

A risk to your pigs and to the national herd

APHA: 0300 020 0301

What is it?

ASF is a notifiable pig disease that is currently not in the UK but especially prevalent across China, has occurred in Germany and is moving across Europe. It doesn't affect humans but due to the highly infectious nature, infected animals must be culled to prevent spread. Animals within a certain radius would also be culled and movement restrictions would be imposed. This can have huge implications for animal welfare and global trade.



*Pigs with ASF will often have red-blotchy ears and extremities.
Photo source: APHA*

*Pigs with ASF will often huddle
Photo source: APHA*



Notifiable disease:

A disease for which any person having in their possession or under their charge an animal affected or suspected of having one of these diseases must with all practical speed notify the Animal and Plant Health agency (part of Defra).

How is it spread?

- Directly from pig to pig, including wild boar, via infected faeces or fluids.
- Via objects that have been infected, especially on people that move around to lots of animals. The virus can survive for months on surfaces!
- Pigs eating infected meat, meat products or food contaminated with meat - Even if cooked or cured!
- Some types of ticks that are not present in the UK.

This is why it is illegal to feed any catering waste or kitchen scraps to a pig in the UK, even if from a vegetarian kitchen! We are especially worried about wild boar because they could eat infected meat from the floor. It is also why we (ourselves) cannot bring pork products from overseas into the UK.

AHDB provide lots of useful posters and resources that can be displayed near pigs to educate staff and the public.

<https://ahdb.org.uk/african-swine-fever-resources-and-posters>

Images published by APHA for vet and pig keeper ASF education.

<http://apha.defra.gov.uk/documents/surveillance/diseases/african-swine-fever-images.pdf>

T: 01666 823355

E: pigteam@georgevetgroup.co.uk

What does it look like?

Generally, an acute presentation of:

- High fever, dullness or loss of appetite
- Huddling
- Red purple skin discolouration and signs of haemorrhage
- Death



*Pigs with ASF might show red skin discolouration.
Photo source: George Veterinary Group*

You can also see:

- Vomiting and diarrhoea (possibly bloody)
- Off balance
- Discharges from eyes and nose, nose bleeds
- Difficulty breathing or cough
- Reproductive problems like abortion

This is easier to spot in a whole herd of pigs as many animals are likely to be very sick. But this is much more difficult if only one pig is present for example. There is no vaccine or cure and infected animals have to be culled to prevent further transmission.



*Pigs with ASF might show, conjunctivitis,
bloodshot eyes or discharges from the eyes.
Photo source: APHA*

How to minimise your risk?

- Ensure that everyone in contact with your pig demonstrates good biosecurity. This includes for themselves and any equipment they use.
- Do not mix with pigs within 3 days of entering the UK and change your clothes.
- Do not feed kitchen scraps to pigs, do not allow pork products to be eaten on farm or near any pigs. Signs around your premises will educate others to do the same.
- Do not allow your pigs to have contact with wild boar.
- Know the clinical signs and how to pick them up, for example by owning a rectal thermometer for the pigs. Make sure all staff are also educated.
- Know what to do if you see the signs and act promptly.



*Pigs with ASF might show a bloody diarrhoea.
Photo source: APHA*

What if you suspect it?

- ⇒ Any suspicion should be reported to APHA immediately 0300 020 0301
- ⇒ Ask your vet to promptly investigate signs of disease in pigs. If they are at all suspicious, the vet will notify the APHA.

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