



## FACT SHEET

### AFRICAN SWINE FEVER VIRUS

September 2018

African swine fever (ASF) is a highly infectious and contagious viral disease of domestic and wild pigs of all breeds. ASF is usually fatal in infected pigs.

ASF is subject to the statutory notification and control obligations internationally. The substantial losses related to an ASF outbreak in countries exporting pigs or pork are linked to import bans imposed from countries free from the disease. ASF does NOT affect public health or food safety, i.e. pork meat is safe to eat.

With ASF now spreading in China, APL urges ALL producers to take extra precaution with their herd's biosecurity. We recommend that all producers review their farm biosecurity plan and complete the Piggery Biosecurity Audit Checklist in the National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Pork Production publication at <https://bit.ly/2JJPSXa>.



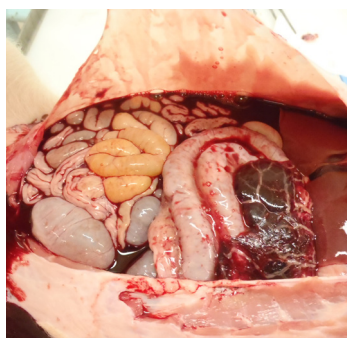
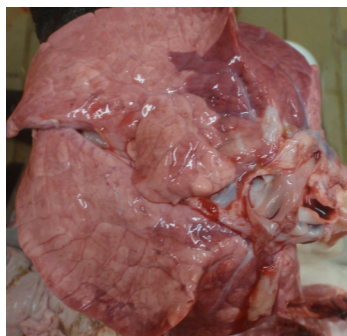
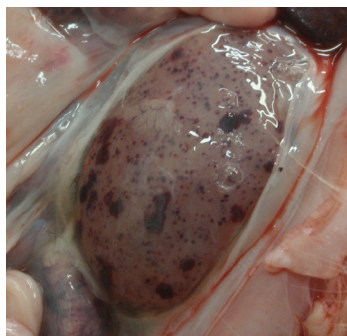
Some clinical signs of ASF virus infected pigs. Source: CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory.

#### General ASF Disease Facts

- ASF is a notifiable, highly contagious disease of wild and domestic pigs
- Given the uninfected status of the Australian pig herd, ASF will devastate the Australian herd if it is introduced
- The spread of ASF into eastern Europe in 2007 was thought to have originated from swill dumped from a ship
- No vaccines or treatments for ASF are currently available
- ASF affects all age groups of pigs
- It is difficult to diagnose ASF based on clinical signs or lesions because of its similarity with other haemorrhagic diseases
- Symptoms of ASF include fever followed by dullness, vomiting, diarrhoea, breathing difficulty, coughing, nasal and eye discharge, abortion, blue or red discolouration of the skin (cyanosis) particularly the ears and snout, and death within seven days
- ASF can occur in acute, sub-acute or chronic forms. The death rate is dependent on the severity of the symptoms, with death rates of pigs with acute forms up to 100%
- Infection is spread from pig to pig by aerosols from infected discharges and faeces, consumption of infected meat, bites of soft ticks, the bites of lice and flies and/or from contaminated syringes. Contaminated feed, water, clothing, footwear, vehicles, equipment, soil and wildlife can also spread the virus
- The most likely sources of ASF infection are pork products, porcine genetic material and incursions by infected pigs
- The most significant risk of entry of ASF virus into Australia is via illegally imported contaminated pork products that are swill fed to domestic pigs and/or accessed by feral pigs
- Swill feeding of pigs in Australia is prohibited
- ASF virus is very stable across a range of temperatures (including temperatures below 0°C) and pH (4–13), particularly when held in a protein rich environment (blood, serum, meat, etc.) and can persist in unprocessed frozen pork for up to six months



- Once a feral pig population becomes infected, the infection is likely to persist
- Virtually every successful ASF eradication programme has required destruction of all pigs in an affected area.



ASF virus-infected pigs. Source: CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory.

## Recommendations

### Biosecurity Considerations for Producers

- Border security measures and farm biosecurity must be maintained
- Implement biosecurity for farm workers returning from international travel:
  - consider implementing a quarantine period of seven days for all workers that have travelled overseas to countries where ASF has been reported
- Limit visitors to farms
  - maintain a visitor register that visitors have to sign to confirm that:
    - they have showered and changed clothes since their last exposure to pigs
    - they have not returned from overseas travel where ASF has been reported within the last seven days and
    - where they were and on what dates and where they visited pigs.

- provide clean clothes and boots for visitors to wear while on-site.
- Follow other generally accepted biosecurity practices:
  - routinely clean clothing and footwear
  - control entry to the farm
  - implement a policy that does not permit staff to own or work with other pigs
  - keep non-farm vehicles outside of farm or at least their drivers inside their vehicles.

### Additional reading:

APL recommends you consult with your veterinarian regularly and urges you to contact them if you observe any unusual disease symptoms.

Emergency Animal Disease Watch hotline 1800 675 888.

For a great resource to show to all piggery staff how to identify ASF and how to protect domestic pigs from infection, produced by the European Food Safety Authority and the European Commission see African Swine Fever: how to stay one step ahead <https://bit.ly/2P99uHb>.

APL Project 2014/483: The epidemiology of African Swine Fever virus and its potential introduction into Australia was funded to inform the Australian pig industry about ASF and identify the risk and potential introduction and spread within Australia.

All photographs supplied by: CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory.

For additional information and/or a copy of the report please contact Dr Lechelle van Breda on 0447 099 397 or at [lechelle.vanbreda@australianpork.com.au](mailto:lechelle.vanbreda@australianpork.com.au).

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