

African swine fever and detection dogs for wild boar carcasses

This is part of a broader study on the possibilities for deploying detection dogs to locate wild boar carcasses in the event of an outbreak of African swine fever (by Hilde Vervaecke and Manon De Meester, Odisee University of Applied Sciences, Belgium; steering committee members: Uta Kielau, Ellen Van Krunkelsven, Kristof Baert, and Arno Thomaes).



Report 3. Overview of standardized protocols for training, deployment, and certification for wild boar cadaver detection dogs for African swine fever monitoring

The sources used in this work include grey literature (e.g. protocols, reports, and expert consultations). They offer practical and contextual insights and should be interpreted accordingly.

Citation: Vervaecke, H. 2025. Overview of standardized protocols for training, deployment, and certification for AVP-wild boar cadaver detection dogs for African swine fever monitoring. Report 3 for ANB.

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A selection of German protocols relating to the training and deployment of detection dogs for African swine fever was collected. An overview of the protocols is given in this report, with the responsible **organisations** for the protocols and **dates** of publication

Also, some questions are answered relating to

- **Who organises the trainings?**
- the **certification** concept and status
- **certification duration** of validity
- **who** organises the certification

Protocols

Here is an overview of the protocols for the training, deployment, and certification of detection dogs for detecting wild boar carcasses for ASF monitoring, that we collected and that can be found as appendixes (as well as Dutch translations).

Table 1: Detection dog protocols in various German states

Bundesland	Organisation	Remarks
Bayern-Württemberg	TCRH – Land Baden - Württemberg	2022 & 2024
Bavaria Mainfranken Mecklenburg	Bavaria has different protocols via different trainers eg. Protocol by Edith Schwarz, validity only confirmed by the Bavarian State Office for Health and Food Safety	2022 & 2024
Niedersachsen	Niedersächsischen Ministeriums für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft, und Verbraucherschutz	2021
Sachsen-Anhalt	State Administration Office (Landesverwaltungsamt, LVwA)	2024
Schleswig-Holstein	Ministerie voor Energietransitie, Landbouw, Milieu, Natuur en Digitalisering van de deelstaat Schleswig-Holstein (MELUND)	2021

Who organises the trainings?

Moschner (2022) listed the organizers of ASF carcass detection dog training in the individual federal German states.

Table: Organisers of AVP-detection dog trainings

Bundesländer	Organisatoren der ASP-Kadaversuchhundeausbildung					
	Ministerium	Sonstige Behörde	Landkreise	Landesforstbetrieb	Ausbildungsstelle(n)	Landesjagdverband
BB						X
BW					X	
BY		X			X	
HE					X	
MV				X	X	
NI	X				X	
NW				X ¹	X ¹	
RP	X			X ¹	X ¹	
SH	X		X		X	
SL	X				X ³	X ³
SN	X				X	
ST	X				X	
TH	X				X	X

In most states, the ministry (Ministerium) organises the trainings, together with a training organisation “Ausbildungsstellen). The organiser can also be an administrative district (Landkreise), the state forestry office (Landesforstbetrieb), or the hunting association (Landesjagdverband).

The Bavarian State Office for Health and Food Safety coordinates and provides technical support for the training. In the federal states of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Rhineland-Palatinate, among others, the state forestry offices are tasked with this responsibility. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the State Forestry MV took the lead in organizing the first courses. In North Rhine-Westphalia, the entire organization is handled by the State Enterprise Forest and Wood. The responsible employee also serves as an ASF carcass detection dog trainer. In Rhineland-Pfalz, the trainer is employed by the State Forests Rhineland-Pfalz. In Schleswig-Holstein, in addition to the ministry and training centres, the districts are also involved in the organization. In Brandenburg, Saarland, and Thuringen, the hunting associations are partially involved in the training organization.

Certification concept and status

Moschner (2022) listed the certification concepts and status in the individual federal German states.

State	Training/Examination Concept	Status/Details
Bavaria	Central training concept developed by LGL (Landesamt für Landwirtschaft und Lebensmittelsicherheit)	Minimum requirements set centrally; each training site develops its own examination regulations based on this
Baden-Württemberg	Qualitative performance assessments	Suitability assessments of the teams are conducted
Hesse	No universally valid examination regulations	Training sites independently decide on suitability and examination modalities
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	Performance records only, no fixed examination regulations	Examination regulations are under development, coordinated with other states
Saxony	Requirement catalog exists	Performance assessment similar to Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

State	Training/Examination Concept	Status/Details
North Rhine-Westphalia	Examination regulations under development	Coordination with other states
Rhineland-Palatinate	Regular meetings for performance assessment	No formal exam
Saarland	Standardized test procedure	Examinations conducted in a standardized manner

- Bavaria and Saarland have clearly defined systems.
- Some states (e.g., Hesse, Rhineland-Pfalz) rely on local discretion or informal procedures.
- Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and North Rhine-Westphalia are developing harmonized examination regulations in coordination with other states.
- Saxony follows a model similar to Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania but has its own requirements.

In the protocols that we collected, we found following information:

Table 2. Overview of certifications and validity of certification:

Bundesland	Certification	Validity
Bayern-Württemberg	Yes (3 levels)	valid until December 31 of the following year
Bavaria	Yes	At least six training sessions per half-year to ensure and maintain deployability (mandatory?)
Bavaria – Mainfranken	Yes	
Mecklenburg Vorpommern	?	
Niedersachsen	Yes	36 months
Sachsen-Anhalt	Yes	24 months valid - Extended upon proof of at least 8 hours of carcass search work.
Schleswig-Holstein	Yes	Participation in at least 4 sessions per calendar year (trainings and theoretical instruction) is mandatory. Actual deployment may count toward the minimum number of practice sessions required to maintain deployability.

In addition, there is some information from our survey (2025) of German respondents. All are experienced in detection dogs training, deployment, or governmental management for ASF. When they were asked what was needed to improve the certification system, following answers were most relevant:

- There is no standardized certification in Germany. A nationwide certification would be better.
- What would be an improvement: a standardized examination for Germany with certification by a neutral state or federal authority, similar to the Federal Aviation Office's explosives dogs for baggage detection.

Training duration

Moschner (2022) lists the training duration of the different training programs for detection dogs in different German states.

Table: Training duration (frequency, duration, intervals)

Bundesländer	Ausbildungstermine	Ausbildungszeitraum	Zeitliche Abstände
BB		In der Prüfungsordnung	
BW	Unterschiedliches Kursangebot, individuell		
BY	Individuell		
HE	Individuell		
MV	25 Termine	8 Wochen	
NI	29 + Termine		
NW	7 + Termine	26-34 Wochen	
RP		Individuell, abhängig von Lerngeschwindigkeit und Training zu Hause	Alle 4-6 Wochen
SH	12 Termine	12 Wochen	
SL	16 Termine		Wöchentliche Einheiten
SN	25 (+) Termine	5 Wochen	
ST	ca. 50 Termine		
TH	6 (+) Termine	4,5 Wochen	10 Tage bzw. 6 Tage

Moschner (2022) found that among the different states, between 6 and 50 training sessions are considered necessary. The required training periods in the various states range from 4.5 weeks up to a maximum of 34 weeks (8 months).

Table: States, guidelines for training, number of training sessions and notes:

State	Guideline for Training Duration	Number of Training Sessions	Notes / Details
Baden-Württemberg	No set timeframe	6–50	Variability due to different course formats (full-time, weekend, day courses) including quality checks and further training
Bavaria	No set timeframe	6–50	Each training centre decides individually
Hesse	No set timeframe	6–50	Individual decision by training centres
Rhineland-Pfalz	No general guideline	6–50	Control intervals of 4–6 weeks to review progress and set new goals; different learning speeds and self-training intensities considered

Preliminary protocol for Flanders

The previous protocols were reviewed and adapted for Flanders. After two visits to the TCRH—consisting of discussions and observations of trainings and exams to ensure an accurate understanding—the material was further adapted to the Flemish context. The adapted protocol is primarily based on the TCRH Center protocol (TCRH Training Center Rescuing and Helping GmbH) for ASF detection dog teams in Baden-Württemberg, Germany. It can be found as report 4: Regulations

for the Training and Examination of an African Swine Fever (ASF) Carcass Detection Dog Team in Flanders, Belgium.

References

Moschner, A. 2022. Bundesweiter Vergleich der Vorgehensweisen bei Ausbildung und Einsatz von ASP-Kadaversuchhunden. Bachelorarbeit. Hochschule für Forstwirtschaft Rottenburg. Germany.