

African swine fever stakeholder update

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Committee: | African Swine Fever Stakeholder
Weekly update

Meeting Date: | 3 April 2020

Item #	Item Name	ASF preparedness update	Major outcomes, recommendations, actions
1	<p>Australian Pork Limited</p> <p>Ms Margo Andrae</p>	<p>Australia remains ASF free.</p> <p>ASF has been reported in the Southern Highlands province of Papua New Guinea, although it may have been present in the country as early as November 2019, with reported pig deaths due to ASF ranging from 300 to 1,500. Movement restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 has affected the ability of the Delimitation response team to reach the affected villages and provide assistance. The source of the outbreak is currently unknown.</p> <p>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, David Littleproud met with the Inspector General of Biosecurity to discuss the recently released report – <i>Adequacy of preventative border measures to mitigate the African swine fever risk entering Australia</i>. The report reviews the Department’s inspection, verification and surveillance pre- and at-border measures to prevent entry of ASF-infected material into Australia. Minister Littleproud advised key recommendations from the report including intervention for international traveler arrivals, deploying detector dogs and increased screening of mail from ASF-affected countries have already been implemented as part of the Australian Government’s \$66.6M ASF response package.</p> <p>The first National Feral Pig Stakeholder meeting was held on 30th March, to understand current initiatives underway on feral pigs, to identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination, and commence discussion on the vision and goals for the National Feral Pig Action Plan.</p> <p>Australian Pork Limited continues to respond to the rapidly evolving impact of COVID-19 to ensure Australian pig producers and the wider industry are best placed to respond to the unfolding situation.</p>	<p>Industry can access general COVID-19 guidance documents and resources via the APL webpage www.australianpork.com.au/covid-19.</p>

2	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment update	<p>The effects of COVID-19 on ASF funded projects have been assessed by relevant project leads and mitigation strategies are being put in place where possible.</p> <p>Increased interventions now apply to all flights from PNG that arrive into Cairns and 100% intervention applies to flights to Horn Island within the Torres Strait.</p> <p>Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions virtually no passenger movements are occurring.</p> <p>As at 1st April 2020, there have been 12 visa cancellations since 1st October 2019, eight of which related to a failure to declare pork and pork products.</p> <p>A two-day workshop with the northern significant disease investigation network (NABSnet) members was held in Broome, WA on 6th-7th March. The workshop included information about ASF and other exotic diseases, along with tips and tricks for conducting disease investigations.</p> <p>NAQS has distributed an ASF fact sheet and ASF posters to all (65) Indigenous Ranger groups that it collaborates with across northern Australia and to all Biosecurity Officers in the Torres Strait to support disease awareness and reporting, and compliance with swill feeding regulations.</p> <p>NAQS completed a surveillance activity specifically for feral pigs from 23rd-26th March 2020. A total of 100 pigs underwent postmortem and sampling as part of the survey. There was no evidence of ASF based on clinical observations and gross pathological findings.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions for all NAQS routine feral and domestic animal field surveillance activities have been postponed. NAQS is continuing to work with remote staff and Indigenous Rangers to deliver field surveillance in their local areas of operation, where possible.</p> <p>Following discussions at the AHC face-to-face meeting in March and reflecting the current COVID-19 situation the format and timing of phase two of Exercise Razorback has changed. It will now consist of five workshops that will cover movement controls, destruction and disposal, ASF in feral pigs, an ASF cost-benefit analysis with the final workshop on the broad ASF strategy that will include transition to management.</p> <p>Large numbers of pig deaths were reported in the Mendi region in PNG in February 2020. Samples tested at AAHL were positive for ASF and PNG reported its first detection of ASF on 28th March 2020 to the OIE and FAO. The Department is working closely with Post and other agencies and the PNG government to provide support for their response.</p>	
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3	Animal Health Committee update	<p>AHC met by teleconference on 23rd March 2020 to review capacity to manage concurrent pandemic and emergency animal disease responses. Emergency animal disease diagnosis and investigation continue to be prioritised and will be managed through business continuity plans.</p> <p>ASF feral pigs task groups are continuing to explore issues around diagnostic testing, communications and biosecurity advice, movement controls, surveillance and tracing, and pre-emptive culling. Some work will be completed soon, whilst other work will be handed over to the National Feral Pig Coordinator.</p> <p>The ASF movement controls task group are working on communication strategies to ensure that movement permit conditions are clearly understood by industry. These will be shared when available.</p> <p>The AHC 3D group continues to explore welfare implications of some pig destruction methods, and will share their findings with industry when completed.</p> <p>With ASF in PNG, Qld is developing plans to protect the state against ASF, which can be executed under pandemic conditions.</p>	
4	Next report	The next report will be distributed on Friday 17 th April 2020.	All stakeholders are welcome to continue sending through or asking questions, or raising their concerns with both Ms Margo Andrae or Dr Lechelle van Breda.