

Animal Disease Advisory for Iowa State University Farms: African Swine Fever

What is African Swine Fever? African swine fever virus (ASF) is a serious, highly resistant, viral disease that only infects pigs. It can spread rapidly in pig populations by direct or indirect contact. Currently no vaccine or treatment options exist. ASF is circulating in Europe, but China particularly has been hard-hit since August 2018, with more than 125 official cases reported. Early in 2019, official reports put China's pig losses in the hundreds of thousands, but unofficial reports put the losses closer to 100 to 200 million pigs.

Has ASF been found yet in the United States? No. The disease is a major threat to pork production globally. U.S. swine industry organizations are working continuously on prevention and response to help keep ASF out of U.S. pig farms.

Why is ASF important to Iowa? Iowa is the nation's leader in pork production. If introduced in Iowa, the viral disease could be catastrophic to Iowa pig farmers and the state's economy — an impact on nearly \$37 billion in annual economic activity. Iowa's corn and soybean farmers also would experience a major impact on their markets because Iowa pigs eat 25% of all corn and soybeans grown in the state. The disease also could be a factor to restrict trade, translating into a loss of export markets for Iowa pork products. The 2019 World Pork Expo in Des Moines was canceled out of an abundance of caution due to the potential threat of ASF.

How is the virus spread? The virus spreads in wild pigs and domesticated pig herds directly through snout-to-snout contact or indirectly through contact with contaminated objects, ticks and biting flies and uncooked pork products. Plant-based feed has been identified as a potential route for virus introduction onto swine farms, although little has been known about the risks for ASF transmission in feed. Recent [Kansas State University research](#) demonstrated that one strain of ASF virus can easily be transmitted orally, in very low doses, during natural drinking and feeding behaviors, although higher doses are required for infection in plant-based feed.

Are there human health risks associated with ASF? ASF is not a public health threat. It cannot be transmitted to humans. It poses no food safety concerns, as consumers cannot get ASF from eating pork.

In response to potential risks of ASF, how should ISU faculty and staff handle requests for tours to ISU Research Farms with livestock?

For international visitors:

- Inform international visitors that they **cannot visit ISU livestock facilities for five days**, starting from the time they arrive in the United States.
- They should not wear any clothing or footwear, or bring any other kind of object or equipment, that has ever been in contact with swine.
- Absolutely no meat products purchased outside the U.S. should be brought to an ISU livestock site or facility.

Follow all other biosecurity protocols for visitors to swine farms. A suggested statement: “Due to risks linked to the African swine fever virus and other foreign animal disease threats, Iowa State University has an advisory in place stating that those who have recently visited foreign countries will not be allowed on ISU farms with livestock before taking part in a **mandatory five-day waiting period.**”

For U.S. citizens:

Similar policy applies to U.S. citizens who recently visited another country:

- Those who recently returned from a trip abroad should contact the ISU Research and Demonstration Farms office, (515) 294-5045, in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to participate in a mandatory five-day waiting period prior to visiting ISU livestock farms.
- They should not wear footwear that has been worn in another country to any ISU livestock facility.
- Absolutely no meat products purchased outside the U.S. should be brought to an ISU livestock site or facility.

After the five-day period has passed, ISU faculty and staff who host visitors should provide them with clothes and shoes at an off-site location before entering the ISU livestock site.

Information and Resources on African Swine Fever from Iowa State University

[Iowa Pork Industry Center](#)

[Center for Food Security and Public Health](#)

For more information on this advisory

Mark Honeyman, ISU Research and Demonstration Farms, (515) 294-4621

Ben Drescher, ISU Animal Science Farms, (515) 291-4725

Dr. Justin Brown, ISU Veterinary Diagnostic and Production Animal Medicine, (515) 294-4508

This advisory was prepared by the ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Agriculture Experiment Station, and reviewed by the ISU College of Veterinary Medicine and Swine Medicine Education Center.

June 2019