



APHA Briefing Note 12/18

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER RISK AND CLINICAL SIGNS

Purpose

1. This briefing note is to alert Official Veterinarians to the current risk of African swine fever (ASF) reaching the UK and to raise awareness of transmission routes and the main clinical signs and gross pathology. ASF is a notifiable disease and suspicion of it must be [reported to us](#) immediately.

Background

2. In summer 2017 the risk of ASF reaching the UK was raised from 'very low' to 'low' due to spread of the disease in Eastern and Central Europe. The [International Disease Monitoring reports](#) provide further information and a recent update has just been published. ASF is currently present in Poland, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, Hungary and Russia.
3. To aid veterinarians in the recognition of African swine fever, The Pirbright Institute and APHA have compiled images of the clinical signs and gross pathology in pigs infected with a virulent strain of ASF like that present in Eastern and Central Europe. These images can be accessed on our [Vet Gateway](#).
4. The greatest risk of introducing ASF into pigs in the UK is through pigs eating infected pork or pork products, wild boar meat from affected areas or other food that has been contaminated by infected meat. It is vital that pig keepers ensure that pigs, even those kept as pets, are never allowed access to any meat products, domestic kitchen waste or catering waste of any description; feeding such material is illegal.
5. The ASF virus can survive for months in smoked, dried and cured meats, and in frozen meat. Although legal trade of such products is not permitted from ASF-restricted areas, ASF-infected material might be brought into the UK by individuals as personal imports. Farm staff who travel to affected areas and

return to the UK pose a risk as well as people returning to the UK from holidays or hunting trips.

6. It is also possible to bring back infection on contaminated clothing, footwear, equipment or other fomites. Valuable procedures for pig keepers to prevent introduction of ASF include routinely providing dedicated clothing and boots for workers and visitors, limiting visitors to a minimum, and preventing outside vehicles or equipment which may be contaminated from coming on to pig premises.

Further Information

- To report suspicion of ASF in England, Scotland or Wales visit our [GOV.UK page](#).
- Information about ASF and how to report it can also be found on [Defra's GOV.UK page](#). In Wales see [Welsh Government's](#) website and Scottish Government have produced two videos outlining the risks and how ASF can be prevented.

[Pig producer video](#).

[Pet pig owner video](#).

- Download our pig keeper [poster](#) produced jointly with Welsh and Scottish Governments, the British Veterinary Association and other stakeholder organisations to give to your clients to warn them of the risk and the actions they can take.
- The Scottish Government, SRUC and Quality Meat Scotland have produced a set of leaflets providing practical advice for pig keepers to prevent disease on their premises. These can be downloaded from the following links:
 - [Practical Biosecurity](#) - Practical Biosecurity for Pig Farmers
 - [Green Warning Poster](#) - Keep Disease Out!
 - [Red Warning Poster](#) - What to do if disease is confirmed in the area

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