

swine have consequently been placed under surveillance and in which specified measures are being taken to protect domestic swine from infection by feral swine)? How will APHIS requirements change as EU wild boar control areas change?

The site visit report notes that a seropositive wild boar was detected in 1999 in the Netherlands. Are there wild boar control areas in that country? Additionally, Italy has a significant wild boar population that overlays the main pig-producing areas. Although Italy has had no reported CSF outbreaks in 2002, it had several outbreaks each year previously.

*Response:* Swine semen will be allowed to be imported into the United States from a wild boar control area. As discussed in the spatial and temporal section of the risk analysis, some of the outbreaks in domestic swine follow domestic animal movement or related pathways in the EU. The analysis documented that the number of outbreaks and the extent of undetected CSF spread associated with these pathways are actually greater than those that have been associated with disease originating from direct contact with infected wild boar and any associated proximity spread.

The clearest examples of these associations are evident in the outbreaks that occurred in the Netherlands and in Germany. The primary outbreak for the epidemic in the Netherlands actually occurred in Paderborn, Germany. The Netherlands outbreaks were linked to infectious material from Germany that contaminated a Dutch lorry. The improperly disinfected truck carried infectious material back to the Netherlands after transporting pigs in the Paderborn area of Germany. In this epidemic, secondary spread occurred through the movement of an empty truck into the Netherlands, where additional spread took place from a variety of causes, including the movement of swine, people, equipment, and semen for artificial insemination. Due in part to the Netherlands' relatively long risky period (the period before the disease was detected and controls implemented), a total of 429 outbreaks occurred in the Netherlands during this epidemic.

In contrast, in Germany during the same time period there were 56 outbreaks. Fourteen of these were primary outbreaks (due to either contact with wild boar or unknown causes that may have been contact with wild boar) with very little secondary spread, in contrast to the enormous secondary spread that occurred in the Netherlands. The outbreaks in Germany occurred

primarily in areas that were already under EU restriction because disease had been detected in wild boar. As discussed in the analysis, APHIS attributed the relative lack of disease spread in Germany to movement restrictions and increased surveillance and control mechanisms, which were required by EU legislation and also conducted in part due to the presence of infected wild boar. During 1997 and 1998, Germany had a much shorter risky period than the Netherlands, with far less undetected and uncontrolled secondary spread. APHIS requirements will not change as wild boar control areas change. In response to the commenter's question, there are no wild boar control areas in the Netherlands.

All of these factors led to the conclusion that the risk to the United States of importing CSF-affected swine or swine products is not greater for imports from areas in close proximity to wild boar than it is from areas like the Netherlands that had more difficulty detecting a CSF incursion and had substantially greater secondary spread before the disease was detected and controls implemented. In short, CSF is found and controlled more quickly in areas of the EU where it is expected to be found, such as in close proximity to wild boar in Germany, than it is in areas where it is not expected to be found, such as in the Netherlands. The greater risk to the United States is from those areas with longer risky periods and substantially greater undetected secondary spread.

No statistical or quantitative methods have been applied to estimate the risk to EU herds from wild boar, because the focus of the risk analysis was on the risk to U.S. herds rather than EU herds.

*Comment:* Local veterinary units are important in local CSF eradication efforts. Are methods employed by the local veterinary units standardized and monitored by a central authority?

*Response:* Local veterinary units are subject to the national rules and regulations of the EU Member State in which they are located, as well as the relevant EU animal health legislation. National contingency plans must be reviewed and approved by EC authorities. Within these constraints, protection zones and surveillance zones are often established based on the boundaries of the local veterinary units.

*Comment:* Are reports from the EU Standing Veterinary Committee the best source of current listings of EU restrictions on swine movement due to a high prevalence of seropositive wild boars? What information will be made available to APHIS to allow it to adjust its listing of infected regions?

*Response:* As standard practice, there is direct communication between the EC and APHIS within 24 hours of an outbreak. Such information is then compiled in the reports of the EU Standing Veterinary Committee.

*Comment:* It would be helpful if all documentation submitted in support of a regionalization request that is posted to the APHIS Internet website be in English.

*Response:* We agree with the commenter. Under § 92.2, submission of information required by the regulations to accompany a regionalization request must be in English. We are encouraging countries requesting regionalization to provide English translations of all supporting documentation.

*Comment:* In its site visit report, APHIS noted that detailed reports on six CSF outbreaks that occurred in 1999 were reviewed and that all six occurred within previously established protection or surveillance zones. The report also notes that data from 2000 was presented but was not detailed. Was there anything of interest in the information from the 2000 outbreaks?

*Response:* Two CSF outbreaks occurred in domesticated swine in Germany in 2000. The two outbreaks were in Kreis Bernkastel-Wittlich (landers of Rhineland Palatinate) and were included on the maps in the spatial and temporal section of the risk analysis. Both outbreaks were situated in an area where there had been long-standing movement restrictions on domesticated swine due to CSF in wild boar. Therefore, these outbreaks would have posed no substantive risk to the United States.

*Comment:* Since January 2002, the EU has been responding to continuing CSF outbreaks in Germany by increasing the size of the areas from which exports of live swine and semen are not allowed. In light of such an evolving situation, has APHIS considered conducting a "test exercise" to review how the agency would apply its import restrictions and procedures? Has the evolving situation altered APHIS' view of the adequacy of the EU disease control procedures?

*Response:* With regard to the recommendation of a "test exercise," APHIS has ongoing experience in responding to outbreaks of animal diseases of concern in foreign regions, including such serious diseases as CSF and FMD, and will continue to take the measures necessary to ensure that such diseases are not introduced into the United States. With regard to how the evolving disease situation in the EU affects APHIS' conclusions regarding disease risk, as noted earlier, the risk