

Updated Outbreak Assessment #2

African Swine fever in China

31 August 2018

Ref: VITT/1200 ASF in China

Disease report

The Chinese authorities have reported three further outbreaks of ASF in commercial farms in Jiangsu province, Zhejiang province and the latest in Anhui province according to the Swine Health Information Centre (SHIC, 2018). According to the OIE reports, the outbreak in Jiangsu involved 615 pigs, of which 88 died and the rest were culled; in Zhejiang involved 430 pigs of which 340 died and the remaining pigs were culled; in Anhui, 80 of 459 pigs died and the remaining were culled.

In the map below, the case in Heilongjiang has not been confirmed but is the live pig market which was the source for the outbreak in Henan.



Actual Scale 1:20,000,000
Map prepared by IDM

African Swine Fever outbreaks in China
July - August 2018

Date prepared 31/08/2018

0 150 300 600 900 1,200
Km

Situation assessment

There are serious concerns that ASF has been circulating in the pig population (whether backyard, commercial or wild boar) for some time. A recent report from the Korean authorities that passengers from Shenan province had brought pig products into South Korea, which they voluntarily handed over, and subsequently these products tested positive for ASF genetic material has increased the importance of reminding passengers about not bringing pig meat products from outside the EU into any EU member state.

ASF is a highly pathogenic virus in pigs, so mortality rates in infected animals are high. However it is not as easily transmissible between animals as some other viruses, such as Foot and Mouth Disease or Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea. In the absence of suitable vectors, such as soft-bodied argasid ticks, direct animal contact is required which includes consumption of infected or contaminated meat products, but often in a pig herd there is a slow build-up of dead animals; the numbers involved in the outbreaks in China suggest the outbreaks are not being reported in a timely manner and the virus has had the chance to spread through the herd, possibly because there is no swift carcass removal or disinfection of animal buildings. Blood, faeces, urine and tissues are all infectious over a long periods and outbreaks have been associated with contaminated water.

The distances between the different infected farms (many hundreds of kms) and the time between the reports (just four weeks) does suggest that infection has been present for some time and this is unlikely to be due to wild boar. In Europe, where ASF has been present since 2007 when first introduced into Georgia, it is accepted that when wild boar are infected, their natural range and the high mortality rate means they don't move disease long distances, but they could be responsible for long term establishment (as carcasses are not removed and environmental contamination occurs). When the disease "jumps" long distances, this is because of the movement of live pigs or infected / contaminated product.

The high density of pigs in China, in particular the high percentage of backyard pigs (estimated at over 50% of the total pig population) and the wild boar population will mean disease will be very difficult to eradicate.

Conclusion

The risk to the UK is assessed to still be **negligible** in terms of these latest cases. However, please see our assessment of the current distribution of ASF in the EU and neighbouring countries where the increase in outbreaks in commercial farms means we have temporarily raised the risk of entry of any contaminated or infected product into the UK as **medium**, although the risk of exposure to pig farms in the UK remains **low**.

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

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Advice Services - International Disease Monitoring

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.

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References

All disease reports are available from the OIE WAHIS database.



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