

# GARA Scientific Meeting

## Rome, Italy | 28-30 April 2025

# Introduction

Backyard pig settings, due to lower level of biosecurity have been identified as the highest risk to the spread of African swine fever (ASF) and other swine diseases.

Community African swine fever Biosecurity Interventions (CABI) was launched by the FAO and was piloted in a village in the southern island of the Philippines in 2022.

In 2024 CABI was adapted for the Western Balkan region and implemented in Kosovo. The approach focuses on community-based trainings, support with equipment and adaptation of new skills with the aim to improve knowledge on ASF and farm biosecurity.

## Summary

- CABI is a community-based approach
- Aim is to improve knowledge on ASF and farm
- biosecurity
- Measure changes after implementation

# 2 Methods/Approach

During the pre-implementation phase 62 pig backyard farmers were selected based on their pig production system from communities of Strpce, Doblibare and Gjurakoc. Between 16 and 31 October 2024 each producer was visited and surveyed to identify their production parameters, ASF knowledge and farm biosecurity. Survey results were collected in Epicollect5.

During the implementation phase three trainings were held for the pig keepers on 'Pig Breeding and Feeding' between 16 and 20 December 2024; on 'ASF and Pig Diseases' between 20 and 22 January 2025 and on 'Cleaning and Disinfection and Biosecurity' between 27 and 29 January 2025. Producers also received biosecurity intervention packages consisting of rubber boots, brushes and brooms, handheld sprayers, detergent and disinfectant.

Farmers were visited following the trainings between 6 and 14 February 2025 to review the use of the tools received. A post-implementation survey repeating the questions on ASF knowledge and farm biosecurity was repeated between 17 February and 7 March 2025.

# 3 Results

All 62 backyard farmers remained engaged during the intervention and replied both to the pre-implementation and post-implementation surveys.

## The surveys consisted of

- 30 questions on the pig keepers' background and production system;
- 5 questions on perceptions on biosecurity measures using Likert scale;
- 13 true/false questions on ASF with the additional option of ,Don't know';
- 27 questions related to farm biosecurity

#### Pig keepers

All pig keepers were male, between ages of 26 to 75 years (average of 54 years). Their experience with keeping pigs ranged from 0 to 40 (average of 23 years). The number of pigs kept ranged from 1 to 25 pigs (median of 2 pigs). Only 19% kept sows (N=12). In all cases own consumption is important reason for keeping pigs. 73% keep pigs primarily for own consumption (N=45), while 27% also sell/give animals away (N=17). Perceptions of pig keepers on biosecurity measures

Pig keepers were asked to rank statements on biosecurity before and after implementation from a scale of 1 to 5 (1=fully disagree, 5=fully agree). The statement on usefulness of fences, cleaning and disinfection, and good management the weighted average improved by 1. In case of regulating movement of people, animals and vehicles it improved by 1.42, while in case of vaccination by 0.47.

#### ASF knowledge

As a group the 62 backyard farmers could score a maximum of 806 points by answering correctly. Before the implementation their score was 343 points (43%), after the implementation it was 640 points (79%).

#### Farm biosecurity

At the beginning of the implementation pigs were already kept indoors and in 98% of the farms (N=61) fencing was adequate. The implementation improved:

- availability of work clothing (from 79% to 100%)
- handwashing before contact with pigs (from 31% to 58%)
- using soap/detergent (from 3% to 94%)
- improved availably of disinfectant (from 0% to 100%)
- improved usage of disinfectant (from 0% to 95%)
- reduced number of visitors (mostly redacting neighbour and friends)
- improved biosecurity when having visitors (96% with no additional measures to 87% disinfecting shoes of visitors)

## 4 Discussion

The increase of vaccination was the lowest from the 5 biosecurity perceptions because it was already viewed as an effective measure by pig keepers.

While overall the knowledge on ASF increased, further adjustments to the training material should be made, including better description on the risk of free-roaming pigs.

The biosecurity intervention packages provided are sufficient for three months. It is not known if backyard farmers will purchase further supplies and maintain the heightened biosecurity.

## Conclusion

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The data show that the intervention (consisting of three trainings, providing biosecurity intervention packages, and subsequent visit to help the backyard pig keeper implement changes) led to an increased trust in biosecurity measures, improved knowledge on ASF and enhanced farm biosecurity among the 62 backyard farmers under the CABI.

The CABI is currently on-going in four countries in the Western Balkan region, namely in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

#### References & Aknowledgements

The project was financed under FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA).

This work is aligned with the principles of FAO's Progressive Management Pathway for Terrestrial Animal Biosecurity, which is FAO's institutional initiative to support Member States at strengthening biosecurity in livestock value chains. <sup>1</sup>All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations SCR 1244 (1999).

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