

AFIA Launches Coordinated Effort to Address African Swine Fever

Last week, the American Feed Industry Association was made aware of several outbreaks of African Swine Fever (ASF) occurring in China, Romania and Ukraine. As such, AFIA has activated its internal ASF crisis management team and will be meeting with several swine organizations in the coming weeks to discuss a coordinated strategy. With the pork tariffs imposed on swine destined to China and these outbreaks, pork producers are nervous, rumors are frequent and concerns are high.

Listed below are five things you should know:

1. ASF is a durable and virulent virus.

Although ASF is mostly spread to pigs through ticks, the consumption of un- or under-cooked garbage (swill), direct/indirect contact with contaminated products or animals, it is also known that feed can be a carrier, which is why AFIA is reminding its members to be vigilant. It does not pose any health concerns to humans. For background information on ASF, we suggest you visit Iowa State University's [website](#).

2. There is no vaccine or feed additive currently approved to prevent the spread of ASF.

Research is underway at several universities to identify effective mitigation steps that feed and ingredient manufacturers could take, as well as the producer community, to limit exposure to the ASF virus. AFIA's [Biosecurity Guide](#), which was updated during the porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv) outbreak a few years back, outlines several steps that manufacturers can take now to dramatically reduce the risk of any disease outbreak or spread at their facilities. We encourage you to read through this and take necessary precautions at your facilities.

3. AFIA is working with several swine organizations to recommend a high-level response.

In the coming days, AFIA's internal ASF crisis management team will be holding high-level meetings with the National Pork Board, Swine Health Information Center and National Pork Producers Council (NPPC). The team will be examining the possibility of forming an external working group to look at possible mitigation steps, such as adding chemical additives to feed to reduce or kill the virus in feed. The working group will also consider what steps would be required for the widespread use of such additives, given the Food and Drug Administration has not approved any additives for the control of ASF. The group could also look at other steps and eventualities in the feed and pork industries to limit exposure of American hogs to ASF.

The AFIA staff is also working with the aforementioned swine organizations to determine what steps their organizations are recommending, both to their members and the government agencies responsible for the import and export of feed ingredients. So far, some options the groups are considering involve quarantining feed and ingredients and issuing import alerts and detentions. AFIA is looking to reduce any overreaction to the current outbreaks by developing comprehensive processes, procedures and steps based on sound science and practical realities to put into place in the affected industries.

4. Feed and ingredient suppliers may soon start getting questions from pork producers.

AFIA is aware that many members are receiving questions from their customers and we expect the pork industry will be distributing a list of questions and recommendations for producers to ask of their feed and ingredient suppliers in the coming days, if they haven't done so already. AFIA is engaged in these dialogues and will be supplying information to members as soon as it is available.

The NPPC gave AFIA permission to distribute this [ASF document](#), which the council issued to its members today, that provides background on the issue, including the risks to the American pork industry, and the steps NPPC is taking to help producers protect their herds.

5. We're here as a resource if you have questions or concerns.

AFIA welcomes any input you may have on the industry's response and appreciates the information and comments many of you have already submitted. AFIA pledges to work with our customer groups and members to do our utmost to address this potential threat to the U.S. pork industry. In the meantime, please bookmark this [webpage](#) on AFIA's member site, where our crisis management team will be aggregating all of AFIA's communications resources on ASF.

Please direct all comments, information and suggestions to [Leah Wilkinson](#), AFIA's vice president of public policy and education, who is leading AFIA's crisis management team.