



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Required Report - public distribution

Date: 8/29/2006

GAIN Report Number: BU6006

Bulgaria

Livestock and Products

Classical Swine Fever Outbreak and Pork Market Effect

2006

Approved by:

Susan Reid

U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Mila Boshnakova

Report Highlights:

In August, Bulgaria officially announced its third classical swine fever outbreak. The upcoming EU animal health inspections may challenge Bulgarian vaccination practices with possible negative consequences for the sector. Although the MinAg is committed to eradicating classical swine fever in Bulgaria, the industry needs to make a more serious effort to address EU structural and health requirements.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Sofia [BU1]
[BU]

The outbreak 3
Background 3
Industry response 3
Government policy 4
Ambiguous future for the pork industry 4

The outbreak

On August 3, Bulgaria officially announced its third Classical Swine Fever (CSF) outbreak. The outbreak is located in Kamenar village, Pomorie area, close to the Black Sea port of Bourgas, Southeast Bulgaria. The disease was identified at a small commercial pig farm. The National Reference Veterinary Lab tests confirmed the presence of CSF on August 2.

Total 85 sick and contact pigs from the farm and from two neighboring yards were culled. All pigs in the 3 km and 10 km radius zones around the outbreak were sample tested.

The regional veterinary office in Bourgas issued a livestock (live pigs) movement ban providing an exception only for those animals destined for slaughter if prior clinical tests were negative. Disinfection of the outbreak area followed after the culling according to the National CSF Surveillance program.

This CSF outbreak is the third since the beginning of the year. The previous two outbreaks were in Malko Sharkovo, Yambol area, and in Elhovo area, both located not far from this third outbreak (all in Bourgas region). In total about 300 pigs were culled. Farmers were compensated at 3.25 leva/kilo (\$2.16/kilo) live weight.

Background

Bulgaria was required to stop vaccination against CSF to meet EU animal health requirements. Thus, the country switched to marker vaccination over the last 4 months of 2005, and completely stopped vaccination as of January 2006. However, the lack of professional dialogue on this issue between the government veterinary service and the industry has resulted in violations of major laws and EU-harmonized regulations.

Industry response

The pork industry continues to protest termination of vaccination as a premature policy. Since CSF is a serious and traditional problem not only in Bulgaria but also in the region (Romania as of today has hundreds of outbreaks), the local industry considers the eradication program as unrealistic and harmful to the industry. According to the pork farmers, the government veterinary system is not capable of coping with the most challenging issues such as to vaccinate and control movement of wild boar population, to stringently control illegal live pig trade, to liquidate non-registered small size pork farms and slaughterhouses, and to implement active CSF surveillance program. Most industry sources consider the veterinary system as inefficient, and of weak administrative and professional capacity.

Attracted by high pork prices, good consumer demand on the EU market, and by a long-standing local meat deficit, many pork farms invested in imported pig breeds in 2005 in preparation to grow pigs and export pork for the EU-15 market by 2007. At the same time, however, fearing inevitable CSF outbreaks (and destruction of sick and contacted animals), many farms illegally vaccinated swine in 2006.

Bulgaria still produces a vaccine against CSF at a research institute in Vratza and exports it to Macedonia. Allegedly, some of these exports were, in fact, destined for the local market. Local experts talk not only about a black market for vaccines but also about a market for negative CSF samples at about \$2.0 per a sample. This information has been confirmed unofficially by industry sources and media. Experts say, EU veterinary officials are informed about this illegal practice.

Government policy

The Bulgarian Veterinary Service is trying to demonstrate serious concern towards CSF, and to undertake all possible measures given its limited resources. The CVO has warned the Association of Pork Producers to immediately cease illegal vaccination. Warnings also included liquidation of vaccinated pigs and lack of financial compensation to farmers.

In a recent ordinance, the Vet Service called for destruction of all pigs being raised illegally on the outskirts of villages and towns in rural areas which are not legally registered, not subject of regular veterinary control, and carry a high risk for CSF. Special measures are also undertaken regarding the local garbage depots, also often carrying CSF risks. The above regulations are to be implemented by the veterinary officers in cooperation with local mayors and authorities.

In mid-2006 (July), the GOB passed a regulation for compensation of farmers in case of infectious animal diseases. According to this regulation, only legally registered farmers who have been applying the necessary measures under the mandatory surveillance programs and have identified and registered livestock, will be able to receive such compensation. The compensation will be based on the average market prices for the month preceding the culling of animals. Although this regulation is a major step ahead in the area of animal health prevention, it does not address the highest risk factor, i.e. the large number of small, non-registered, backyard, semi-subsistence livestock farms where the animal health and biosecurity issues are of serious concern.

Ambiguous future for the pork industry

Bulgaria expects an in-depth EU inspection on animal health issues in the fall of 2006. Reportedly, the emphasis will be given to CSF, Avian influenza, BSE, and TSE . The country has already been given a "red flag" in the area of destruction of animal waste (and especially the BSE surveillance program) due to lack of sufficient and well functioning incinerators.

The pessimistic scenario regarding the CSF decisions includes possible ban on pork exports to the EU (in the past, Bulgaria was not able to export pork to the EU due the CSF mandatory vaccination); and/or continuation of mandatory vaccination for another year or two; and/or eventual ban on trade in Bulgarian origin pork on the EU market. Thus, if Bulgaria becomes a full EU member on January 1, 2007, local farms will not be able to sell pork even on the local Bulgarian market. The optimistic option is for the Bulgarian veterinary authorities to manage to convince the EU to have a regionalized ban on pork exports from the area of Bourgas.