

Control of African Swine Fever (ASF)

“Relief by amendments to changes in EU Animal Health Legislation”

I. Introduction

Following repeal of the government measures imposed in connection with the outbreak of African Swine Fever in the Emsland district in October 2022, sectoral talks were conducted at Lower Saxony's Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection on 19.06.2023 at the invitation of Minister Staudte. The meeting was attended by representatives of the authorities involved in the measures to control the outbreak, representatives of the business enterprises and associations along the value chain (agriculture, slaughterhouses, processing establishments, retail trade) and the insurance sector.

The objective of these talks was to evaluate the measures that had been implemented and identify facts that could help to optimise processes in the course of future ASF incidents. The participants also discussed possible options for compensation and aids, such as the establishment of a fund for businesses affected by the restrictive measures. A further topic addressed at the meeting was the option of amending EU animal health legislation to minimise financial damage and ensure animal welfare in the course of future ASF outbreaks, in particular in establishments of kept porcine animals.

On 20.03.2024, a delegation travelled to Brussels with the aim of drawing attention to the need for appropriate amendment of EU animal health legislation, in particular with regard to restrictive measures for establishments of kept porcine animals and for the implementation of these changes.

Headed by Minister Miriam Staudte, representatives of agricultural organisations and the Lower Saxony veterinary authorities responsible for implementation of animal health legislation attended expert talks with the EU Commission.

The following organisations and public authorities were involved in drawing up the following position paper:

- Interessengemeinschaft der Schweinehalter Deutschlands e. V. (*association representing the interests of establishments of kept porcine animals in Germany*)
- Landvolk Lower Saxony - Landesbauernverband e.V. (*Lower Saxony farmers' association*)
- Verein zur Förderung der bäuerlichen Veredlungswirtschaft e.V. (*association to promote the agricultural processing industry*)
- Niedersächsischer Landkreistag e. V. und Niedersächsischer Städtetag. (*associations of rural authorities and municipal authorities in Lower Saxony*)
- Niedersächsische Tierseuchenkasse (*Lower Saxony epizootic compensation fund*)
- Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit (*Lower Saxony State Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety*)
- Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz (*Lower Saxony Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection*)

II. EU animal health legislation: requirements, proposed amendments and other issues

In the event of an isolated outbreak of ASF in kept porcine animals in a zone which was previously ASF-free, the provisions of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 which was issued on the basis of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 (AHL) apply. In case of further outbreaks in populations of kept porcine animals or in case of outbreaks of ASF in wild boar populations, the provisions of Implementation Regulation (EU) 2023/594 apply in conjunction with Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687.

In particular in areas with a high density of kept porcine animals, these regulations can be expected to lead to severe economic losses for the (ASF-free) establishments affected by the restrictive measures. If the legal requirements together with economic reasons as well as lack of consumer acceptance mean that it is not possible to have sufficient numbers of porcine animals transported to slaughterhouses, there is a further risk of a deterioration in animal welfare as a result of “slaughterhouse tailback”, when porcine animals that are ready for slaughter cannot be moved out of the establishments.

Implementation of the following demands and/or proposals for legal relief is intended to avoid animal welfare problems and to alleviate the financial consequences for those establishments affected by the restrictive measures. We further believe that these proposals ensure that such amendments to the legal situation would not increase the risk of the introduction or spread of ASF, if necessary by means of additional measures such as stricter test obligations or additional requirements, such as stricter biosecurity measures.

II.1. Reducing the duration of ASF restrictive measures

In the event of an isolated ASF outbreak in kept porcine animals in a previously ASF-free zone, Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 (Annex X, XI) provides for a minimum duration of 30 days for application of the measures in the restricted zone. Based on Article 259 Para. 2 of Regulation (EU) 2016/429, however, the EU Commission stipulates a minimum duration of three months in the form of an implementing decision. As reasons for this procedure, it refers inter alia to the contents of the [Terrestrial Animal Health Code](#) of the World Organisation for Animal Health (Chapter 15.1.7).

In the course of the ASF outbreak in the Emsland district (2022), it was already possible to prove confirmed freedom from ASF in the restricted zone after around five weeks owing to the tests carried out, in some cases over and above the legal requirements. The request for reduction of the duration of the restrictive measures was not approved by the EU Commission.

In our opinion the specification of a three-month duration of the restrictive measures is out of proportion – also in view of the characteristics of the ASF virus (incubation period, low contagiousness) – especially as it is possible to establish very quickly that the affected restricted zone is free of ASF owing to the prescribed measures as well as additional tests and biosecurity measures.

If in future the duration of the protective measures in the case of an isolated ASF outbreak in kept porcine animals in a previously ASF-free zone is to be specified as three months by virtue of an implementing decision or Annex II Part B of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, a consensus is required in respect of the **criteria for a obtaining a reduction on application**. This also applies fundamentally to a reduction of the duration of the restrictive

measures (12 months) that were ordered pursuant to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. We believe that the results of the clinical, epidemiological and laboratory tests in the restricted zone are decisive. Further ASF outbreaks in the same Member State cannot be decisive, in our opinion, even if there is a certain correlation in the time of the outbreak, as long as no epidemiological and geographical correlations are established.

II.2. Reducing the minimum radius of an ASF restricted zone (protection and surveillance zone)

Pursuant to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687, in case of an outbreak of ASF in an establishment of kept porcine animals, a minimum radius of 3 km around the establishment concerned is to be specified for the protection zone and a minimum radius of 10 km for the surveillance zone. During the ASF incident in Lower Saxony (2022), approx. 250 establishments of kept porcine animals in the Emsland and Grafschaft Bentheim districts in the restricted zone with the 10-km radius were subject to movement restrictions and consequently sustained severe marketing losses. As already stated under II.1., however, it was possible to establish very quickly that the restricted zone was ASF-free.

The ASF virus can be spread both directly through contact between the animals or indirectly via vectors. In its [qualitative risk assessment](#) dated August 29, 2023, the Friedrich Loeffler Institute points out that it has been proven that stocks of kept porcine animals are subject to a higher risk of suffering an ASF outbreak if ASF-infected wild boar have been established in the vicinity. These findings refer in particular to very small establishments that can be assumed to have low biosecurity standards.

In that connection, the specification of the **3 and 10 km radii** in the case of isolated ASF outbreaks in previously ASF-free zones **has to be reconsidered**. Especially in **regions with low wild boar populations, a reduction in the extent of a restricted zone should be considered in individual cases**. Specification of the **extent of a restricted zone should be decided as a minimum on the basis of defined criteria, e.g. biosecurity, wild boar hunting yield**. An alternative **option would be to reduce the specified radii as soon as possible** provided that **clinical, epidemiological and laboratory tests** of kept porcine animals and wild boar were concluded with negative results and **stricter biosecurity measures** remain in force.

II.3. Opportunities for placing on the market of fresh meat (protection and surveillance zone)

In the case of an isolated ASF-outbreak in kept porcine animals in a previously ASF-free zone, Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 does not provide for any possibility of placing on the market of fresh meat for the purpose of human consumption. Products obtained from porcine animals in an ASF restricted zone has to undergo treatment to mitigate risks before it is marketed for the aforesaid purposes. Even if Amending Regulation (EU) 2023/751 amended the requirements of risk-mitigation treatment in favour of placing on the market opportunities, the product range remains minimised, as it is not possible to market fresh meat. This inhibits the outgoing flow of goods and thus the number of porcine animals slaughtered. Severe financial losses are also sustained because the prime cuts also have to undergo risk-mitigation treatment.

As already explained under II.1. and II.2., animals from a restricted zone that were released for slaughter underwent clinical and virological tests for ASF with negative results. We would

again point out that with regard to the ASF outbreak in Lower Saxony (2022), laboratory tests were always conducted after blood samples had been taken prior to any movement. **There is no ASF infection risk for negatively tested animals from the protection and surveillance zone, so that there are no objective reasons to justify the risk-mitigation treatment of fresh meat so that the placing on the market of fresh meat from the protection and surveillance zone should be legally permissible.** Alternatively, it should be investigated whether meat deriving from porcine animals from protection and surveillance zones can be marketed as fresh meat provided it has tested negative for the ASF virus. This option would **also** be conceivable for **porcine animals from the protection and surveillance zone that have been in frozen storage** after the restrictive measures have been lifted. Sampling the individual carcasses at the designated slaughterhouse and **PCR testing of the pooled samples prior to placing on the market** could provide additional security for **both the above options**. In these cases, risk-mitigation treatment could be considered obsolete and the fresh meat could be marketed without restriction, if the requirements concerning the transport of fresh meat as laid down in Regulation (EU) 2020/687 were amended. We would point out that the foregoing procedure complies with Chapter 15.1.15. of the [Terrestrial Animal Health Code](#) of the World Organisation for Animal Health.

II.4. Special health mark

Pursuant to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, fresh meat obtained from porcine animals from restricted zones which can be placed on the market for the purpose of human consumption pursuant to the scope of the aforesaid Regulation has to bear a health mark consisting of an oval stamp with two additional parallel diagonal lines. Derogation from this specification was permissible until 16 March 2024 and the use of an alternative form of special health mark that is not oval and cannot be confused with the aforesaid health mark could be permitted. **The prescribed oval health mark with diagonal lines is not well accepted by the local meat industry or food retail business.** The food retail trade in particular reports a lack of acceptance by the consumer. **We therefore propose the provision of an unrestricted scope for using an alternative mark as stated above. This should ensure reliable traceability, goods separation and secure implementation in warehouse management systems at the establishments concerned and simultaneously achieve better acceptance by the consumer.** This could be achieved, for instance, with a **numerical code inside a rectangle**.

II.5. Designation of slaughterhouses and processing establishments and separation of goods (restricted zone II/III)

Article 45 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 specifies the conditions for the designation of establishments for the slaughter of porcine animals. The conditions for the designation of establishments for downstream production stages cutting, processing and storing are laid down in Article 46 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, which states that these establishments must ensure that porcine animals and/or their products that do not comply with the conditions laid down in Articles 45 and 46 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 must be kept separate from porcine animals and/or their products from ASF-free zones or respectively from porcine animals and/or their products that comply with the aforesaid conditions.

Both cases (Articles 45 and 46) are based on compliance with Articles 15, 16 and 17 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. The movement of porcine animals for immediate slaughter pursuant to Article 24, 29 or 30 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 is

subject to the same requirements, with the exception of the conditions specified in Article 15 Para. 1 Point a of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594.

Article 15 Para. 1 Point a of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 states that the porcine animals must have been kept in and not moved from the establishment of dispatch during a period of at least 30 days prior to the date of movement of, if younger than 30 days of age, since birth, and that no other kept porcine animals have been introduced from establishments located in restricted zones II that do not comply with the conditions or derive from establishments located in restricted zones III.

The Regulation thus offers relief for the movement of porcine animals for slaughter (Article 15 Para. 1 Point a of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 is not relevant here), **but not for slaughterhouses or downstream processing establishments that process the slaughtered porcine animals and are always subject to the separation requirements** in case of non-compliance with the conditions of Articles 15, 16 and 17 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594.

This restriction constitutes an additional and unjustified burden for slaughterhouses and processing establishments. **Products of porcine animals that satisfy the requirements for movement should not be subject to stricter regulations.** It is therefore necessary to establish consistency between Articles 45 and 46 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 and the provisions of Articles 24 and 29, respectively Articles 41, 42 and 43 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 so that porcine animals that comply with the conditions laid down in Article 24 Para. 1 and 2 and Article 29 Para. 1 to 4 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 are not subject to **additional requirements concerning separation in slaughterhouses and processing establishments.**

II.6. Early detection and biosecurity

The term “biosecurity” used in this section encompasses protection against biological risks as defined in Article 4 Number 22, Regulation (EU) 2016/429.

The term “(voluntary) early detection” encompasses measures such as those laid down in Article 16 Para. 1 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. In the ASF-free zone in Lower Saxony, several establishments keeping porcine animals continue to take part in a voluntary ASF early detection programme that is based on the aforesaid requirements of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 and which includes animal health inspections, stricter biosecurity measures and continuous monitoring in the form of sampling of fallen animals.

II.6.1. Restricted zone III – movements to the slaughterhouse

From a professional viewpoint, (voluntary) early detection pursuant to Article 16 Para. 1 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 is an important instrument for preventing the introduction and spread of ASF into and/or out of establishments in a restricted zone. The establishment of the voluntary early detection programme in Lower Saxony makes an important contribution towards disease prevention and early disease detection. An incentive to participate in such programmes prior to a disease outbreak is given in that if a restricted zone is established, less strict conditions apply to the movement of porcine animals in terms of waiting periods and test frequency.

For a restricted zone III that is to be established, however, pursuant to Article 28 Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 derogations to facilitate the movement of porcine animals apply only from a corresponding restricted zone III within this zone and outside this restricted zone into a restricted zone I or II of the same Member State concerned. Moreover, Article 30 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 permits application of the early detection programme for the movement of porcine animals that were kept within a restricted zone III for the purpose of immediate slaughter only within the same restricted zone.

Pursuant to Articles 29 and 43 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 the derogations for the movement of porcine animals kept in a restricted zone III do not apply if the animals are to be moved out of restricted zone III for the purpose of immediate slaughter. The foregoing restriction also applies to the movement of consignments of fresh meat or fresh meat products, inclusive of casings, obtained from porcine animals kept in a restricted zone III into other restricted zones I, II and III or to areas outside restricted zones I, II and III within the territory of the same Member State.

These restrictions mean that the movement of porcine animals inclusive of their products to the slaughterhouse from the restricted zone III is not part of the “early detection programme”. The fact that Article 43 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 for the movement of meat (products) makes no reference to the derogations for movement severely restricts its applicability.

Particularly in areas with a high density of kept porcine animals in which the operators are dependent on movements of these animals outside restricted zones, this means an enormous restriction and consequently high time requirements for the clinical tests prior to each movement. This also ties up human resources to a significant extent.

There is consequently reason to fear that early detection programmes will become less attractive because they do not offer advantages. An important instrument for early disease detection is thus lost. The weekly testing of fallen animals as part of the permanent monitoring measures, which are the most effective measure for the early detection of ASF in kept porcine animals from a professional viewpoint, would consequently no longer take place.

We would point out that in contrast to the above, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 includes a provision for waiving clinical tests prior to movement for the movement of germinal products from restricted zones III if the establishment participates in an early detection programme.

It would therefore be desirable, also in view of the existing options for breeding materials, to create the aforesaid advantages for participating in an early detection programme also for establishments that move porcine animals for immediately slaughter outside the restricted zone III. Such an amendment of the legislation would create a significant incentive for participation in voluntary monitoring programmes in ASF-free zones.

In that connection, a **reduction of the interval** pursuant to Article 16 Para. 1 Point a Number ii of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 for visits by a veterinarian, for instance **to approximately every four months** should also be considered.

II.6.2. Voluntary ASF monitoring programme in Lower Saxony

For the reasons stated under II.6.1, the voluntary ASF monitoring programme in Lower Saxony as currently in force (January 2024) is designed for the establishment of a restricted zone I and II in case of an outbreak and not of a restricted zone III. In order to give the participating establishments maximum reliability that the measures performed during disease-free periods would also entail benefits in the event of an outbreak, (cf. II.6.1.), it would be desirable if the procedure described below would be confirmed by the EU Commission if the establishment of restricted zones I and II were to be specified in the case of an outbreak.

As part of Lower Saxony's voluntary ASF monitoring programme, the following procedure is envisaged with regard to the weekly test obligations as part of ongoing monitoring: *"Participants in the voluntary ASF monitoring programme prior to an outbreak of ASF are obliged to conduct weekly pathogen identification tests per epidemiological unit on at least the first two dead kept porcine animals, which should if possible be more than 60 days of age. In the absence of such dead porcine animals of more than 60 days of age, the sample should be taken from dead porcine animals after weaning that are less than 60 days of age. No sampling of suckling piglets is necessary."* The aforesaid procedure is based on the requirements pursuant to Article 16 Para. 1 Point c Number ii of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594.

The frequency of veterinary visits to the establishments, inclusive of verifying the implementation of stricter measures as protection against biological risks, is determined pursuant to Article 16 Para. 1 Point a Number i of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594.

II.6.3. Continuous monitoring – testing of fallen animals

Pursuant to the English-language version of Article 16 Para. 1 Point c Number ii of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, samples are to be taken of all¹ dead kept porcine animals after weaning for each epidemiological unit in the absence of dead animals of more than 60 days of age. In the case of porcine animals of more than 60 days of age, samples have to be taken of only the first two dead animals per week. This requirement entails high expenditure and effort for rearing establishments. With regard to the reasonableness of this requirement, it also has to be considered whether the scope of sampling for porcine animals before weaning of less than 60 days of age could be reduced.

II.6.4. Stricter biosecurity measures in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687

In Germany or respectively in Lower Saxony, various programmes and/or guidelines are in force regarding the optimisation of biosecurity in establishments keeping porcine animals. In addition to the hygiene regulation for porcine animal farming in force in Germany, these include the [niedersächsische freiwillige ASP-Früherkennungsprogramm](#) (Lower Saxony voluntary ASF monitoring programme), the [Niedersächsische Biosicherheitskonzept für Schweine haltende Betriebe nach dem EU-Tiergesundheitsrechtsakt](#) (Lower Saxony biosecurity concept for establishments keeping porcine animals pursuant to the EU Animal Health Act), [Leitlinien zur Auslauf- und Freilandhaltung von Hausschweinen unter ASF-Bedingungen](#) (guidelines for outdoor bred and free range keeping of porcine animals under

ASP conditions) and the [ASF-Risikoampel zum Schutz vor der Afrikanischen Schweinepest](#) (ASP risk assessment for protection against African Swine Fever). Accordingly, biosecurity is already an important consideration in establishments keeping porcine animals in this region, even in ASF-free periods, and this continues to be supported by the authorities. Stricter biosecurity measures, including those that are already in force during ASF-free periods (voluntary ASF monitoring programme), should therefore enable derogations for the movement of animals for immediate slaughter or further keeping, even in the case of isolated outbreaks of ASF in kept porcine animals in previously ASF-free zones. **It is therefore proposed that stricter biosecurity measures should also be taken into account in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687, in particular with regard to less stringent requirements for movement.**

The aforesaid demand also applies to the movement of animal by-products from porcine animals occurring in an ASF restricted zone, such as slurry or slaughterhouse by-products.

II.7. Need for clarification and other issues

II.7.1. Need for clarification

Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 (Articles 35 and 51) and Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 (Article 36) govern the movement of manure, including litter and used bedding from establishments in restricted zones. As there is no legal definition of the term “movement” in EU animal health legislation, it has to be clarified whether the **application** of manure by the operators **on their own establishment premises** inside the restricted zones has to be distinguished from the term “**movement**”. There is no movement of the manure to other establishments so that the movement restrictions laid down in the regulations are not relevant, provided that the manure does not harbour the risk of spreading a severe transmissible disease. In view of the legally prescribed and additionally performed tests (cf. II.1., II.6.4.), that risk can be rated as negligible.

II.7.2. Marking of meat from wild porcine animals from restricted zones

Pursuant to Article 2 Point e of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, a restricted zone III is established when kept porcine animals are affected. Pursuant to Article 52 Para. 2 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, meat from wild porcine animals from restricted zone III can be moved only for private domestic use or after risk-mitigation treatment. In restricted zones I, II and III the objective is to reduce the wild boar population and thus prevent a further spread of African Swine Fever. The cooperation of persons with a hunting licence is of essential importance in that respect. **As the hunting of wild boar without subsequent utilisation of the meat is rejected by hunters, it is mandatory that simplified placing on the market options are found for meat from wild boar.** The conditions stated in Article 52 Para. 2 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 are in conflict with that objective and should be reconsidered.

The movement of fresh meat from wild boar pursuant to Article 52 of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 should therefore also be permissible from restricted zones II and III, provided that a pathogen identification test has been performed with negative result prior to movement.

III. Summary and conclusion

Essential demands, proposals and issues are summed up as follows:

1) Reduction of the duration of classification as ASF restricted zone

Especially in the case of an isolated ASF outbreak in kept porcine animals in a previously ASF-free zone, it should be possible to reduce the period of validity of an ASF restricted zone subject to certain conditions. The duration of the validity of the restricted zone is generally stipulated as three months in the way of an implementing decision. Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687, however, specifies a minimum period of 30 days.

2) Reducing the minimum radius of an ASF restricted zone

Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 prescribes a minimum radius of 3 km for the protection zone and 10 km for the surveillance zone. From the professional viewpoint, a reduction of the restricted zone subject to certain conditions would be desirable. Such a reduction could potentially also come into effect in the course of the outbreak on the basis of the test results.

3) Options for placing on the market of fresh meat

Options should be legally established for placing on the market of fresh meat obtained from porcine animals from an ASF restricted zone which is governed solely by measures pursuant to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 and not measures pursuant to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594. This option, which is not provided for by currently valid EU legislation, could raise acceptance with regard to approval for slaughtering.

These marketing channels should also be investigated for fresh meat from wild porcine animals from restricted zones I, II, III.

Moreover, the option of unrestricted placing on the market of fresh meat from porcine animals in ASF restricted zones should be created, provided that PCR tests conducted on samples taken from all carcasses of the affected batches in designated slaughterhouses deliver solely negative results.

4) Special health marks

In order to raise acceptance by the trade regarding the placing on the market of fresh meat from ASF restricted zones, an unrestricted option should be created for the Member States to use marks for the fresh meat (e.g. numeric code in a rectangle) which diverge from the marking provisions pursuant to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594.

5) Designation of establishments and separation of goods

In conjunction with Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 there is a need for harmonisation with regard to the requirements relating to the production and storage of products obtained from porcine animals from ASF zones by slaughterhouses or processing establishments.

6) Early detection and biosecurity

a. Restricted zone III – movement to the slaughterhouse

If Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 is applied, certain advantages of participating in an early detection scheme (potential waiver of the performance of clinical tests prior to movement) do not exist if animals are slaughtered outside the restricted zone. In areas with a high density of kept porcine animals, slaughtering outside the restricted zone is generally necessary. Amending the legislation accordingly would also raise acceptance for participation in early detection programmes.

b. Voluntary ASF monitoring programme in Lower Saxony

It would be appreciated if the EU Commission recognised monitoring programmes conducted in ASF-free periods.

c. Continuous monitoring – testing of fallen animals

Pursuant to Article 16 Para 1, Point c of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594, continuous monitoring is carried out by testing fallen animals as part of early detection measures. In that connection, less stringent requirements regarding the sampling of fallen animals after weaning and less than 60 days of age would be appreciated.

d. Recognition of stricter biosecurity measures in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687

Biosecurity concepts, biosecurity guidelines and biosecurity programmes that are established in Germany, and in particular in Lower Saxony, should have more recognition or be taken more into account in legislation, in particular in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687.

It can be assumed that all demands/proposals/issues stated under the above Nos. 1 to 6, in particular No. 1, are of great significance with regard to avoiding animal protection problems and the alleviation of financial losses for those establishments affected by the restriction measures.

Moreover, relief with regard to the period of validity and/or extent of a restricted zone would involve less administrative effort for the competent authorities involved.

The targeted legal derogations can, however, be realised only subject to the proviso that additional measures (such as additional test obligations) or requirements (such as stricter biosecurity) are put in place to ensure that the amended legislation does not increase the risk of introducing and spreading ASF.