, with Belgium accounting for 0.59 percent and France for 0.01 percent.

## **Current situation on African swine fever**

(02/02) According to the latest figures from the Supreme Veterinary Authority, a total of 45 new outbreaks of African swine fever (ASF) were confirmed in the wild boar population in Poland from 21 to 29 December 2023, most of them in the West Pomeranian and Warmian-Masurian Voivodeships. In addition, the viral infection has been detected in wild boars in Lower Silesia, Opole and the Subcarpathian Mountains. According to official figures, a total of 2,669 ASF outbreaks in wild boar have been confirmed in Poland since the beginning of 2023 up to 29 December. Compared to 2022, when 2,108 outbreaks were reported, the number has risen significantly. The veterinary authority also reported 30 outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs in 2023, compared to just 14 in 2022. In the years 2018 to 2021, however, there were still more than 100 ASF outbreaks in domestic pig herds.

## **New type of circovirus discovered for the first time in pigs and wild boar in Europe**

(02/03) The novel porcine circovirus type 4 (PCV-4) has been detected in Europe for the first time. This pathogen was discovered in domestic pigs in China in 2019, and later also in South Korea and Thailand. So far, however, it has been limited to Asia. According to a study by Spanish scientists, the results of which were published in October in the "Virology Journal", PCV-4 was also detected in the Spanish pig population. The detection was carried out in wild boars and free-ranging Iberico pigs in the centre and south of the country. The virus was not found in the intensively reared pigs in the north and east of Spain, nor in animals in Italy that were also tested. The study was conducted with samples obtained between 2018 and 2022. The detection of the PCV-4 genome was performed using various conventional or quanti-

tative real-time PCR. In wild boars, 57 out of 166 samples or 34.3% were positive, and in Iberico pigs nine out of 223 or 4%. According to the authors, the relatively high prevalence in wild boar and free-ranging pigs suggests intra- and interspecific transmission. The lack of detection of PCV-4 in intensively reared pigs is likely to be related to the higher level of biosecurity and the lack of contact with the wild.

The incidence of emerging and recurrent infectious diseases in pigs is continuously increasing, according to the study. The globalisation of trade and the worldwide movement of humans and animals contribute to its spread. However, the specific route of entry of PCV-4 into wild boars and Iberian pigs in Spain is still unknown. Given the economic and social importance of the pig industry in Spain and Europe, the authors say the spread of emerging pathogens such as PCV-4 should be a cause for concern. Porcine circovirus can lead to diseases such as PCV-2-SD in piglets (formerly post-weaning multisystemic wasting syndrome - PMWS), or porcine dermatitis and nephropathy syndrome (PDNS), especially in combination with other factors. Diseases of the respiratory, gastrointestinal tract and reproductive organs, which are summarised under the term porcine circovirus disease (PCVD), can also be triggered. Infectious and non-infectious co-factors usually determine the occurrence as well as the course and severity of clinical disease symptoms.

### **France: Spread of epizootic haemorrhagic disease slows down**

(02/04) The spread of epizootic haemorrhagic disease (EHD) in France has slowed down. As the Ministry of Agriculture in Paris announced at the beginning of this year, 3,708 outbreaks of the animal disease were known nationwide on farms up to and including 3 January. 20 départements were affected. At the end of November, the ministry reported a total of 3,556 cases from 18 départements. One of the new additions is Morbihan, which is located in the south of Brittany, so that the whole of Brittany is now declared a restricted zone. The spread of the disease to the north is thus progressing but has slowed down in the area. The first EHD cases in France were registered on 25 September 2023 in départements on the Spanish border.

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Editor: European Poultry, Egg and Game Association (EPEGA),

Am Weidendamm 1A, DE 10117 Berlin

Manager: Christine Amling/Sebastian Werren

Tel.: +49 30 590099-562, E-Mail: [info@epega.org](mailto:info@epega.org), Internet: <http://www.epega.org>

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