

African Swine Fever Detected in the Dominican Republic for the first time in ~40 years!  
The UMN MSHMP and the Secure Food Systems Teams

Given the recent unfortunate news regarding the detection of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the Dominican Republic, we thought that briefly reviewing the history of this virus in the Americas would be relevant to the U.S. industry. It's important to remind everyone that this is not the first time ASF has been in the Western Hemisphere, and it may not be the last.

Historically, the ASF virus has been limited to sub-Saharan countries in Africa. However, in the last two decades, the virus started moving through eastern Europe, Asia, western Europe and now it has made its way to the western hemisphere. This is not the first time the virus has been present on the western hemisphere. Indeed, it has already been in the Americas before, specifically in the Caribbean and in South America.

The virus was detected in Cuba in 1971, then in Brazil (April 1978), followed by detections in both the Dominican Republic and Haiti (July 1978), and then for the second time in Cuba in 1980. Questions related to how the virus may have entered these countries still remain; however, in those cases infected pork scraps from international flights originating from Europe have been suggested as the likely source of the virus. Fortunately, in all these outbreaks, the virus was eradicated from these countries, and it has not been detected ever again...until July 2021.

The current situation in a nearby country brings an important level of uncertainty regarding the biosecurity of the whole US swine industry. We should therefore focus on the things that are clear to us and dedicate our efforts towards doing all we can do to protect our industry. First of all, if you any questions, reach out to your herd veterinarians, state animal health officials, and/or state veterinarians. They will have recommendations and advice for you, such as some of the information below from the Minnesota Board of Animal Health.

#### Practice Biosecurity:

- **Ask all visitors about recent travel outside the country.** Do not let anyone who has been in an ASF-affected country onto your farm for at least five days after they enter the United States.
- Separate new pigs before bringing them into your herd and monitor them for signs of disease. If pigs become sick, separate them and contact your veterinarian.
- Don't visit other swine farms. If you must visit another farm, take a shower and wash your clothing before and after your visit.
- Vehicles and tools can carry disease. Don't share equipment with other farms and clean tools after use.
- Restrict visitors to your farm and reduce on-farm traffic as much as possible.

#### Know the signs of ASF:

The virus can cause a wide range of clinical signs in infected pigs and can spread very rapidly. Some signs of an ASF infected pig include: fever/piling up, discoloring of the skin, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, weakness, and unexpected death.

#### Know that ASF can survive a long time in pig products, pork, and be present in wild pig populations.

- Make sure your pigs are not exposed to any pork products that people have brought into the farms.
- Don't engage in hunting of wild pigs if you have regular contact with domestic pigs.

#### ASF Resources:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/swine-disease-information/african-swine-fever/seminar>  
<https://content.govdelivery.com/bulletins/gd/MNBAH-2ea831d>  
[https://www.bah.state.mn.us/media/African-Swine-Fever-Accessible.pdf?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.bah.state.mn.us/media/African-Swine-Fever-Accessible.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)  
[https://www.bah.state.mn.us/media/African-Swine-Fever\\_SPA\\_508.pdf?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.bah.state.mn.us/media/African-Swine-Fever_SPA_508.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

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