

African Swine Fever

BACKGROUND

African Swine Fever (ASF) virus is a highly transmissible hemorrhagic disease resulting in **up to 100% mortality in swine**. Currently, **there is no vaccine or treatment** for this emerging pathogen. According to the [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(APHIS\)](#), ASF can be spread by contact with infected animals' body fluids, ticks that feed on infected animals, or feeding pigs infected pork products. There is also evidence that feral swine and human activity have played a role in spreading the virus.

According to the [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#), ASF spread to countries in the Caucasus region and Russia in 2007. The first outbreak in China was reported in August 2018. China is the global leader in pork production with over half the world's population of swine. According to the [USDA Economic Research Service \(ERS\)](#), the ongoing ASF outbreaks have reduced the number of pigs in China by at least 40% since late 2018 and have expanded into 50 countries, including most of Asia.



IMPACT

ASF is a **trade-restricting transboundary animal disease**. ASF is not a threat to human health as it cannot be transmitted from pigs to humans, but it can cause negative impacts like societal disruption and loss of livelihood. Countries with confirmed cases are subject to international trade restrictions aimed at reducing the risk of introduction of the disease.

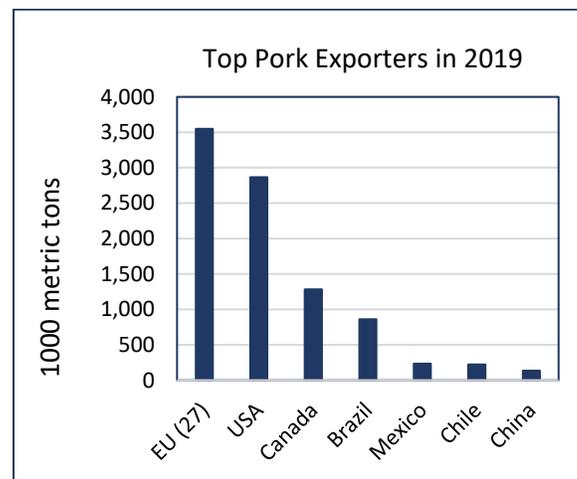
According to 2019 USDA data, the **United States (U.S.) is the global leader in pork exports** and has never had a case of ASF. Domestically, more than 115 million hogs, with an economic value of around \$25 billion go to market annually, according to the [National Pork Producers Council](#). According to the [USDA ERS](#), the U.S. exports about one fourth of its pork products. **A domestic ASF outbreak would terminate the ability of the U.S. to export pork**. In addition, depending on the severity of the outbreak, it could cost billions of dollars in disease outbreak control.

PLUM ISLAND ANIMAL DISEASE CENTER (PIADC) ASF TASK FORCE

In response to the increased threat of ASF worldwide, **PIADC established the interagency ASF Task Force** with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), the USDA APHIS and USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

The task force was established to increase collaboration and coordination, and leverage resources between the three agencies at PIADC in addressing the threat of ASF. Current ASF Task Force activities include:

- Fast-tracking development and scaled-up **production of a live, attenuated ASF virus vaccine** using existing cell culture technology.
- **Improved diagnostic testing and increased national preparedness and response.**
- **Evaluations of commercially available disinfectants** to characterize their ability to kill the ASF virus to support outbreak response.



https://apps.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/circulars/livestock_poultry.pdf

For more information about the current state of available information on ASF, please consult the [ASF Master Question List](#).