

## African Swine Fever Virus

African Swine Fever Virus (ASF) is spreading throughout Asia and Eastern Europe.

### **Background:**

ASF is a highly contagious virus in pigs, transmitted through direct contact between pigs as well as indirectly, through fomites (contaminated clothing, vehicles or equipment), ingestion of contaminated meat and meat by-products, semen and can be maintained in a sylvatic cycle via *Ornithodoros* ticks (primarily in Africa).

ASF virus can affect domestic and feral pigs of all ages. Clinical manifestations include fever, 'blotching' of the skin, incoordination, diarrhoea, vomiting and pneumonia. Currently, there are no vaccines available. Due to variability in virulence, the disease ranges from high morbidity and mortality to a milder form that may just result in seroconversion.

ASF virus is not zoonotic – humans are not at risk.

The virus is highly resilient in most environmental conditions and at a wide range of pH levels. It is resistant to a number of commercially available disinfectants. ASF virus is not inactivated by thawing or freezing but can be inactivated in a liquid media by heating at 60°C for 30 minutes.

The specimens required for diagnosis of suspected cases include:

1. Whole blood in EDTA anticoagulant.
2. Samples of tonsils, spleen, lymph nodes (gastrohepatic and mesenteric), lung, kidney, liver and ileum collected aseptically and transported in neutral-buffered saline.

### **Situation update:**

ASF virus is endemic in most sub-Saharan countries and has been present across Europe. On 3 August 2018, ASF virus was reported in China and has since had 5 outbreaks. China produces approximately 500 million pigs per year, which accounts for about half the world's pig production. The virus has been traced to the sale of live pigs and investigators estimate the disease has been circulating in China since April 2018.

From early July 2018, ASF virus has been confirmed in south-east Romania, triggering an on-going stamping out process. On 27 August 2018, ASF virus was confirmed in the largest pig farm in Romania (second largest in Europe) with the planned culling of 141,000 susceptible pigs across 3 properties.

On 31 August 2018, the first case of ASF virus was reported in Bulgaria

### **Risk to Australia:**

There have been no reported cases of ASF virus in Australia.

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources have reviewed the existing imports and pathways and believe that the risk of ASF virus is being managed by biosecurity risk management measures already in place. To manage the risk of ASF virus, meat must be retorted, cured under specific conditions to inactivate the ASF virus or sourced from ASF-free countries or zones.

These international events highlight the importance of maintaining good biosecurity practices on farm.

### **How to report:**

If you suspect African swine fever in pigs you must report it to your Local Land Services District Veterinarian immediately on 1300 795 299 or call the 24 hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

### **Further information:**

Biosecurity guidelines for pig producers – NSW DPI

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/pigs/compliance-and-biosecurity/legislation/the-general-biosecurity-duty-and-pig-producers>

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