

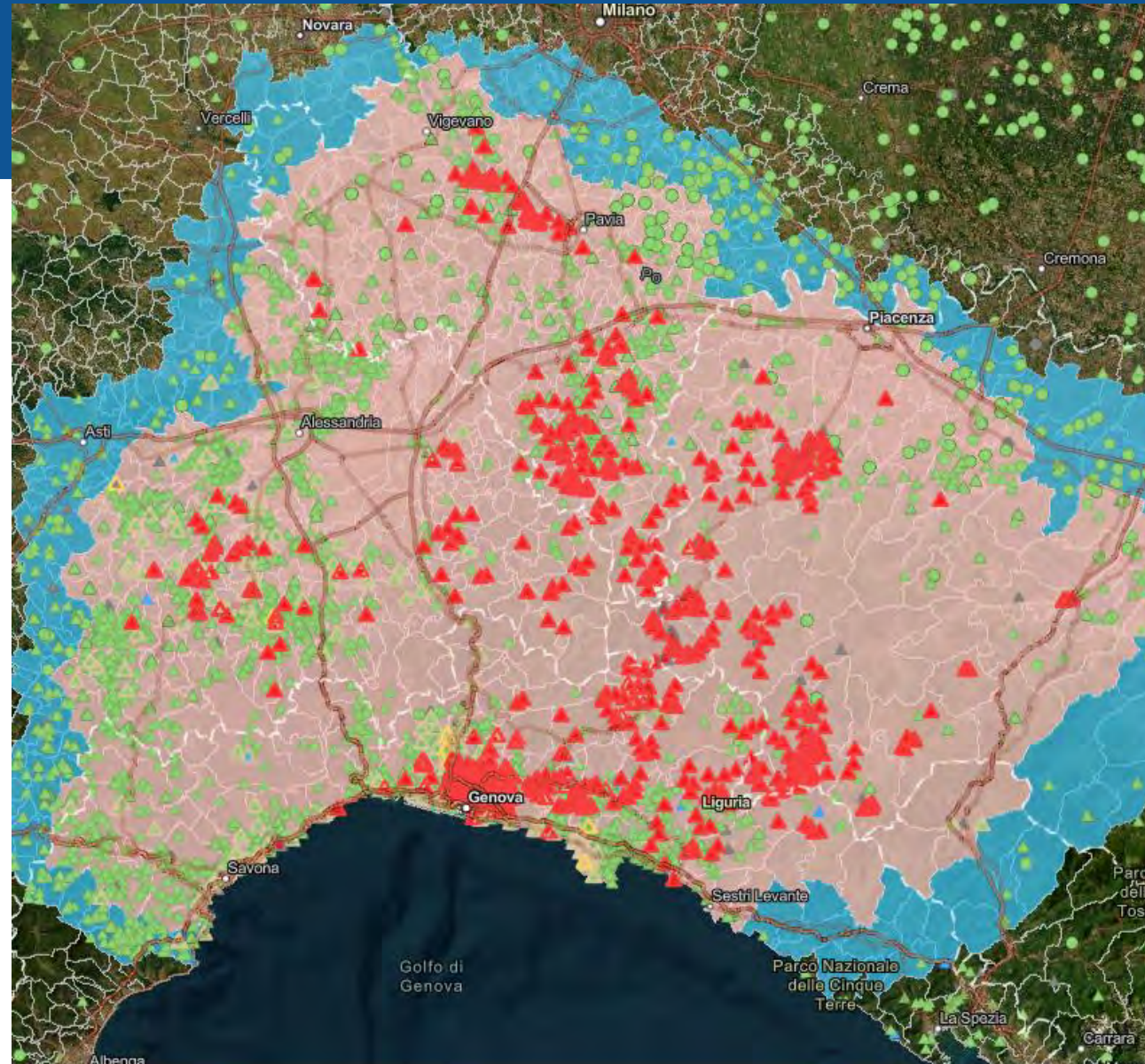


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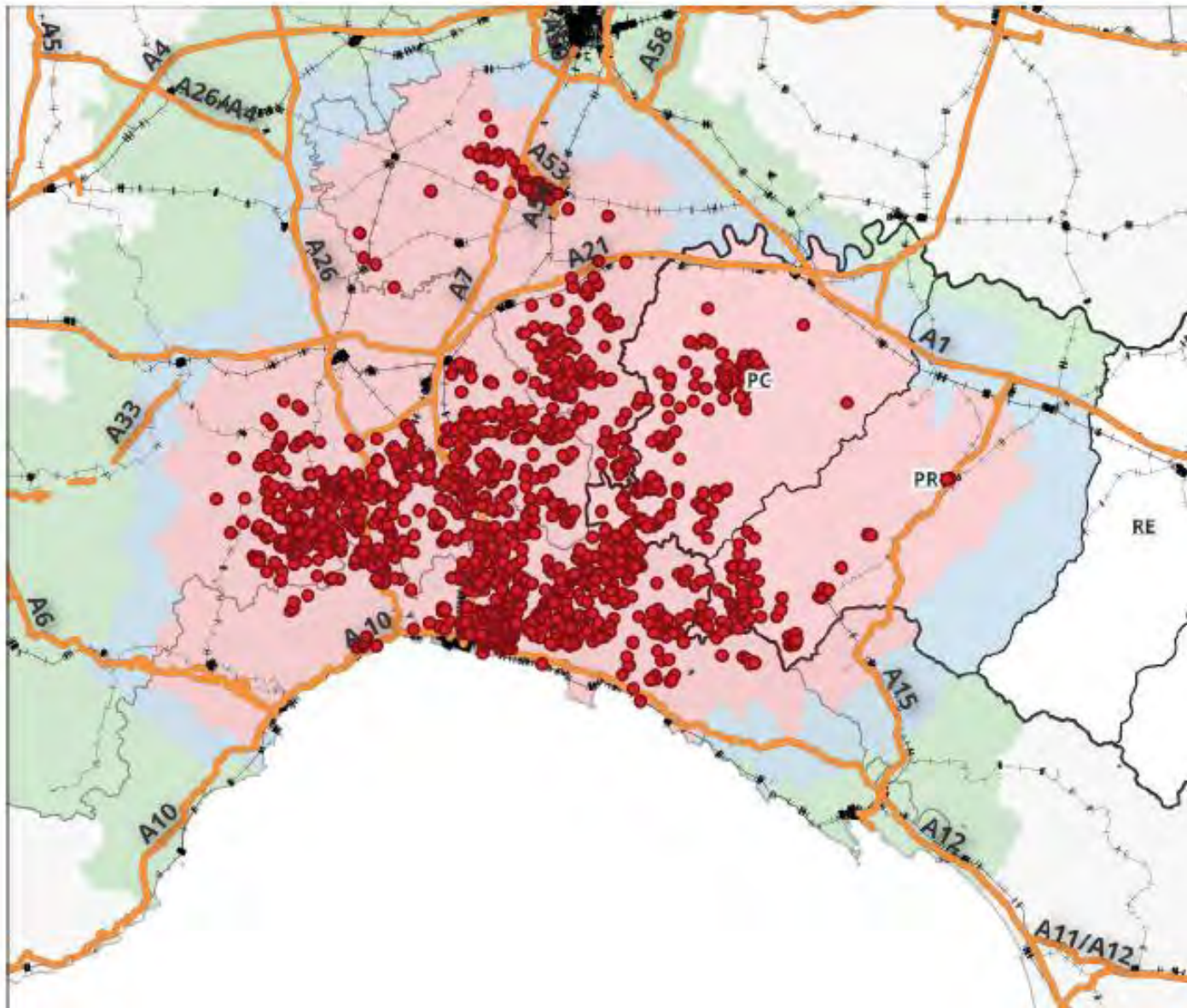
African swine fever EUVET mission to Lombardia and Emilia Romagna Italy

(2- 4 July 2024)

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ASF in wild boar and domestic pigs in northern Italy in 2024



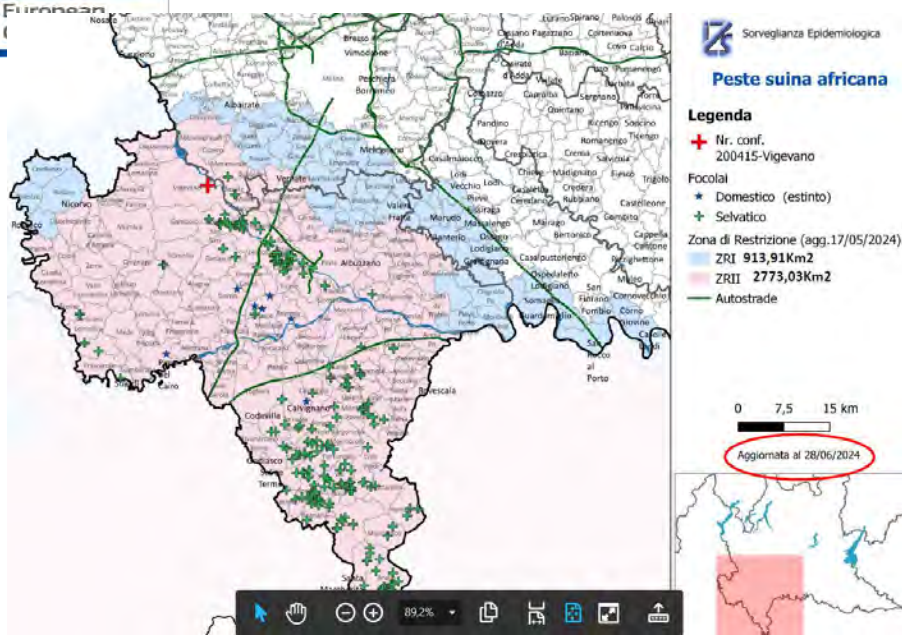
ASF in wild boar and domestic pigs in northern Italy in 2024



Places visited:

Lombardia
Pavia province, ASL
Parco del Ticino

Emilia Romagna
Piacenza province, ASL
Parma province, ASL
Highway A15





Providing on-the-spot assistance

- most suitable ASF eradication measures
- scientific, technical, managerial aspects
- preparedness and surveillance in wild boar
- preparedness and surveillance in domestic pigs

Specific questions

Are the ASF control measures being applied in northern Italy sufficient to prevent further spread, particularly east of the A15 motorway and south (Tuscany)?

How can the risk of ASF spreading be reduced (hunting strategy, surveillance, fencing, biosecurity)?

Are the ASF control measures in place adequate and effective?

Are biosecurity measures adequate to protect domestic pig holdings within the restriction zones?



Main conclusions and recommendations

Overall disease control strategy

- The overall disease control strategy in northern Italy needs to be improved. Each region/province carries out its own measures with minimum coordination with its neighbors.
- There is a need for a coordinated and harmonised disease control strategy for northern Italy that considers the overall epidemiological situation, regardless of administrative boundaries.
- A group of experts should draw up a common ASF strategy for northern Italy, to be applied in a coordinated way in all regions and provinces.
- One common strategy for northern Italy is needed.



Main conclusions and recommendations

Hunting strategy

- The scope of the hunting strategy should be address those questions: Is hunting done to reduce the wild boar population in certain areas so that there is no danger to domestic pig farms, or is hunting done to stop the epidemic spread of ASF?
- For certain areas within the restricted zones with a high density of domestic pigs, there are plans to reduce the density of wild boar to zero through hunting measures.
- Reducing the wild boar population to zero seems an objective difficult to reach. Instead, domestic pig populations should be protected by good biosecurity measures.
- Hunting should primarily be used to prevent the epidemic spread of ASF. This requires a well-thought-out and planned hunting strategy that should be developed and coordinated centrally by an expert group for the entire endemic area.
- As hunting measures can also have a counterproductive effect and can lead to the spread of the disease if not coordinated, it is recommended to only hunt where the virus has not yet arrived.
- Hunting is just a tool and not the solution.



Main conclusions and recommendations

Surveillance

- Due to the very large epidemic area and limited resources, surveillance (carcass search) must be prioritised.
- The main focus of surveillance should be in restricted zone 1, at the borders of the epidemic wave.
- Surveillance should primarily monitor the spread of ASF. This requires a well thought out and planned surveillance strategy, which should be centrally developed and coordinated by an expert group for the whole endemic area. Risk areas and availability of human resources should be considered.



Main conclusions and recommendations

Fencing

- Fencing can be an effective tool to limit the movement of wild boar. The Italian colleagues have already identified key spots where fencing could prevent the spread of ASF; mainly along the motorways where rivers are crossing.
- However, due to the very difficult geographical conditions, building fences in these places is a major challenge.
- Insufficient financial support and technical challenges have delayed the construction of fences.
- The epidemic seems to be moving faster than the fencing measures. As a result, fencing is behind schedule and may not have the desired effect of stopping the spread of ASF to non-infected areas.
- Much more financial and human resources are needed to timely implement fencing as an effective disease control measure.



Main conclusions and recommendations

Plan B

- It is to be feared that the ASF will spread further east (east of the A15 motorway) and south towards Tuscany, if it has not already done so.
- Therefore, an extended control and eradication plan for ASF (Plan B) is urgently needed that takes into account Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany.



The EU-VET team would like to thank all Italian colleagues for their support and help.

The working atmosphere during the mission was very good. The colleagues gave us all their support and help to make the mission fruitful.