Insights into Ukrainian Hunters' Understanding of Biosecurity

Background: Since the first detection of African Swine Fever (ASF) in wild boar (WB) in Ukraine in 2014, cases have been most frequently reported in Ukrainian regions bordering Belarus, Poland, Hungary, and Moldova. The persistence of the virus for over a decade, coupled with low numbers of hunted wild boars, raises concerns about the effectiveness of passive surveillance and control measures on hunting grounds. Hunters play a crucial role in the implementation of these measures, yet the level of biosecurity and adequacy of infrastructure on hunting grounds, which cover approximately 64% of Ukraine's territory, remains largely unknown. The success of ASF surveillance and control efforts depends heavily on hunters' awareness of ASF, their involvement, and biosecurity measures in hunting grounds.

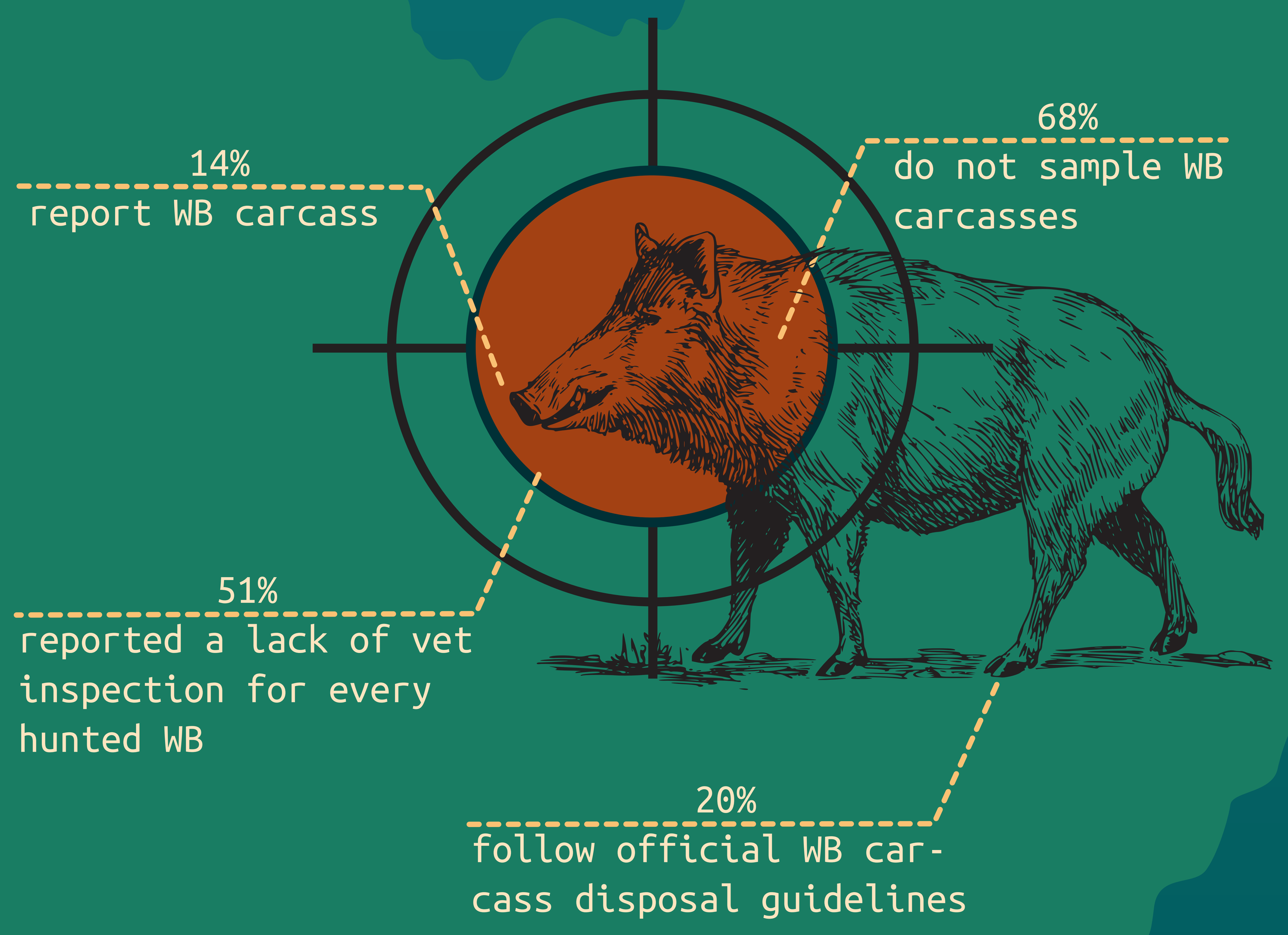
Aim: To explore hunters' understanding of biosecurity measures related to ASF surveillance and control.

Materials and methods:

Study design
phone-based structured survey

Data collection
74 hunting ground managers
from 19 regions in Ukraine

Results:



Conclusions and recommendations:

1) Our study suggest low biosecurity and poor passive surveillance on hunting grounds in Ukraine that hinder effective ASF control, increasing the risk of continuous ASF spread.
2) We recommend stronger enforcement and support for infrastructure on hunting grounds in Ukraine. Further analyses of infrastructure on hunting grounds, hunters' implementation of ASF control and elimination measures may be used to prepare more detailed recommendations for the decision makers in Ukraine in order to improve the current surveillance system and the control of ASF in WB.

Ryevnivtsev, O.[1,2] Moskalenko, L.[3] Nedosekov, V.[1]
1 Department of Veterinary Epidemiology, National University of Life and Environmental Science of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
2 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FAO Investment Centre, Rome, Italy
3 Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences, Estonian University of Life Science, Tartu, Estonia

Corresponding author:
Ryevnivtsev Oleksandr

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