

Updated Outbreak Assessment #23

African swine fever (ASF) in South East Asia

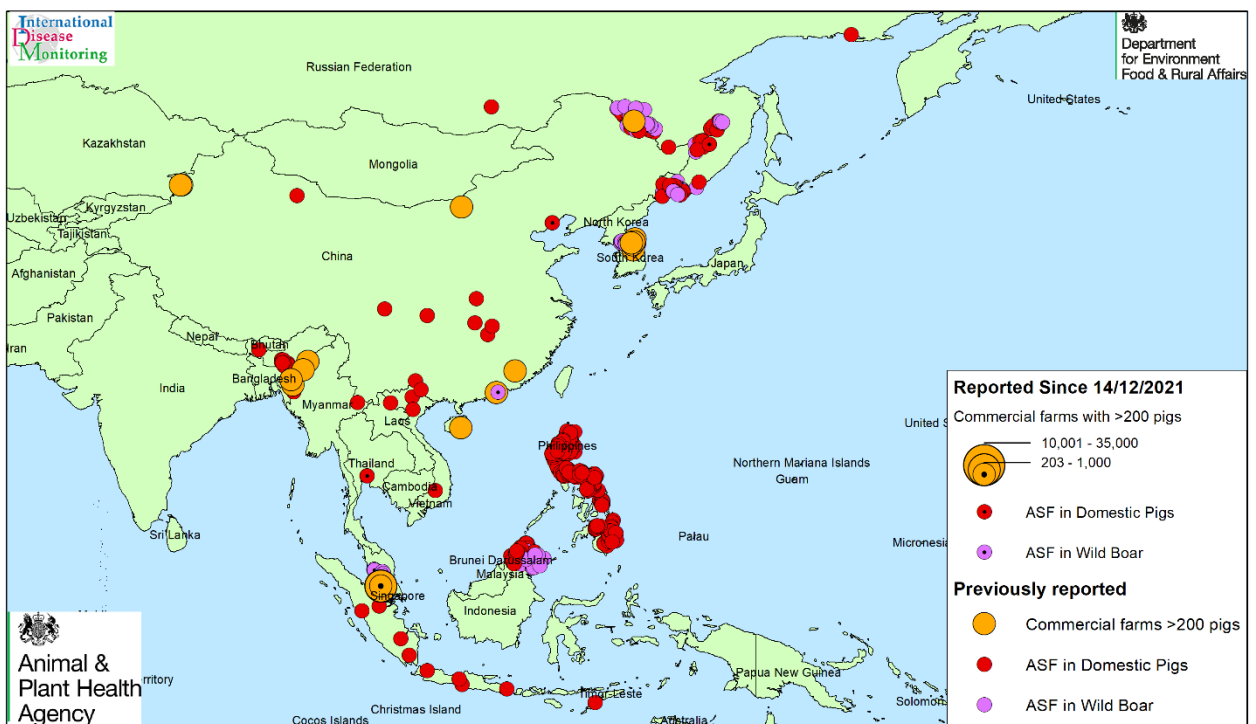
17 January 2022

Ref: VITT/1200 ASF Asia

Disease report

Since our last report on 14 December 2021, ASF has been reported in domestic pigs in Thailand for the first time. There have been further reports of ASF in domestic pigs in China and Malaysia, ASF in wild boar continues to be reported in Hong Kong and the Malaysian peninsula.

Map of OIE reports of ASF in South East Asia



Map prepared by IDM
Date: 18/01/2022
Absolute scale: 1:50,000,000

African Swine Fever January 2021 - January 2022 (OIE Data Only)

0 345 690 1,380 2,070 2,760 Km

Situation assessment

Our last report on 14 December 2021 provided a full situation assessment on ASF in Asia. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the epidemiologically significant change noted in Thailand, and report on the situation in other affected countries in Asia that have reported ASF since the last assessment.

Thailand: On 14 January 2022, OIE reported the first confirmed case of ASF in Thailand. Three companion pigs were affected in the Bangkok metropolis region and died in the first week of December 2021. This case is under investigation by the Department of Livestock Development (DLD), who have been conducting active and passive surveillance. Active surveillance of pigs and slaughterhouses in nearby Nakhon Pathom province has been conducted following detection of ASF in a pork product exported to Chinese Taipei originating from the region. To date, one ASF-positive surface swab sample from a slaughterhouse has been confirmed. Authorities have suspended exports of live pigs until 5 April 2022 (Reuters 2022).

China: Since our last report, OIE has reported one further outbreak of ASF in domestic pigs in China. In December 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) reported a detection of ASF in legally transported pigs on a vehicle intercepted at a checkpoint in Mengjiang Township, Hebei Province. A total of 245 pigs were affected.

Since May 2021, pig movement in China has been restricted by dividing the country into five regions, allowing movement within these regions. Within the regions, ASF-free zones have been created and only pigs from free zones, breeding pigs and piglets are allowed to move beyond their respective regions (FAO, 2022). On 21 December, MARA announced a plan to organise a three-month action to strengthen slaughter industry supervision and crack down on illegal acts in the slaughter process to ensure the safety of meat products (MOA 2021).

Hong Kong: According to OIE, there have been no further outbreaks in domestic pigs in Hong Kong since our last report. The Hong Kong government has established a surveillance system for ASF in both the local and wild pig populations. Following recent reports of abnormal deaths in wild pigs in the Wong Yue Tan area of New Territories, samples were collected and tested, with one confirmed ASFV-infected carcass confirmed in January 2022. The relevant department will continue to monitor situation though currently no domestic premises have been found to be affected by this case, and there are no pig farms located within 3km of this report.

Malaysia: Since our last report on December 2021, OIE has reported further ASF outbreaks in Malaysia, affecting 11 commercial domestic pig farms in Malacca State containing 200 to 2400 animals. Malaysia also reported five cases of ASF in wild boar, affecting 14 animals in Pahang and Perak States. These outbreaks have all occurred on the Malaysian peninsula. An epidemiological investigation is ongoing to identify the source of infection on the peninsula and surveillance continues to be conducted across the whole country.

Since our last report on 14 December 2021, there have been no further outbreaks of ASF reported in Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, North Korea, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, South Korea or Vietnam according to

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OIE, though it is likely that the virus is still circulating in these areas. In April 2021, media reported that ASF was detected in illegally transported pigs that were intercepted at two Cambodian border checkpoints in Banteay Meanchey and Takeo Provinces, (FAO 2022), suggesting that ASF is still present. More recently, smallholders have raised concerns in the media over the smuggling of meat and live pigs over water (Cambodiansess 2022).

The continued detection of ASF in multiple countries across Asia and Oceania, and the wide geographic range of infection found within these countries, demonstrates the potential for further spread of ASF into and within the domestic pig and wild suid populations in this part of the world.

As part of ongoing surveillance, Australia have been testing pork products seized at International Mail Centres in Brisbane, Perth, Sydney and Melbourne. Results found ASF virus fragments in 24% of products, and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) virus fragments in 1% of products (AWE 2021). These findings highlight the need to maintain high biosecurity standards, and the potential illegal practices (such as swill feeding) have to bring diseases to farms. In January 2022, the Australian Government provided funding to Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea to mitigate the effects of ASF in these countries (The Pig Site 2022)

Publicity campaigns are in place in the UK to inform the general 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/>

Conclusion

The risk of ASF introduction 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 subsequent detection of ASF in wild boar in Belgium in September 2018.

The current risk of ASF introduction to the UK is still considered to be **medium**, despite the spread of ASF within Asia and Oceania.

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

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, direct flights to/from the EU and UK, and internationally, may be cancelled or running a very limited schedule. Nevertheless, there still remains a risk of entry of ASFV in products of animal origin from affected countries via other pathways, including from illegal imports.

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 Asia and other third country areas who bring meat or dairy products can also face prosecution and a large fine.

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We would like to highlight to all pig keepers, pig producers, smallholders and general public to ensure that pigs are not fed catering waste, kitchen scraps or pork products, thereby observing the swill feeding ban. 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 the affected regions.

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

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