

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Belgian Regains African Swine Fever-Free Status

Country: Belgium

Post: Brussels USEU

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Livestock and Products, Policy and Program
Announcements, Pest/Disease Occurrences, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Prepared By: Yvan Polet

Approved By: Lisa Allen

Report Highlights:

On November 20, 2020, the European Commission declared Belgium free of African Swine Fever (ASF), one year after the last finding of an ASF infection. Belgium becomes only the second EU Member States (MS), after the Czech Republic in 2019, to eradicate the disease and regain export eligibility, while eleven other EU MS continue to fight the disease. This EU decision opens the door for Belgian pork exporters to seek export approval to overseas markets, especially China and other Asian countries. The Belgian pork industry faced severe losses over the last year years after suffering from its own ASF outbreak, the arrival of the COVID-19 crisis, and the outbreak of ASF in its first export market, Germany.

On November 20, 2020, the [European Commission](#) (EC) recognized that Belgium succeeded in eradicating African Swine Fever (ASF) from its territory, lifting all restrictions on Belgian pork. This measure comes one year after the last case was found and restores Belgium's ASF-free status, which is critical for its pork exports. Belgium is only the second EU Member State (MS) to be declared ASF-free, after the Czech Republic in 2019, while eleven MS are struggling with the disease. Belgian pork producers and exporters will breathe a sigh of relief as this EC decision sets the state for reopening overseas markets, especially to China and other Asian countries.

Belgian pork producers lost all overseas exports after ASF was discovered in white boar in the south of the country in September 2018, even as no domestic swine were infected by the virus and Belgium's swine production is concentrated on the opposite side of the country. Upon the discover of ASF, the Belgian Food Safety Agency (FAVV-AFSCA) acted quickly, putting a protection plan in place and culling all 4,000 domestic pigs within the protection zone in order to safeguard commercial production. Nevertheless, the loss of extra-EU markets inflicted severe economic damage to the heavily export depended Belgian pork production, as it could only export within the EU at a significant discount. The arrival of the COVID-19 crisis made things worse, as domestic consumption also dropped and live swine exports to Germany suffered from the COVID-19 outbreaks in the German slaughter sector. When ASF was found in Germany in September 2020, Belgian pork exporters also lost their major intra-EU export market, as Germany was facing export bans for its own pork.

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Attachments:

No Attachments.