

UPDATE ON AFRICAN SWINE FEVER - 5th September 2018

Background

African swine fever (ASF) was first detected in the European Union in 2014 in Lithuania. Currently, there are eight affected EU Member States including Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and within the last week, Bulgaria. In August 2018, China also confirmed its first outbreak of the disease.

Bulgaria- First outbreak of ASF

Bulgaria reported its first ever outbreak of African swine fever in domestic pigs on 31st August 2018. The outbreak occurred on a small backyard farm containing approximately 7 pigs in Varna in the central part of the country. The location of the outbreak is a considerable distance from the border with Romania where there are ongoing outbreaks of ASF (Figure 1 below). The Bulgarian veterinary authorities have introduced the required control measures in the area surrounding the farm and have begun an epidemiological investigation into the cause of the outbreak. In August of this year Bulgaria had constructed an 81 mile long fence with Southeast Romania in an attempt to prevent wild boar from straying into the country in addition to increased luggage checks at the border with neighbouring countries.



Figure 1: African swine fever outbreak in Bulgaria 31st August 2018

Source: ADNS European Commission

Romania- Current Situation

The number of outbreaks in Romania continues to rise with in excess of 800 domestic pig farms affected in 2018 to the end of August. This includes some large domestic pig farms including the second largest pig farm in Europe affected with 141,000 pigs. Romanian authorities have been carrying out preventative culling in areas surrounding affected farms. There are concerns that water from rivers contaminated with pig or wild boar carcasses has contributed to some of the ASF outbreaks. This method of transmission has never been proven before but it is currently being investigated by veterinary authorities there.

China- Further Outbreaks

Since the last update of 13 August 2018 there have been further outbreaks of ASF in previously unaffected areas of China and it now affects 6 provinces – Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Henan, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui (see figure 2 below). The exact cause of the introduction of ASF into China is not yet known. However tests carried out on the virus have confirmed that the strain of the virus in China is similar to the strain circulating in Eastern Europe.

Control of the disease in China is challenging given the large pig population (estimated 500 million), the presence of many backyard farms, wild boar, and the presence of the soft tick (not in Ireland) that is capable of spreading ASF. It is suspected that ASF was circulating in China for some months without being detected.

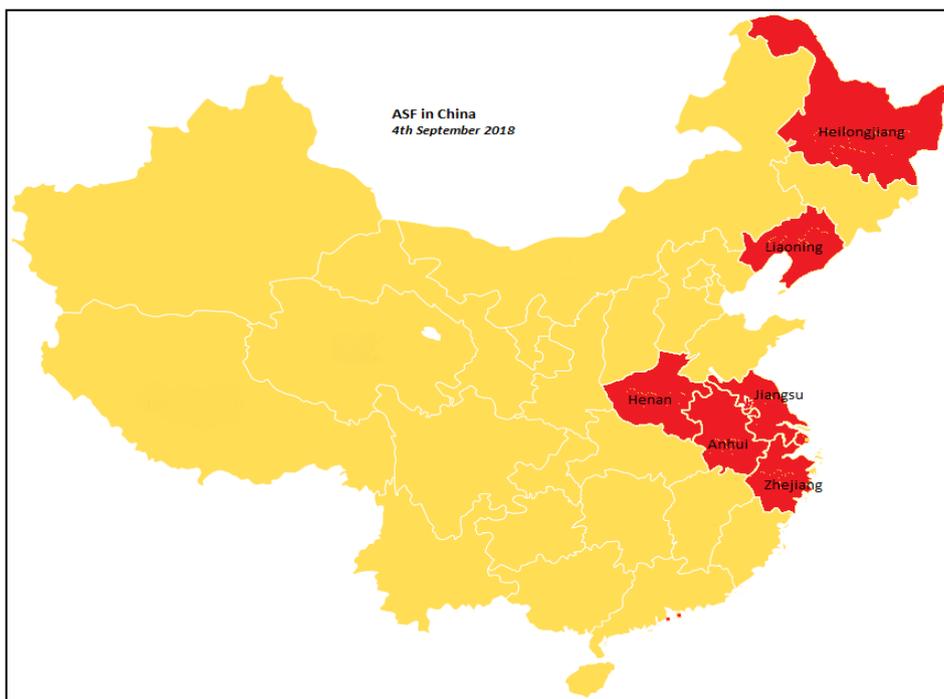


Figure 2:

Risk to Ireland and Disease Awareness Campaign

DAFM's awareness campaign for ASF is ongoing and aims to provide up to date information to stake holders to ensure they are aware of the risks and what they can do to protect their animals and the wider industry. The illegal importation of meat infected with the ASF virus and subsequent feeding to pigs is the main risk pathway for the introduction of ASF into Ireland and the focus of DAFM's awareness campaign is to prevent this happening.

Further information on African swine fever and documents relating to DAFM's awareness campaign are available at

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrol/africanswinefever/>

Further reading on ASF

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/africanswinefever/UsefulLinksInformationAfricanSwineFever030817.pdf>

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