

Updated Situation Assessment #3

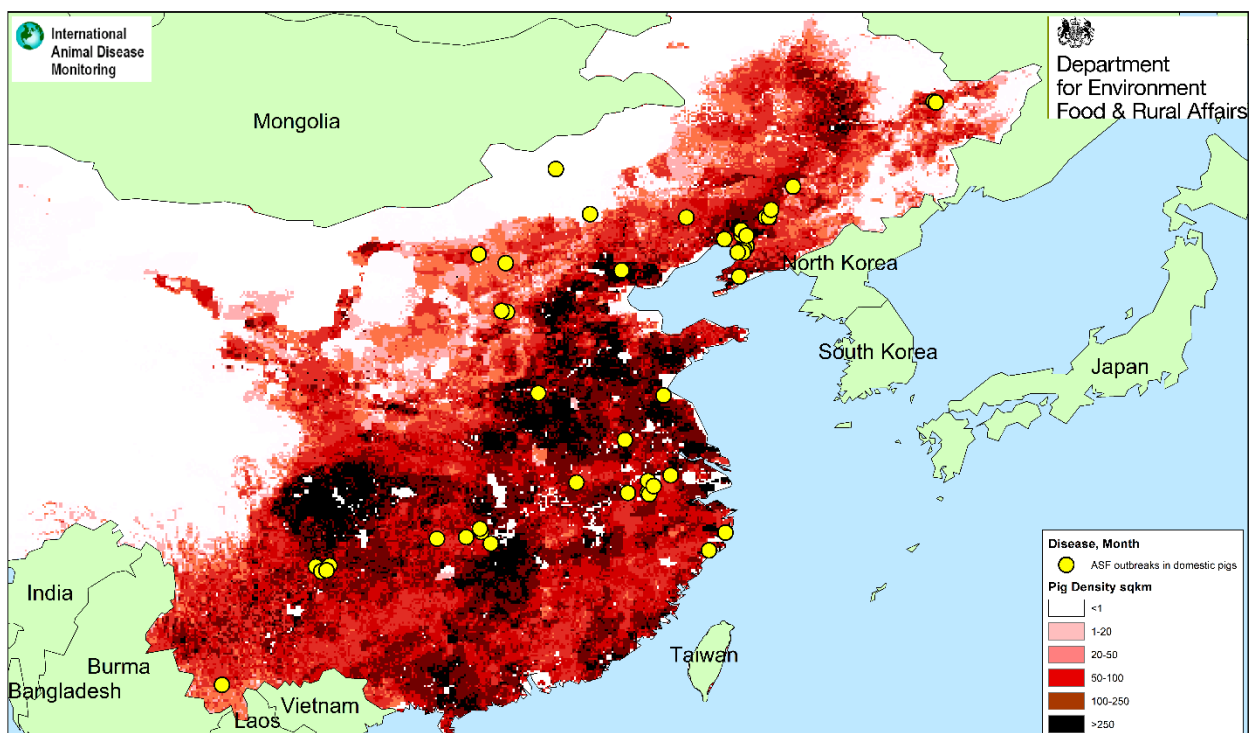
African Swine fever in China

29 October 2018

Ref: VITT/1200 ASF in China

Disease report

Over the last three months, the Chinese authorities have reported 53 outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs in 13 provinces of China. The most recent reports are in South East China in Guizhou, Hunan and Yunnan provinces and represent a significant geographical jump. The map below shows the location of all outbreaks according to OIE (2018), with the domestic pig density, according to FAO Empres-i data. Disease control measures are in place.



African swine fever outbreaks and pig density (#/square km)

July - October 2018

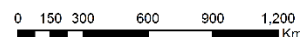
(Pig density courtesy of FAO Empres-I)



Map prepared by IDM

Actual Scale 1:20,000,000

Date prepared 20/12/2018



Situation assessment

ASF was first reported in China on the 3rd August. The disease has spread quickly. The Chinese have put a series of control measures in place.

- Restriction zones of 3km and 10km around each affected establishment;

- A complete ban on feeding catering waste and swill to pigs;
- Closure of live pig markets in affected provinces;
- Suspending movements of live pigs in affected and adjacent provinces, unless destined for breeding and with a pre-movement test; and
- Culling with more than 210,000 pigs culled to date.

The detection of ASF in pig farms in south east China represents a large jump in geographic spread. The source of the first outbreaks in China is unknown at present, but the Chinese Authorities have reported that over 60% of the outbreaks are associated with feeding swill or catering waste to pigs. Nevertheless, there are other pathways which need to be considered, including the movement of infected pigs over long distances to market, the exposure to contaminated equipment, feed or water and vector transmission.

Argasid (soft-bodied) tick species, such as *Ornithodoros spp.* are known to be involved in the transmission cycle of ASF, where present. The virus can persist for several years in the absence of infected suids, when ticks are present, hindering eradication efforts in domestic pigs and wild boar / feral pigs. There are thirteen species of soft-bodied ticks present in southern China, including two species of *Ornithodoros spp.* (Yu et al., 2015), although it is not known how effective they are as vectors of ASF. Therefore this recent jump not only represents a spread of the disease towards other countries in south-east Asia but also opens up the possibility for establishment of the virus in the resident tick population, so facilitating persistence. In this respect the degree of exposure of domestic pigs and wild boar to soft ticks will be an important consideration.

According to a media report, sausages seized recently from a passenger on a flight from China to Japan tested positive for ASF highlighting the potential risks posed by translocation of personal imports of products of animal origin (POAO).

The overall risk to the UK given the current distribution of ASF in the EU and neighbouring countries is still **medium**. With ASF established in Eastern Europe, there are ongoing concerns around pork products from non-EU countries entering the EU in passenger luggage and then being discarded in areas where wild boar or domestic pigs are present. With direct flights to the EU and UK from China and southern Asia, there is a risk of entry of ASFV in POAO from Asia. Publicity campaigns are in place to discourage individuals from bringing pork products into UK.

Conclusion

The risk of ASF introduction to the UK was raised to **medium** in August 2018. This reflected the spread of ASF westward from Eastern Europe. Despite the spread of ASF to China, the current risk of ASF introduction to the UK is still considered to be **medium** although the situation is being kept under review and depends on how ASF spreads both within China and across other parts of south-east Asia.

We would like to highlight to all pig keepers and the public to ensure pigs are not fed catering waste, kitchen scraps or pork products, thereby observing the swill feeding ban. All pig keepers should be aware that visitors to their premises should not have had recent contact with pigs and pig premises in the affected regions. Anybody returning from any ASF-affected area should avoid contact with domestic pigs, whether commercial holdings or smallholdings, areas with feral pigs or wild boar, until they are confident they have no contaminated clothing, footwear or equipment. Pig keepers and veterinarians should remind themselves of the clinical signs for ASF. Any suspect cases must be reported promptly.

A campaign to highlight the dangers of swill feeding has been launched and more information can be found at this [link](#). Please see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/african-swine-fever> for more information. We would like to remind the public that any feeding of meat products, including the feeding of swill, kitchen scraps and catering waste, to wild boar or feral pigs is also illegal.

We will continue to monitor the situation.

Authors

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References

All disease reports are available from the OIE WAHIS database.

Yu, Z., Wang, H., Want, T., Sun, W., Yang, X. & Liu, J. (2015) Tick-borne pathogens and the vector potential of ticks in China. *Parasites & Vectors* 8: 24.



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