

Updated Outbreak Assessment #6

African swine fever in South East Asia

14 May 2019

Ref: VITT/1200 ASF in South East Asia

Disease report

Since our last report on 23rd April, China and Cambodia have reported more outbreaks in domestic pigs, and Hong Kong has now reported its first outbreak of ASF in domestic pigs at a slaughterhouse, albeit in an imported pig. Disease control measures are in place, including culling affected and susceptible animals.



Map prepared by IDM
Date: 14/05/2019
Absolute scale: 1:30,000,000

African swine fever in China, Mongolia, Vietnam and Cambodia since August 2018

0 205 410 820 1,230 1,640 Km

Situation assessment

China

The Chinese authorities reported the first outbreak of ASF in domestic pigs on 3rd August 2018. Since then, a total of 129 outbreaks in domestic pigs have been reported. See above map for location of the outbreaks (OIE, 2019). Since our last report in April, four new outbreaks in domestic pigs; three in commercial and one in a backyard holding, have been reported by the Chinese authorities. As well as direct and arthropod vector routes of transmission, animal feed ingredients and fomites have the potential to be pathways for

ASF. US pork producers use feed from China for their pigs, raising concerns about this as a potential route of import into the USA.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong reported its first outbreak of ASF in domestic pigs on 10th May 2019. An ASF surveillance system is in place for local pig farms, slaughterhouses, and wild boars in Hong Kong. The virus was detected in tissue samples collected from the condemned carcass of a pig imported from the Guangdong province in southern mainland China, tested as part of the laboratory quality management system. The slaughterhouse has been declared an infected place and operations suspended since announcement of the outbreak on 10th May 2019. Further control measures have been implemented to reduce spread, such as enhanced surveillance and movement control.

Taiwan

Taiwan remains officially free from ASF, and no reports of disease in domestic pigs or wild boar have been made to OIE.

Vietnam

The first case of ASF in Vietnam was reported in early February 2019, since then a further 112 cases have been reported, although no new outbreaks have been reported since our report on 23rd April. ASF outbreaks have been reported in 23 provinces and cities and more than 89,600 pigs have been culled. Pork accounts for 3/4 of total meat consumption in Vietnam, and most of its 30 million farm-raised pigs are consumed domestically.

Mongolia

There have been no new outbreaks reported in March, April or May. The last outbreaks were in backyard pigs in early February. To date, 11 outbreaks have been reported in Mongolia: in Bulgan, Darkhan-Uul, Dundgovi, Orkhon, Selenge, and Tov provinces and Ulaanbaatar, involving a total of 105 farms/households. According to media sources, more than 10% of the total pig population in Mongolia have died or been destroyed due to the ASF outbreaks.

Cambodia

Cambodia reported its first outbreak of ASF in domestic pigs in a backyard farm in Rattanakiri province on 23rd March 2019. This was on the eastern border with Vietnam and in this respect was not surprising, although it does represent a jump south if cases are linked across the border. Since our last report on 23rd April, there have been three more outbreaks in domestic pigs in the Rattanakiri province, leading to the culling of 1,673 pigs.

Other factors

The presence of ASFV in China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia and now Hong Kong shows the potential for further spread into the domestic pig and wild suid populations in

south-eastern Asia, where the presence of soft-bodied argasid ticks could also hinder eradication if found to be able to transmit ASFV. In China, for example, there are 13 species of argasid ticks (Yu et al. 2015) belonging to three genera: *Argas* (seven species), *Carios* (four species), and *Ornithodoros* (two species).

The overall risk to the UK given the current distribution of ASF in Belgium, Eastern Europe and neighbouring countries is still **medium**. 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 regular direct flights to the EU and UK from China and eastern Asia, there is a risk of entry of ASFV in POAO from Asia. Indeed, according to recent media reports, in New Jersey (USA) in March, customs agents seized just under half a million kilograms of illegal pork products, coming in to the US from China (CNBC, 2019). Moreover, Japan reported finding the virus in sausages brought into the country from China in January 2019.

Publicity campaigns are in place to inform the public and discourage individuals from bringing pork products into UK, with targeted messages to key people such as road hauliers, hunters, pig keepers and veterinarians. See: http://web.oie.int/rr-europe/eng/regprog/en_asf_depository.htm, and, <https://pork.ahdb.org.uk/health-welfare/health/emerging-diseases/african-swine-fever/>

Conclusion

The risk of ASF introduction to the UK was raised to **low** in August 2017. This was because, despite the relatively low level of legal trade in live pigs or commercially produced pig products, there could be a risk from the fomite pathway involving movement of people and vehicles from affected Eastern EU countries and there was evidence of contaminated / infected non-EU origin pig products being detected in the EU. With the number of outbreaks of ASF being reported in Eastern Europe in August 2018, and subsequent detection of ASF in wild boar in Belgium in September 2018, the risk to the UK was elevated to **medium**. Despite the spread of ASF to China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Hong Kong, 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. 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. A poster reminding pig keepers of this is available: <http://apha.defra.gov.uk/documents/surveillance/diseases/african-swine-fever-poster.pdf>

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We will continue to monitor the situation.

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References

All disease reports are available from the OIE WAHIS database.

Yu et al. (2015) Tick-borne pathogens and the vector potential of ticks in China. *Parasites & Vectors*, 8:24.

CNBC (2019) <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/05/07/use-of-china-animal-feed-in-us-raises-concern-amid-swine-fever-in-asia.html>



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