# Danes to fence German border to stop boars with swine fever

August 15 2018, by Jan M. Olsen

Denmark is to erect a 70-kilometer (43.4-mile) fence along the German border to keep out wild boars, in the hope of preventing the spread of African swine fever, which can jeopardize the country's valuable pork industry.

Denmark's Environmental Protection Agency said Wednesday it had approved the outline for the steel fence, which will be up to 1.5 meters (5 feet) tall. Construction is slated to start next year.

Lawmakers approved the fence in June, among a raft of measures aimed at stopping the spread of African swine fever, which has been reported in the European Union, chiefly in the Baltics, Poland and Romania.

Critics say the 30 million kroner ($4.5 million) fence will harm wildlife and is a symbolic gesture tackling a largely non-existent problem.

The fence would be out up in such a manner that "people and transportation could still be able to cross in accordance with (the EU's border-free) Schengen zone, said Bent Rasmussen, of Denmark's Environmental Protection Agency.

He also conceded that wild animals could, in theory, pass through 15 gaps in the fence where it crosses highways, roads and streams.

Environment minister Jakob Ellemann-Jensen warned in June that Denmark's pork exports to non-EU countries—worth 11 billion kroner

($ 1.6 billion) annually—could be affected. Total Danish pork exports were worth about 30 billion kroner ($4.55 billion) in 2016.

"In case of an outbreak of African swine fever the export to non EU-countries will shut down," Ellemann-Jensen said.

Unlike swine flu, African swine fever doesn't affect humans but it can be deadly for domestic and wild boars, and cause massive losses for farmers.

According to the European statistical agency Eurostat, there are some 150 million pigs in the EU, far outnumbering cattle and other bovines, the second-largest livestock category with 89 million head.

Eurostat says 40 percent of the EU's pigs are in Spain and Germany, with significant numbers also in France, Denmark, the Netherlands and Poland.

Denmark, known for its quality bacon, is the only EU country where pigs outnumber people, with 215 pigs to every 100 residents.

Citation: Danes to fence German border to stop boars with swine fever (2018, August 15) retrieved 3 May 2024 from
https://phys.org/news/2018-08-danes-german-border-boars-swine.html