Updated Outbreak Assessment #27

African swine fever (ASF) in Asia

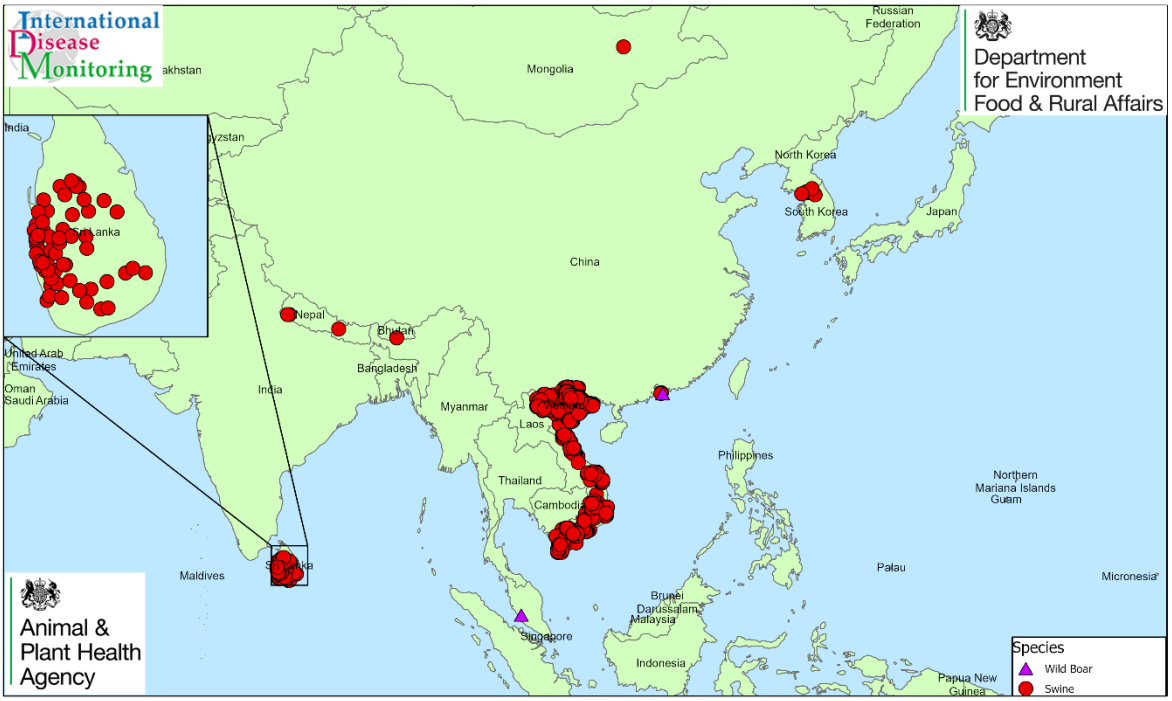
27 February 2025

Disease report

Since our last report on African Swine Fever (ASF) in Asia, dated 26 August 2024, the disease has continued to be reported in domestic pigs and wild boar populations across the region. Notably, in October 2024, ASF was detected in Sri Lanka for the first time, bringing the total number of affected countries in Asia to 20.
According to WOAH, since our last report, outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs have also been reported in Bhutan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Mongolia, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia and Nepal. Additionally, ASF has been reported in wild boar in Bhutan. Furthermore, other sources have indicated that outbreaks of ASF have occurred in Vietnam, the Philippines, India, and Indonesia.

Our previous reports highlighted the emergence of a recombinant strain of ASF virus (ASFV) genotypes I and II which were first detected in China in 2023 and then in northern Vietnam in 2024. China has recently published guidelines on how to control the spread of the recombinant strain. The recombinant strain found in north Vietnam and China is resistant to the single p72 genotype II vaccines.

Vietnam had developed three ASF vaccines against ASFV genotype II using live virus with trials conducted across the country. Despite ongoing vaccine trials and authorisation of at least two vaccines for commercial use, media reports suggest that Vietnam has experienced more outbreaks of ASF in 2024 compared to 2023. One of these vaccines, AVAC ASF LIVE, has also been approved for trial in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and the Philippines. Vaccine trials are underway in the Philippines. However, the emergence of recombinant strains of the ASF virus poses a significant challenge to the success of the current vaccination strategy in Asia. These strains are likely to hinder the success of the vaccination efforts and complicate the evaluation of their efficacy in Vietnam, and potentially elsewhere in southeast Asia.



Situation assessment

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the first detections of ASF were reported by WOAH on 5 December 2024. These outbreaks occurred in domestic pig farms, 2 in the Western Province and 1 in the Northern Province. The source of infection is speculated to be contaminated fomites and swill feeding (WOAH Event 6086). As of 28 February 2025, there have been a total of 63 outbreaks reported in domestic pig farms across six provinces (Western, Central, North Central, North Western, Sabaragamuwa, and Uva). In addition to this, there are media reports of 100 dead wild boar positive for ASF in the Southern and Uva provinces, although this is likely to be an underestimate of the number of wild boar affected. The ASF situation update for Asia published by the FAO suggests that nearly 20% of the pig population in Sri Lanka has already been affected by ASF.

Vietnam

Vietnam provides updates to WOAH every 6 months, the last published report for terrestrial animals was for the second half of 2024. During this period there were 660 cases of ASF all in domestic pigs (WOAH Vietnam 2023). The Vietnam Department of Animal Health have indicated that during 2024, 1,609 ASF outbreaks were detected across 48 provinces and municipalities. Leading to 89,580 dead pigs. Media reports suggest that 81,030 pigs have been culled as a result, which is 2.6 times higher than in 2023, (Vietnam makes concerted efforts to control African

Swine Fever | SGGP English Edition). ASF was detected in Lao Cai Province (North Vietnam) in December 2024, and 136 domestic pigs have been culled (Không để dịch bệnh tả lợn châu Phi lây lan tại xã Tả Phời | Báo Lào Cai điện tử). The genotype has not been reported. ASF genotype II is endemic in Vietnam, however, a new variant was discovered in domestic pigs across six provinces in northern Vietnam in 2023. This new variant is a recombinant virus with features of both genotype I and genotype II. A similar virus had previously been identified in China (Le et al. 2023). The vaccines currently in use in Vietnam are specifically for genotype II and are not effective against the new recombinant strain.

As of 23 December, 11 districts and Vinh city remained affected by ASF (Nghe An drastically suppresses African swine fever). There have also been media reports of 29 dead wild boars found during patrol in November and December 2024 in the Nghe An Province (Nghe An: Dozens of wild boars died in Pu Mat National Park).

The Philippines

Since our last report, the Philippines have reported no further outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs to WOAH. Philippines Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) records showed that as of 27 December 2024, 11 regions, 21 provinces and 67 municipalities reported ASF cases in 2024 (Philstar ASF update for the Philippines). A total of 225 outbreaks were reported across the country in 2024. North Cotabato was the most affected municipality and had 86 reports of ASF in 2024. Kalinga reported 15 cases. Other affected areas include Masbate, Ilocos Norte, Bohol, Catanduanes, Quezon province and Sultan Kudarat.

In October, after purchasing 10,000 doses of the AVAC ASF vaccine from Vietnam, a trial began in the domestic pig population. The vaccine was administered in Lobo, Batangas. The vaccine administration is being closely monitored, and an update will be provided as the post-vaccination period progresses. BAI reports promising results 28 days post-ASF vaccination of Lobo pigs | Official Portal of the Department of Agriculture.

India

A six-monthly report was published on WOAH in January 2025, this report highlighted 54 outbreaks of ASF in the second half of 2023, there is no more recent data for India on WOAH. However, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and media reports have reported that 24 states in the country have been affected since the first detection in 2020 (ASF situation in Asia & Pacific update (fao.org). The majority of outbreaks were in northeast India in states bordering Bangladesh and Myanmar. More than 15,000 pigs died in Mizoram State in 2024 as of 14 December. Siaha District and Kerala State confirmed outbreaks of ASF in November 2024. An increase in outbreaks has been linked to when the weather starts getting warmer and pre-monsoon rain begins, as noted to have happened in the Philippines.

Hong Kong

Since our last report, dated 19 August 2024, there have been 4 further outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs in Hong Kong. Three outbreaks occurred in January 2025. One

occurred on a farm in Yuen Long containing 6,956 pigs. The ASF contingency plan was activated, and pig movements were immediately suspended until further notice. Pigs from the index farm were killed and disposed of. Movement of pigs on three pig farms within three kilometres of the index farm were suspended temporarily, were inspected and samples were collected for ASF testing. There was also one case of ASF in wild boar. As part of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation's wild pig management strategy, a wild pig capture and dispatch operation was held on 21 November 2024. Samples were collected from the wild pigs hunted, for testing under the government's ASF surveillance programme. A sample collected from one wild pig tested positive for ASF virus. There is no pig farm located within 3 km nor are any pig farms affected by this case.

Indonesia

No further outbreaks of ASF have been reported in Indonesia by WOAH, but there have been additional reports according to the Food & Agriculture organisation of the United Nations (FAO) ASF situation in Asia & Pacific update with 6,490 ASF cases confirmed across 11 provinces in 2024. Most of these cases occurred in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). Detections were also found in North Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, Riau, East Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, West Sulawesi, Central Java, West Kalimantan, North Sumatra, and Papua. ASF outbreaks were also confirmed in Nabire Regency, Central Papua Province, Jayawijaya and Yahukimo regencies, Highland Papua Province (ASF situation in Asia & Pacific update). It is not clear how many of these reports are in wild boar or domestic pig farms. But the number of reported ASF outbreaks in 2024 has been much lower compared to the 24,732 reports in 2023.

Mongolia

In Mongolia, 1 outbreak of ASF was reported in domestic pigs in January 2025. The outbreak occurred in Hentiy with 330 susceptible pigs.

Nepal

Since our last report, there have been 3 ASF outbreaks in domestic pigs in Nepal reported by WOAH. Of these, 1 outbreak was on a farm premises in Bagmati Pradesh and two were in farm premises in Sudurpaschhim Pradesh.

Bhutan

Since our last report in August 2024, Bhutan reported 4 outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs to WOAH. One outbreak was located within the southern Sarpang district, close to the border with India. This occurred on a farm with 82 pigs. The other three outbreaks occurred in Central Bhutan in small pig farms. There have been no new reports since November 2024.

South Korea

Since June 2024, South Korea has reported 6 outbreaks of ASF in domestic pigs to WOAH. Four of these outbreaks occurred on farms located in Gangwon-do and neighbouring Gyeonggi-do districts close to the border with North Korea. Previously, ASF has only been reported in the Gyeonggi and Gangwon regions.

In response, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for South Korea, established a quarantine zone within a 10 km radius of the affected farm, and conducted inspections on all four pig farms within the quarantine zone, as well as 40 pig farms linked epidemiologically to the outbreak (MAFRA, 2024).

Malaysia

Since our last report, Malaysia has reported one outbreak of ASF in domestic pigs in Tebedu District, Sarawak (DVSS). There have been no further reports of ASF in wild boar. The movement of live pigs is prohibited without a transfer permit from the Department of Veterinary Services Sarawak (DVSS).

Elsewhere

Since our last report on 13 February 2023, no further outbreak notifications of ASF have been reported to WOAH in Bangladesh, China, Eastern Russia, Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia, North Korea, Singapore, Papua New Guinea, or Timor-Leste. However, evidence from annual reports submissions to WAHIS and FAO reports confirms that the virus continues to circulate in these regions, but the exact number of outbreaks is unclear (ASF situation in Asia & Pacific update, https://wahis.woah.org/#/annual-report). Furthermore, China recently published guidelines for the control and prevention of the recombinant strain of ASF (https://www.gdaav.org/web/article/15018.html).

Conclusion

The continued detection of ASF in countries across Asia, 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 boar populations in this part of the world. ASF is challenging to control in wild boar populations as they are free to move, providing opportunities for the virus to move to new areas. Though the virus can also be spread by the movement of ASF infected products of animal origin, our previous report highlighted that ASF contaminated pork was imported to Singapore from Indonesia. There have also been historical reports of detection of ASF in pork products in illegally operating factories in Thailand. Now, the spread of ASF to Sri Lanka, further demonstrates how the virus can spread large geographical distances by human-mediated means. The authorities in Sri Lanka have suggested that the initial detections were due to either swill feeding or contaminated fomites. Since then, there have been many wild boar tested as positive for ASF and numerous outbreaks on domestic farms. The genotype has not been confirmed at this time.

Recent trials of modified live vaccines offer hope, but the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) stresses the need for high-quality, regulatory-approved vaccines to prevent the risks of poor-quality alternatives, which could worsen the

outbreak by creating new virus strains. Vaccination should not be a standalone measure but part of a broader ASF control strategy, including biosecurity, movement controls, and post-vaccination monitoring. WOAH is overseeing vaccine development and has proposed new safety standards, urging manufacturers and governments to follow guidelines to ensure effective disease control. Vaccine development in Asia, including Vietnam, marks a positive step forward, with the approval of two vaccines for commercial use and exports. However, the emergence of a new variant of ASF combining features of both genotype I and genotype II in Vietnam and China presents a significant challenge. Depending on the rate of spread of this variant throughout south-east Asia, vaccination campaigns may prove insufficient to effectively control ASF in the region. The recent surge in infections across Vietnam underscores the limited success of the current vaccination efforts. These developments highlight the risks associated with the use of live-attenuated vaccines in the control of this disease. Alarmingly, compared to 2023, the number of ASF reports and culled pigs has increased dramatically, emphasising the need for robust control strategies.

ASF continues to affect domestic pig populations across Eastern Europe and remains widespread among wild boar across much of Eastern Europe, as well as in parts of Germany (Brandenburg and Saxony, and recently Hesse) and Italy (Piedmont, Liguria, and Emilia Romagna). Therefore, the risk of ASF virus incursion into the UK remains classified as **medium** (occurs regularly).

For more information on the situation in Europe, see our most recent update: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/african-swine-fever-in-pigs-and-boars-in-europe)

The countries listed in this assessment are not approved for exports of live pigs to the UK. Illegal importation of infected pork meat from affected parts of Asia, 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.

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://ahdb.org.uk/african-swine-fever

The spread of the virus across Europe and other regions remains a threat to livestock, human-mediated routes such as introduction such as personal imports (including illegal imports) or contaminated items (fomites), continue to be a risk. On 1 September 2022, strict new controls were introduced restricting the movement of pork and pork products into Great Britain from the European Union (EU) and European Free Trade Association states. Under these new rules, it is no longer legal to personally import pork or pork products weighing over two kilograms, unless they are produced to the EU's commercial standards. However, these restrictions do not apply to commercial imports, which remain unaffected. Although the legislation does

not currently cover personal imports of pork products under 2 kg from the EU, all travellers are strongly advised to avoid bringing, buying, ordering on the internet, or requesting any pork products – for example, fresh or frozen meat, dried or cured meats, sausages, salamis, or pâté – back to the UK from affected parts of Europe. Additionally, it remains illegal for travellers to import meat or dairy products from Asia and other non-EU regions (third country areas).

We emphasise the importance of observing the swill feeding ban. Swill feeding any animal, whether pigs, poultry, ruminants, or wildlife is illegal and has the potential to cause substantial harm. We would like to emphasise to all pig keepers, pig producers, smallholders, and the general public to ensure strict compliance with this rule which prohibits feeding pigs catering waste, kitchen scraps or pork products. Furthermore, all pig keepers are urged to 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.

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