

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER TREATENS THE GLOBAL PIG POPULATION

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER (ASF) IS A THREAT TO ALL PIGS

IF YOUR CLIENTS HAVE ANY PIGS, THEY MIGHT BENEFIT FROM LEARNING ABOUT THE DANGERS OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

Veterinarians have an important role to play in:

- educating owners about the disease and current disease risks
- reviewing clinic and client biosecurity protocols
- providing guidance on biosecurity measures to protect swine health and
- identifying and reporting suspect cases of ASF

THE VIRUS

African swine fever is a double-stranded DNA virus. The virus is robust and complex, and harder than Porcine epidemic diarrhea (PED). The virus is stable over a wide range of temperatures and pH. It can survive putrefaction, aging meat, cooking, smoking, curing, air drying, salting and freezing.

The virus can remain infectious for:

- 11 days in feces
- Months in bone marrow
- 15 weeks in chilled meat
- 3-6 months in cured hams that have not reached high-temperature cooking
- Up to several years in frozen meat.

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

- African swine fever is one of the most severe viral diseases of pigs. It affects pigs of all ages but does not infect humans.
- Domestic and wild pigs are equally susceptible to ASF.
- No treatment or vaccine currently exists for this virus.
- ASF is recognized by the global veterinary society as one of the major world threats to pig production, food security and biodiversity.
- The disease can spread through direct or indirect contact and often causes high mortality.
- The virus can persist for a long time in the environment, carcasses and in a variety of pork products.

TRANSMISSION

The virus is transmitted from oral and nasal exposure through direct or indirect contact.

- Directly by contact of infected pigs with healthy pigs.
- Indirectly by contact with the virus from excretions, secretions, and infected tissues including the ingestion of contaminated pork or meat products, contaminated swill or kitchen waste, contaminated fomites such as feed, vehicles and footwear.

Biological vectors such as soft ticks can propagate this disease and other vectors, such as stable flies may also be involved in virus transmission.

DIAGNOSIS

The recognition and diagnosis of African swine fever can be difficult. Clinically, the disease looks identical to Classical swine fever and looks very similar to Erysipelas, Salmonellosis, Septicemic pasteurellosis and other septicemic diseases. Laboratory testing by CFIA is required to confirm the diagnosis.

WHAT PIG OWNERS SHOULD KNOW

- African swine fever is a contagious virus that affects pigs and wild pigs in Africa, Asia and parts of Europe.
- The disease is not currently in Canada. We must prepare for that eventuality but also work to prevent the disease from coming into Canada by putting measures in place to reduce the risks of contamination.
- Humans cannot catch ASF from infected pigs nor can they contract the disease by eating meat from a pig infected with ASF.
- Humans can spread the disease and infect pigs in many ways such as:
 - if they have been in a contaminated area, they can carry the virus on their clothes, footwear, and vehicles;
 - through the feed they use for their pigs.
- The disease can survive on packages imported from countries where the virus is present.
- Don't bring pork products onto farm premises and ensure people who have travelled abroad are aware of the dangers of ASF.
- Contaminated meat can find its way into kitchen scraps used to feed pigs.
- All pig owners should keep their animals away from wild pigs. They could be carriers of many diseases.

SIGNS OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER IN PIGS

- High fever (>40°C)
- Weakness and difficulty standing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (may be bloody)
- Cutaneous hemorrhages (particularly around ears, snout and hindquarters)
- Coughing or labored breathing
- In sow barns: miscarriage, abortions, stillbirths, and weak litters can occur
- High proportions of the animals with the disease will die within 10 days.

The incubation period of African swine fever is 5-15 days. There are both acute and chronic forms of ASF. Clinically the disease is characterized by hemorrhagic fever and multiple organ involvement. If a pig survives the infection they can shed virus for up to 6 months.

BIOSECURITY RESOURCES

- Swine Biosecurity Standard
- ANAC Feed Biosecurity Recommendations
- CFSPH ASF Fact Sheet
- FAO ASF Manual



More information about African swine fever, as well as resources for pig owners, can be found at www.cpc-ccp.com/african-swine-fever