

# African swine fever



## outbreak alert



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## **AFRICAN SWINE FEVER – A THREAT TO CANADA'S SWINE INDUSTRY**

African swine fever (ASF) is a highly contagious viral disease that afflicts pigs. It is characterized by high fever, blotchy skin, congestion and extensive bleeding in the internal organs. ASF is a killer. In its acute forms, up to 100% of infected pigs die.

There is no treatment or vaccine. ASF does not affect humans or other animals.

Canada has remained free from ASF, but there is a constant risk that it could be introduced into the country. The effects would be devastating. Most exposed pigs would die or become unmarketable. The epidemic would cost us millions in lost export sales and measures to control and stamp out the disease.

Keeping Canada free from ASF calls for prevention, and that starts with public awareness. That's what this leaflet is all about. Read it carefully and learn what *you* can do to prevent this menace from endangering Canada's swine industry.

### **History**

African swine fever was first discovered in East Africa in 1910 and was later imported into Spain, Portugal and France. Its effects were devastating. By 1965, Spanish and Portuguese authorities estimated that 3 million swine had either died of the disease or been slaughtered in attempts to control it. The Western Hemisphere has also been exposed to ASF. Outbreaks recently occurred in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Brazil and Haiti.



Swine sometimes develop a bloody diarrhea.

## **How ASF is spread**

Infection most commonly results from:

- contaminated pork or pork products imported by unsuspecting travellers;
- contaminated clothing, footwear and equipment;
- contaminated insects such as soft ticks, lice and biting flies;
- ingestion of infected or contaminated water, garbage or feed;
- contact with urine, feces or carcasses of infected animals;
- contact with infected or recovered carrier hogs;
- carrier animals; and
- semen used in artificial insemination.

African swine fever is a durable virus. At temperatures up to 23°C, infected blood in soil remains infectious for 120 days. The virus has also been recovered from processed hams that have been frozen for long periods.

## **If an outbreak of ASF should occur in Canada**

In the event of an outbreak, Agriculture Canada has developed a national emergency program to stamp out the disease and protect the health of our swine. A government-controlled slaughter of all infected and exposed hogs will be necessary in the area of an outbreak. This will likely increase the cost of pork products to the consumer. Costs to control and eradicate the disease will also be substantial; slaughter campaigns, quarantine, disinfection programs and payment of compensation to farmers cost a great deal of money. Canadians will pay the price with higher taxes.

## **Signs of ASF: what to look for**

Signs of ASF depend on whether the infection is caused by a lethal strain or by a less deadly one which has recently been reported. Pigs with acute ASF usually die within 4 to 7 days after the onset of fever. During this period, pigs often appear quite healthy and continue to eat and move about normally. Forty-eight hours before death, the fever subsides and other symptoms become evident.

Some or all of the following symptoms may be seen in pigs with ASF:

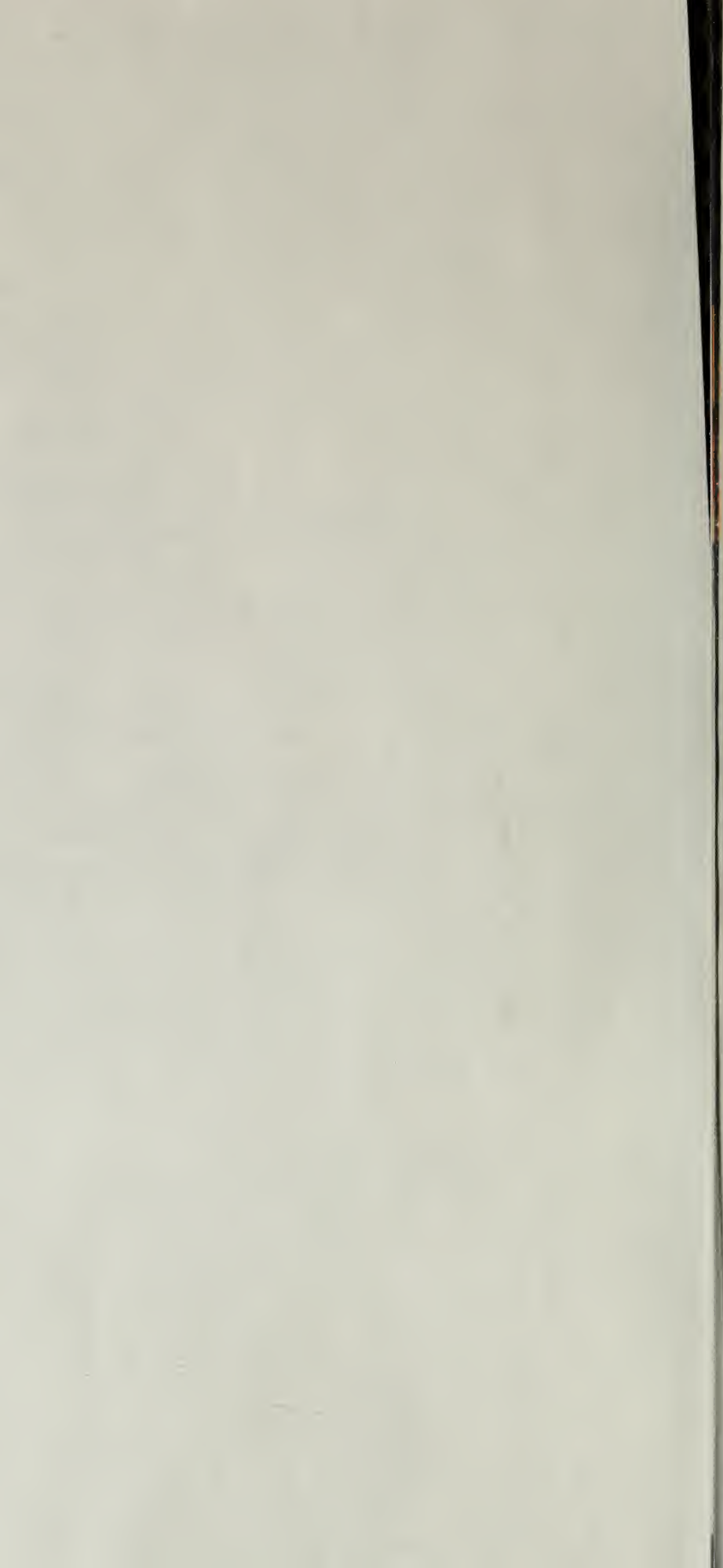
- depression
- abortion
- tendency to huddle together or lie down
- profound weakness, especially in the hind legs
- discharges from the eyes and nose
- blotchy redness on ears, snout and tail
- panting and coughing

Diagnosis is made on the basis of symptoms and events leading to the disease. Since ASF may closely resemble other swine diseases, laboratory diagnosis is essential.

## **Prevention**

To prevent ASF from entering Canada, the government imposes strict regulations on our imports of pigs and pork products from countries where ASF is known to exist. If an infected sausage or other pork product from abroad were fed to pigs, an outbreak of ASF would most certainly occur. Travellers coming into the country must declare all meat or meat products they have with them.







Acute forms of the disease kill quickly.

## What YOU can do

When travelling:

- Declare all meat products you wish to bring into Canada. That innocent-looking sausage may be harboring the virus that causes ASF.
- If you visit a farm while abroad, make sure that clothing and footwear you wear on the farm are free from soil and manure before entering Canada.
- If you visit a farm while abroad, do not go near a Canadian farm for 14 days.

On your farm:

- Be alert to abnormal conditions in your herds.
- Should you notice the symptoms in your livestock, contact your veterinarian or notify Agriculture Canada. *Every* report will be investigated.
- Isolate hogs showing signs of the disease. Do not remove them from your farm.
- Don't let people, animals, vehicles and equipment enter or leave your farm until a veterinarian has examined your livestock.

For more information, contact:

Animal Health Division

Agriculture Canada

2255 Carling Avenue

Ottawa K1A 0Y9

Telephone: (613) 995-5433

or the nearest Agriculture Canada veterinary inspection office.

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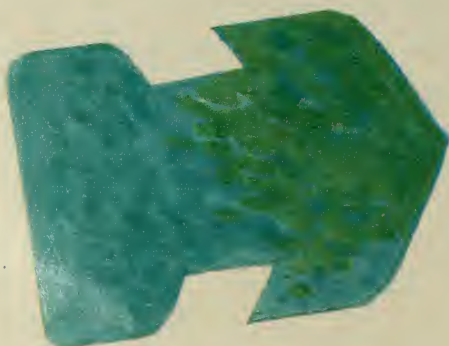
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