

## KEY FACTS

- African swine fever (ASF) is a severe viral disease affecting domestic and wild pigs and can spread rapidly;
- An estimated 200 million pigs have been killed globally to date causing serious economic losses with close to 100% mortality rates. According to a Mecardo analysis, this is approximately 25% of the total pig population;
- ASF can be spread by live or dead, domestic or wild pigs. Transmission can also occur via contaminated feed and non-living objects such as shoes, clothes, vehicles, knives, equipment, etc., due to the high environmental resistance of the virus;
- Pork products remain infectious for up to 2 years; and
- There is no approved vaccine or treatment against ASF and experts warn it will take years before a vaccine is developed.

## THE DISEASE

African swine fever is a highly contagious haemorrhagic disease of pigs caused by an Iridovirus of the Asfarviridae family. It causes pigs to have high fever and lose their appetite, and also causes haemorrhages in the skin and internal organs. Pigs die in a span of 2 to 10 days upon affliction. Additional symptoms include reddening of the skin at the tips of ears, chest and abdominal areas observed in white pigs; vomiting and haemorrhagic diarrhoea. **Pigs of all ages can be affected.**

The causative agent can remain viable for long periods in blood, faeces and tissues and can also multiply in its vectors. In view of this, the control of ASF is dependent on strong policies and strict quarantine enforcement.

## TRANSMISSION/DISTRIBUTION

In the 2016-2019 period, a significant and alarming increase in ASF incidents have been recorded from OIE reporting countries with 24% stating the disease is present. Of particular importance to the Pacific region is Timor-Leste's confirmation of ASF presence during September 2019. Within the first 24 hours of reporting, 405 cases were listed in the Dili municipality with a 100% mortality rate.

Projecting data from these initial findings predicts a devastating impact to smallholder farmers and urban rural communities. Pacific Island Countries and Timor-Leste not only share key trade pathways but also similar livestock rearing characteristics; a significant reliance on protein from pork products; and the use of pigs as economic buffers to cover unforeseen costs to communities; as well as cultural importance in most Pacific Island Countries. Global efforts to control ASF is spread across borders and has not been as effective as needed especially in countries with large wild boar populations and a preference for smallholder backyard farming such as in Pacific Island Countries. While ASF doesn't directly affect human health, the indirect impact to food security and smallholder economies is severe.

Direct transmission between sick and healthy animals; indirect transmission through feeding on garbage or swill; biological vectors include soft ticks of the genus *Ornithodoros*.

Asia: China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, North Korea, South Korea, the Philippines and Timor-Leste

Europe: Currently present in 13 countries, historically present in Andorra

Africa: Endemic in sub-Saharan Africa. Currently present in 28 countries, historically present in an additional 5 countries

## FAO/OIE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Animal disease containment in its broadest sense should be prioritised within the highest levels of governments.
- Preparedness (e.g. contingency planning, standard operating procedures, secured financial support) for improved early warning, detection and notification, early reaction, and coordination needs to be in place and reviewed periodically in relation to changing disease situation.
- Application of strict biosecurity measures specific to the different swine producing sectors including frequent cleaning and disinfection of farms, transport vehicles, and improved husbandry practices and production systems.
- Strengthening surveillance and monitoring of transport of live pigs as well as pork products.
- Good communication and coordination with swine-producing commercial sector and swine farmers are essential to strengthen cooperation in ASF prevention, detection, and control. Awareness and training of all stakeholders, from veterinarians to farmers, intermediaries and other value chain actors is needed.
- Communication to the public is vital to avoid rumours leading to food safety perceptions and consumption disruption.
- Farm registries, animal identification and censuses are essential to enable animal health interventions.
- Prohibition of swill feeding where feasible; highly regulated where not.
- Strengthening proper disposal of food waste (food services, airports, seaports), which may contain pork products.

- Outbreak control strategies must be in place. The strategies need to be developed in consultation with the private sector (pig producers and allied industries, such as transport, feed operators) for improved disease management options and compliance.

## **MORE DETAILED INFORMATION**

Aus. Department of Ag.	<a href="https://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/ead-bulletin/ead-bulletin-no-120">https://www.agriculture.gov.au/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/ead-bulletin/ead-bulletin-no-120</a>
OIE Technical Disease Cards	<a href="https://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/technical-disease-cards/">https://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/technical-disease-cards/</a>
CABI Data Sheets	<a href="https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/95040">https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/95040</a>
FAO Emergency Prevention	<a href="http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/empres/ASF/situation_update.html">http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/empres/ASF/situation_update.html</a>