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**Plan for the control of classical swine fever in feral pigs in the Federal Land of
Lower Saxony/Germany**

updated version of 20.11.1996

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Lower Saxony/Germany**

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Plan for the control of classical swine fever in feral pigs in the Federal Land of Lower Saxony/Germany

I. Introduction

By decision 96/552/EC of 6.9.1996 the Commission suspended Decision 93/617/EC of 1.12.1993 and approved the new plan to eradicate classical swine fever (CSF) in Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. This plan was adapted to the development of classical swine fever among wild boars in Germany.

Account was taken of the fact that the CSF virus had not been found among the wild boar population in the Federal Land of Lower Saxony since 24.2.1995. Over that period, more than 2 241 wild boars underwent virological and serological tests for CSF.

On 13 September 1996, IFT and virus culture examination identified the CSF virus in 2 young wild boars in the central part of the Lower Saxon swine-fever monitoring area in the district of Lüneburg and the district of Uelzen (see Annex 1)

The measures to eradicate CSF among wild boars provided for under Council Directive 80/217/EEC were therefore put in force with effect from 16.9.1996 for the CSF infected area of the Federal Land of Lower Saxony established by orders of the administrative districts of Lüneburg and Uelzen, replaced by the order of the regional administration of Lüneburg.

Pursuant to Article 6(a)(3) of Directive 80/217/EEC, the Federal Land of Lower Saxony submits its amended written plan to eradicate classical swine fever among wild boars and to monitor domestic pigs in the area defined as infected, drawn up on the basis of para. 14(a)(2) of the national swine fever order.

II. Measures to control classical swine fever

Chapter 1: The infected area

An area of 577 km² in north-eastern Lower Saxony, region of Lüneburg, administrative districts of Uelzen and Lüneburg, was defined as an infected area in September 1996 because of the renewed appearance of classical swine fever among wild boars.

This area encompasses parts of the districts of Lüneburg and Uelzen and is situated west of the Elbe Seitenkanal almost in the centre of the swine fever monitoring area established on 1.9.1995, which covers a total surface of 5 192 km² (see Annex 1)

The boundaries of the district are as follows:

North

The road from Raven to Wetzen from the crossing over the Luhe river eastwards via Wetzen and north-eastwards via Südergellersen, Heiligenthal, Rettmer and Häcklingen up to the crossing with Federal Road 4.

East

From there via Federal Road 4 southwards via Melbeck and further south-eastwards to Bienenbüttel, south-westwards via Steddorf, Rieste, Varendorf, Wessenstedt to Ebstorf, then further southwards via Wittenwater, Stadorf to Gross Süstedt, Federal Road 71 eastwards to Gerdau, thence southwards via Bargfeld and Bahnsen up to the railway line (Suderburg station).

South

The railway line from Suderburg station south-westwards up to the district border with the Celle administrative district.

West

The district border northwards up to the district border with the Lüneburg administrative district, thence on towards the west, north and east up to the Luhe river, south of Putensen, and the Luhe southwards until it passes under the road from Raven to Wetzen.

It is estimated that there were about 2 350 wild boars within the infected area, much of which is forested, before the mating season in autumn 1996. That suggests a wild boar density of about 4 per km², which is above average. The wild boar stock is estimated by hunters, forestry officials and members of the hunting authorities and organizations who have spent many years observing and hunting wild boars and the findings are collated by the local administrative district centres responsible for the control of classical swine fever and the regional coordinating centre of the regional administration of Lüneburg.

The table below shows the number of wild boars shot over the period from 1993 to 1.4.1996:

Wild boars killed			
Hunt year	in Lower Saxony	In Lüneburg region	In the monitoring area districts
1993/94	37 483	15 451	9 585
1994/95	32 223	13 051	8 147
1995/96	22 434	9 550	5 947

The total number of holdings that keep domestic pigs in the area defined as infected is 119 and the domestic pig stock is 20 200. Most of these holdings have fewer than 100 pigs.

Among these holdings, 41 breed pigs (1 155 breeding pigs with piglets) and 78 are pig-fattening units, containing 12 302 fattening pigs.

In this area with its low domestic pig and pig holding density, the species of livestock and the trade structures, including the movements of breeding pigs, production pigs and pigs for slaughter, give no reason to fear any special risk of CSF spreading to a serious degree or over a large area.

Over the period from 1.1.1996 to 31.10.1996 the serological testing for CSF of 466 916 breeding pigs in 2 876 stocks in the Lüneburg district identified no case of CSF antibodies. Over that period, the results of the tests on 1 618 breeding pigs in 110 holdings in the Lüneburg district and 3 283 breeding pigs in 212 holding in the Uelzen district proved negative.

Chapter 2: Measures to detect CSF infection in feral pigs

Following the increased boar hunting, the health controls and monitoring of wild boars in the area defined as infected were tightened.

All wild boars found dead in the area defined as infected are regarded as especially dangerous material. Before they are safely disposed of in the appropriate rendering establishment, samples are taken for the same CSF testing as that carried out on wild boars that have been shot, provided the state of decomposition of the dead animals allows it.

All shot animals are taken to collecting points equipped with a refrigeration unit by the forestry administration. The animals are subjected to pathological and anatomical examination and specific CSF testing by the responsible official veterinarian under the provisions of the legislation on meat hygiene. Furthermore, samples are taken for virological and serological CSF testing: tonsils, spleen, kidneys, lymph nodes and a blood sample. Every laboratory sample is sent to the national laboratory in Hannover or Oldenburg for examination, together with the form attached as Annex 2.

All shot wild boars remain under the supervision of an official veterinarian from the moment they are shot until the laboratory results are available.

The meat from virologically and serologically CSF-negative wild boars may only be marketed within the territory of the Federal Länder of Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Bremen.

The safe disposal of wild boars found dead and of boars that were shot and tested virologically or serologically CSF-positive, together with the general gutting of wild boars, is carried out in closed containers provided specifically for that purpose at the collecting points by the responsible rendering plants.

The same applies in the monitoring area.

Chapter 3: Organizations responsible for measures to control classical swine fever

Crisis centres in the administrative districts coordinate all the measures at local district level in close cooperation with licensed hunters and regional hunting organizations, together with officials from the forestry administrations and the departments responsible for hunting and the veterinary offices. The laboratory examinations are carried out in the national veterinary examination offices in Hannover and Oldenburg, Stade branch.

The responsible administrative districts (local crisis centres) notify the regional coordination centre of the Lüneburg regional administration, where the specialist veterinary, hunting and forestry and agricultural departments evaluate the results of the CSF control measures and lay down further measures in coordination with the specialist departments on controlling animal epidemics and on hunting in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Chapter 4: Reducing the feral pig population

The main means of controlling CSF is to hunt wild boars more intensively in order to bring about a considerable further reduction in the stock.

Over and above natural fluctuations and against the constant and marked rising trend of the last decade, the figures relating to shot animals (see Chapter 1) show a definite reduction in the wild boar stock in Lower Saxony and especially in the Lüneburger Heide area. More intensive wild boar hunting must and will, however, be encouraged further and for the long term, in order to minimize the chances of contact and therefore possibly spread of infection within the population.

The hunters are informed of wild boar hunts, the health examinations and the treatment of wild boars by official announcements in the press, articles in specialist journals, the hunting organization and special events organized by it, the hunting authorities and the veterinary authorities. In addition to 6 forestry offices of the Bundes- und Landesforstverwaltung (Federal and Land Forestry Administration), those involved include the Deutsche Jagdschutzverband (German Game Protection Association) with its Lüneburg and Uelzen hunting groups, which covers more than 150 private hunting grounds and their licensed hunters.

On principle, the wild boar hunting season extends from 16 July to 31 January, while young boars and two-year olds are hunted throughout the year. There is a closed season only for sows with young piglets, i.e. as a rule from 1 February to 16 June.

The hunting methods (raised hide, shooting down at the decoy place, extensive raised-hide and close-quarters hunting with little hunting pressure) are designed to achieve the desired aim while preventing any excessive spread of the animals.

All the high-risk material (animals found dead and animals that are virologically or serologically positive) is taken to the responsible rendering establishment. Special waterproof containers are provided at the game collecting points for this purpose.

Should the laboratory tests prove that shot wild boars are virologically and serologically CSF-negative, the meat is labelled with the national mark designating it as fit for human consumption. This meat (cf. Council Directive 92/45/EEC) may not be marketed within the Community. Within Germany, it may only be marketed in the Federal Länder of Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Bremen.

Chapter 5: Epidemiology

The results found by the local CSF control centres of the administrative districts and the initial analyses are collated by the regional coordination centre of the regional administration of Lüneburg and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture of Lower Saxony together with regular reports. The ministry carries out epidemiological evaluations in cooperation with veterinary medical laboratories in Lower Saxony and the Bundesforschungsanstalt für Viruskrankheiten der Tiere (Federal Research Institute for Viral Diseases in Animals), together with the Institute for Epidemiology in Wunsterhausen and the EU reference laboratory for classical swine fever, the Institute for Virology of the Hannover Veterinary College.

In the monitoring area of the Lüneburger Heide positive virological results (IFT and virus culture) were most recently found among wild boars in February 1995. Since 1.9.1995 virological tests for classical swine fever were therefore carried out on 1 532 shot wild boars under an-across-the-board monitoring programme extending until 31.8.1996, with totally negative results.

Of these animals, 1 218 underwent parallel serological examinations; the results are listed in Annex 3. Accordingly, the proportion of anti-body carriers is largely age-related in terms of the individual and correlated with the length of time since exposure to the virus in terms of the population.

According to the national reference laboratory and the EU reference laboratory, the typological examination carried out in relation to the new CSF case in September 1996 established that the virus was the «Lorraine» type, which was also found among wild boar and domestic pig stocks in Lower Saxony between 1992 and 1995. This finding does not enable it to be said with any absolute certainty whether this is a new infection or relates to a residual focus.

On the basis of the results of the epidemiological investigations and after hearing the participating groups, it was decided to take further action to control CSF among wild boars.

Chapter 6: Measures relating to domestic pigs in the infected area

All owners of pig holdings are informed by the local press, the specialist press and official publications about the renewed appearance of swine fever among wild boars and about the measures that have to be taken. The official veterinarians provide the pig-keepers with information at all agricultural meetings and at talks with pig-keeping associations. Information is supplied to the individual farmer by the responsible veterinary surgeons when they examine the pig stocks in relation to points 1 to 4 below.

In particular, the measures include:

- preventing contact between domestic pigs and wild boars;
- isolating domestic pigs, in order to preclude contact with wild boars or wild boar products;
- securing the stored feed and straw against wild boars;
- disinfecting the entrances and exits to pig-styes;
- restricting trade in pigs; pigs may only be sold or acquired with the authorization of the veterinary authorities.

The measures to ensure implementation of the measures to combat swine fever and monitor epidemics include the following:

1. Health checks and CSF control hygiene measures in pig holdings.

All pig holdings are inspected three times a year by an official veterinarian. The inspection includes a health check on all the pigs in a given holding and monitoring of the CSF control hygiene measures. After each inspection, a report is drawn up on animal health and CSF control hygiene in the holding, in accordance with the model attached in Annex 7, and submitted to the responsible authority.

2. Monitoring an infected area pursuant to Article 6(a)(2).

Serological examination of all breeding herds, at least twice a year. At least 40% of breeding animals in every herd must be examined within a given year. Blood samples must be taken at the holding and/or at the time of slaughter.

3. Post-mortem examinations.

In the event that pigs die from unexplained causes, a post-mortem examination for CSF must be carried out, together with a laboratory test.

4. The following applies to controls over the transport of pigs from the endangered area:

- (a) Pigs from the infected area may not be transported to other Member States (cf. Article 4(b) of Council Directive 64/432/EEC).
- (b) Breeding and production pigs may only be transported nationally provided:
 - the responsible authority in the place of origin informs the responsible authority of the place of destination three days before the transport,

- they come from a holding in which no new pigs have arrived over the past 30 days,
- they were examined serologically within 10 days before being transported pursuant to Annex IV No 1 of Directive 80/217/EEC and examined virologically pursuant to Annex I, Chapter B of this directive or under an authorized testing procedure,
- they were clinically examined no more than 24 hours before being loaded,
- the means of transport were officially sealed and
- the pigs remain in the place of destination for at least 30 days.

Pigs for slaughter may only be transported nationally provided that

- they are clinically examined by an official or specifically authorized veterinary surgeon no more than 24 hours before being transported and
- if they are slaughtered outside the infected area in German slaughterhouses designated by the responsible authorities, the means of transport were officially sealed.

III. Suspension of CSF prevention measures and restrictions

1. Provision has been made for suspending the restrictions on the national transport of domestic pigs if the CSF virus has not been found among wild boars for a period of 6 months.
2. Live domestic pigs may be transported to other Member States only if at least 12 months have elapsed since the CSF virus was last isolated among wild boars.
3. Wild boar meat may be transported to other Member States only if no less than 24 months have elapsed since the CSF virus was last isolated.
4. Once the first six months have elapsed after the most recent finding of the virus, the wild boar stock of an area determined on the basis of the relevant epidemiological and biological aspects, which must encompass at least the infected district, shall be subject to the following CSF monitoring programme for no less than a further six months. This period shall include a breeding time.
 - 4.1. 30% of all wild boars shot or found dead in the monitoring area shall be examined for CSF virologically and serologically. The results will be differentiated according to the ages of the wild boars.

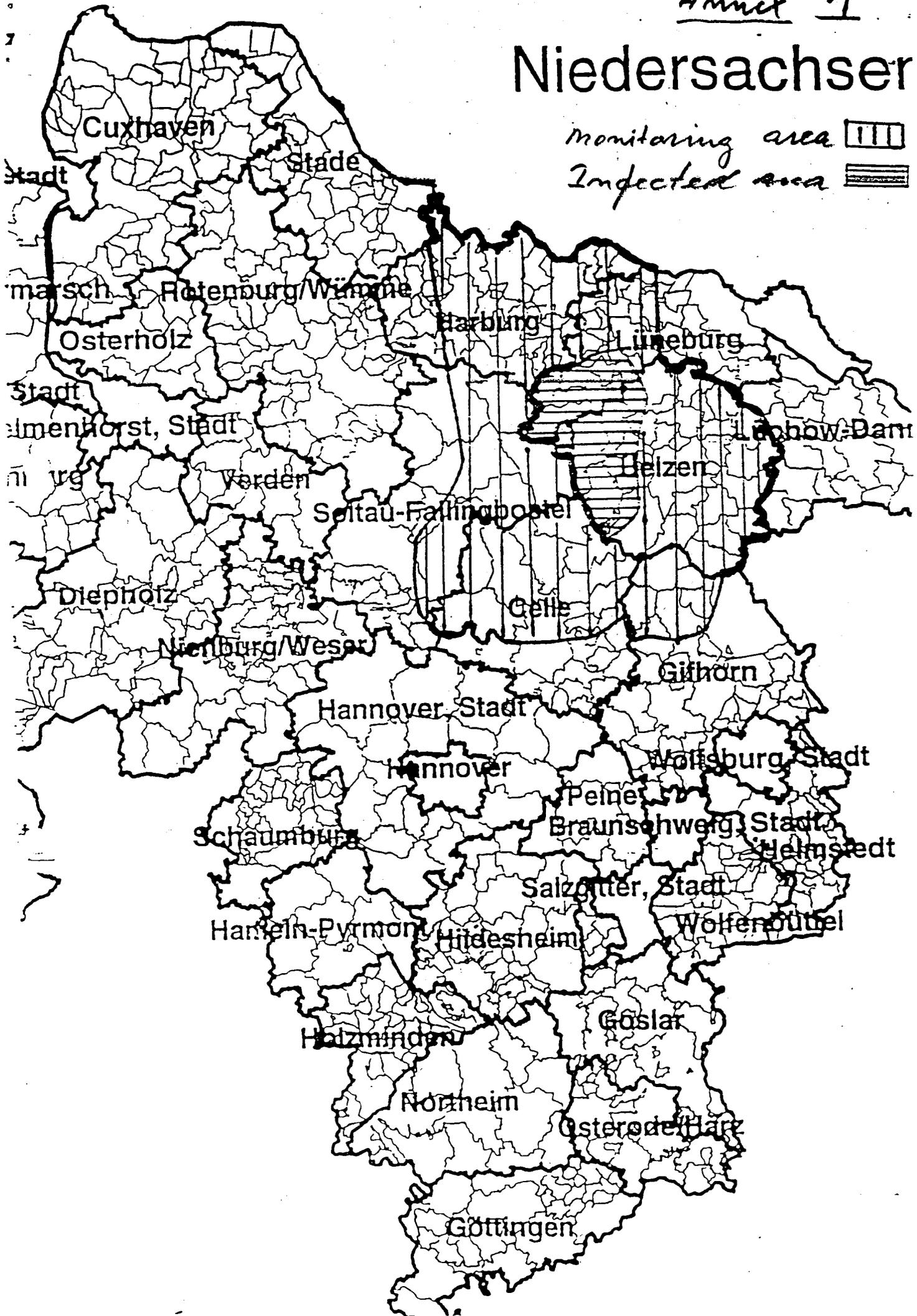
- 4.2. Wild boars found dead and CSF-positive carcasses shall be safely disposed of pursuant to Council Directive 90/667/EEC.
- 4.3. Meat from CSF-negative wild boars may be marketed in the Federal Länder of Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Bremen.
- 4.4. No less than six months after the CSF-monitoring area has been established, the highest regional authorities shall suspend the measure, in agreement with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, provided no positive virological results were found within that period.
- 4.5. In the event that a CSF virus is found again during the monitoring period, a swine-fever infected area with a radius of no less than 5 km shall be established around the reference area, taking account of local and natural conditions, within which the measures set out under this plan shall again be taken.
5. The highest regional authorities shall inform the Federal Ministry of Agriculture of the intention to suspend the restrictions in relation to classical swine fever among wild boars in Lower Saxony and submit the results of the examination.

IV. Reports

A report containing data documenting the results of the measures to combat swine fever shall be forwarded to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture every six months, together with the form attached as Annex **5**.

Annex 1

Niedersachser



Testing for swine fever in wild boars

Results sheet

1. Sender

.....

2. Details regarding the wild boar to be examined

found dead

killed

Date

Name and address of person who killed or found the dead animal

.....
.....
.....

Age and sex of animal

.....

If the animal was killed, would you describe its behaviour prior to killing as

normal slightly disturbed

severely disturbed

If the animal was found dead, please describe the condition in which it was found

.....

3. Test findings

Pathoanatomical findings

.....

Serological examination

virus neutralization test: titre:

ELISA: titre

Viral antigen detection

immunofluorescence

virus isolation

Testing body:

Monitoring of CSF in feral pigs, Lower Saxony**1.9.1995 to 31.8.1996**

Serological examinations in wild boar:

(a) CSF antibody detection in different age groups

	Age groups						Without information
	Σ	I	II	III	IV	V	
Animals	1 218	640	419	68	38	13	40
AG*)	138	16	62	28	21	11	0
=%	11,3	2,5	14,8	41	55	85	0

*) I = < 1 years, II = 1-2 years, III = 2 years, IV = 3-and 4-years, V = 5 years and more

(b) CSF antibody detection in 1st and 2nd part of monitoring period

	Monitoring period		
	1.9.95 - 31.8.96	1st Half year 9.95 - 2.96	2nd Half year 3.96 - 31.8.96
Animals	1 218	921	297
AG*)	138	120	18
=%	11,3	13,0	6,1

Amtliche Gesundheitsüberwachung in Schweinezuchtbetrieben im Wildschweinepest-gefährdeten Bezirk

I. Bestandsdaten		Betriebszweige		Tierzahlen																
Tierhalter		<input type="checkbox"/> Schweinezucht <input type="checkbox"/> Schweinemast <input type="checkbox"/> Milchproduktion <input type="checkbox"/> Rindermast <input type="checkbox"/> sonst. Tierhaltung		Sauen: _____																
Name				Zuchteber: _____																
Straße				Saugferkel: _____																
PLZ / Ort				abges. Ferkel: _____																
Telefon				Mastschweine: _____																
Haltung		<input type="checkbox"/> Quarantänestall <input type="checkbox"/> Rein-Raus-Methode pro Stalleinheit <input type="checkbox"/> Freilandhaltung																		
Anzahl getrennter Stallabteilungen: _____																				
II. Epidemiologie																				
Zukauf		Verkauf																		
Art, Zahl: _____		Art, Zahl: _____																		
Herkunft: _____		Empfänger: _____																		
letztmals: _____		letztmals: _____																		
Transport		<input type="checkbox"/> nur mit betriebseigenen Fahrzeugen <input type="checkbox"/> erfolgt durch: _____																		
Becht		<input type="checkbox"/> Deckakt <input type="checkbox"/> Spermabzug von: _____																		
Fütterung		<input type="checkbox"/> betriebseigenes Futter <input type="checkbox"/> Zukauf-Futtermittel <input type="checkbox"/> Speiseabfälle																		
Futterlagerung		<input type="checkbox"/> im Außenbereich <input type="checkbox"/> im Gebäude																		
Betriebsfremde im Schweinebestand		<input type="checkbox"/> keine <input type="checkbox"/> vereinzelt <input type="checkbox"/> regelmäßig																		
Prophylaxe im Schweinebestand		<input type="checkbox"/> Stiefeldesinfektion <input type="checkbox"/> Schutzkleidung für Besucher <input type="checkbox"/> Schmutznagerbekämpfung <input type="checkbox"/> gesonderte Stallkleidung für Personal <input type="checkbox"/> Sonstiges: _____																		
Kontaktmöglichkeiten von Haus- und Wildschweinen		<input type="checkbox"/> direkt <input type="checkbox"/> indirekt <input type="checkbox"/> keine																		
Entfernung bis zum nächsten Schweinebestand		<input type="checkbox"/> < 1 km <input type="checkbox"/> geschätzt _____ km																		
III. Bestandsuntersuchung																				
<input type="checkbox"/> Allgemeinbefinden gestört <input type="checkbox"/> Freßunlust <input type="checkbox"/> Fieber bis _____ °C		<input type="checkbox"/> Allgemeinbefinden ungestört <input type="checkbox"/> Somnolenz <input type="checkbox"/> Koordinationstörungen <input type="checkbox"/> Sonstiges: _____																		
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<input type="checkbox"/> Durchfall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																
<input type="checkbox"/> ungeklärte Todesfälle, Anzahl: _____, seit _____ (Datum)																				
IV. Analyse und Maßnahmen																				
<input type="checkbox"/> Bestand ist ESP-unverdächtig <input type="checkbox"/> angeordnete Maßnahmen: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Bestand ist ESP-verdächtig; Veterinäramt wird sofort informiert																		
				Untersuchender Tierarzt Datum, Unterschrift, Praxisstempel: _____																
				Unterschrift des Tierhalters: _____																

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Annex 5

ANNEX
REPORT FROM
CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER AREAS CONTAINING INFECTED WILD BOAR

Reporting period from: _____ to _____

Member State: _____

A map showing the location and boundaries of the infected area should be attached.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. REGION _____ 2. AREA _____ sq km

3. ESTIMATED WILD BOAR POPULATION

(Number prior to breeding season) _____

4. DOMESTIC PIGS

POPULATION

Breeding pigs _____ fattening pigs _____

HOLDINGS

Breeding/mixed _____ Fattening _____

OPEN-AIR HOLDINGS

B. SURVEILLANCE domestic pigs

SIX MONTH REPORTING PERIOD FROM _____ to _____

1. ROUTINE SEROLOGY

SAMPLING BASIS _____ % of breeding animals tested
 _____ times a year

	No tested	No positive	%
--	-----------	-------------	---

HERDS	_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------	-------

ANIMALS	_____	_____	_____
---------	-------	-------	-------

2. MOVEMENT SEROLOGY

	No tested	No positive	%
--	-----------	-------------	---

HERDS	_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------	-------

ANIMALS	_____	_____	_____
---------	-------	-------	-------

3. POSTMORTEM EXAMINATIONS (suspicious deaths)

No examined	_____	No positive	_____
-------------	-------	-------------	-------

C. SURVEILLANCE wild boar

1. HUNTED BOAR

MONTH

SEROLOGY TESTED

POSITIVE

VIROLOGY TESTED

POSITIVE

MONTH	1	2	3	4	5	6
SEROLOGY TESTED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
POSITIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
VIROLOGY TESTED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
POSITIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

2. BOAR FOUND DEAD

MONTH

SEROLOGY TESTED

POSITIVE

VIROLOGY TESTED

POSITIVE

MONTH	1	2	3	4	5	6
SEROLOGY TESTED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
POSITIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
VIROLOGY TESTED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
POSITIVE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. DATE MOST RECENT POSITIVE SEROLOGY / /

DATE MOST RECENT POSITIVE VIROLOGY / /

¹ Data for 6 months in report period.

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VI/B/II.2

VI/8151/97
AL/al

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Amendment of the Plan for the control of classical swine fever in feral pigs in the Federal Land of Lower Saxony/ Germany (doc. VI/9066/96 Rev. 1)

The description of the eastern border of the infected area reported on page 3 and the map of Lower Saxony reported on Annex 1 of the doc. VI/9066/96 Rev. 1 are hereby replaced.

East

From there via Federal Road 4 southwards via Melbeck and further south-eastwards up to the district border with the Uelzen administrative district, thence north-eastwards up to the Elbeseitenkanal, following this southwards up to the railway line Uelzen/Dannenberg in the north of Uelzen and from there on south-westwards the railway line Uelzen/Celle up to the railway station Suderburg.

Map of Lower Saxony showing the infected area and the monitoring area

