

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

African swine fever in the Dominican Republic

29 July 2021

Ref: VITT/1200 ASF in The Dominican Republic

Disease report

On 28 July 2021, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory confirmed African swine fever virus (ASFV) in samples collected from pigs in the Dominican Republic through an existing cooperative surveillance program (USDA; 2021). There have been two confirmed reports of the disease. One outbreak affected 827 animals (266 of which tested positive) in La mina in the north of the island, just over 20km from the border with Haiti, with initial samples taken on 1 July. Samples from the second outbreak were taken on 14 July and involved 15 animals (seven of which tested positive) in the central region of La Breña. Domestic control measures including zoning, increased surveillance, movement controls and quarantine have been applied. Details on the strain have not been released.

Map 1 showing outbreaks of ASF in the Dominican Republic



Map prepared by IDM

Date: 30/07/2021

Absolute scale: 1:29,012,309

**African swine fever in the Dominican Republic
July 2021**

0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600 Km

Outbreak data

Details of all outbreaks and cases provided in this report were taken from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), unless stated otherwise.

Situation assessment

This is the first time ASF has been confirmed in the Dominican Republic since the outbreaks between 1978 and 1980 during which a total of 192,000 pigs were culled following virus confirmation at 374 locations (PigProgress; 2021).

The Dominican Republic is currently dealing with an outbreak of classical swine fever (CSF) and pork and pork products from the Dominican Republic are currently prohibited from entry to the United States of America (USA) as a result of existing CSF restrictions. Additionally, the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is increasing inspections of flights from the Dominican Republic to ensure travellers do not bring prohibited products to the USA. CBP will also be ensuring that waste from these airplanes are properly disposed of to prevent the transmission of ASF. The USDA is assisting the Dominican Republic in dealing with ASF, offering continued testing support, and will consult with them on additional steps or actions to support response and mitigation measures. They are also offering similar help to Haiti, which borders the Dominican Republic and is at high risk for ASF detections (USDA; 2021). During the last outbreak of ASF in the Dominican Republic in 1978-1980; the infection spread to Haiti, Cuba and Brazil. The last known report of ASF from the Americas dates from 1982 in Haiti.

Conclusion

ASF in domestic pigs has now been reported in the Dominican Republic for the first time in 40 years, representing another large geographical jump with the disease having previously having been restricted to Sub-Saharan Africa, where it is endemic, eastern Europe and Germany, and Asia and Oceania. This is a further example of the geographical jumps that have spread ASF to (and within) Europe, Asia and Oceania since 2007 and demonstrates the potential for further spread of ASF into and within the domestic pig populations globally.

Publicity campaigns are in place in the UK to inform the public and discourage individuals from bringing pork products into UK. This includes targeted messages to key stakeholders such as road hauliers, hunters, pig keepers and veterinarians. See:

<https://pork.ahdb.org.uk/health-welfare/health/emerging-diseases/african-swine-fever/>

The risk of ASFV entry to the UK was raised to **medium** in August 2018 as a result of the number of outbreaks of ASF being reported in Eastern Europe, and its subsequent emergence in wild boar in Belgium in September 2018 (now ASF free) and then in Germany in September 2020.

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The current risk of ASFV entry to the UK is still considered to be **medium**, despite the spread of ASF to the Dominican Republic.

Illegal importation of infected pork meat from affected parts of the Americas, presents a concerning route of entry of ASFV into the UK. There are also ongoing concerns around infected pork products originating from affected countries entering the UK in passenger luggage and the subsequent waste being discarded in areas where wild boar or domestic pigs could access them.

Although the UK has now left the European Union, as part of our ongoing commitment to ease the burden felt by businesses and travellers and allow ports of entry longer to prepare, there has been no change to the rules for passengers travelling into GB from the EU with products of an animal origin from January 2021, but Great Britain will be bringing in controls in January 2022. Nevertheless, all travellers are strongly advised to avoid bringing, ordering or requesting any pork products – for example, dried or cured meats, sausages, salamis or pâté – back to the UK from affected parts of Europe. Travellers from the Americas, sub-Saharan Africa and other third country areas who bring meat or dairy products can also face prosecution and a large fine.

We would like to highlight the importance of observing the swill feeding ban to all pig keepers, pig producers, smallholders and to the general public thereby ensuring pigs are not fed catering waste, kitchen scraps or pork products. All pig keepers should remain vigilant and ensure that any visitors to their premises have not had any recent contact with pigs or pig premises in those regions affected by ASF.

People returning from any ASF-affected areas of the world should avoid any contact with domestic pigs in commercial holdings, smallholdings or even household pet pigs. Habitats where feral pigs or wild boar exist should also be avoided. All clothing, footwear or equipment should be disinfected before entering pig areas.

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 will continue to monitor the situation.

Authors

Dr Lauren Perrin
Dr Paul Gale
Joe Bowen
Anthony Pacey

References

All OIE disease reports are available from the OIE WAHIS database.

(PigProgress; 2021) <https://www.pigprogress.net/Health/Articles/2021/7/After-40-years-ASF-is-back-in-the-Dominican-Republic-775973E/>

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(USDA; 2021) https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/news/sa_by_date/sa-2021/asf-confirm



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at iadm@apha.gov.uk