



CLIPPINGS a weekly column from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

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For Immediate Release

African Swine Fever

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There has been a lot of discussion about African Swine Fever or the possibility of some other foreign disease infecting livestock in our country. If that happens, it is likely that the export markets will be dramatically reduced, at least for a while. All the formerly exported meat will have to be consumed domestically resulting in an abundant pork supply and much lower prices.

Consumers of pork should know that African Swine Fever is only a pig disease and will have no impact on the taste or food safety of pork meat. A likely scenario is that the price of pork would be considerably lower, with a lot of extra pork available domestically. That would raise the importance of increased local pork consumption.

The African Swine Fever virus is known to survive in the environment for a relatively long time, especially with cool temperatures. Three areas that are focused on include: foreign travel, meat coming in at the airport, and imported feed from infected countries. Swine producers are taking precautions regarding foreign travelers, requiring more downtime before entering a pork production area. Additionally, they are asking their feed manufacturers about handling, shipping and storing imported feedstuff to minimize feed biosecurity risk. The virus can survive on meat products, so to help prevent meat coming in from an infected country, customs officials are using dogs to detect any meat product.

Swine producers are also actively looking for signs of the disease. Early detection is an important first step in possible eradication and restoration of export markets. African Swine Fever is difficult to differentiate from other common diseases in the early stages. The main difference during the early stage of the disease is that the pig will have a high temperature. Posters and more information about foreign disease identification are available to all pork producers.

If there is one thing that is important for swine producers to realize, it is that African Swine Fever is spread by being carried. That makes biosecurity very important. The virus could be carried by people, animals, feed or supplies. If biosecurity is in place to prevent viruses from entering the site, the risk of that operation getting African Swine Fever is very low. Biosecurity workshops are available through Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

There is pre-work that should be done by pork producers in a precautionary effort if/before African Swine Fever infects the U.S. swine herd. It is called a Secure Pork Plan. In brief, the operation needs a national premises identification number, and needs to keep detailed records for animal movement, feed, supplies, equipment and people. The operation should have a site-specific biosecurity plan,

develop a premises map and appoint a biosecurity manager. All farm personnel should be trained in biosecurity measures and in identifying disease symptoms (especially foreign animal disease symptoms). And, lastly, a daily record of pig health should be kept, monitoring for disease symptoms.

If an unusual disease symptom is identified, producers are urged to call their veterinarian immediately. Early detection is critical for improved chances of eliminating a new disease quickly and with less financial loss. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is planning to host workshops to help producers understand and prepare for a possible foreign disease outbreak. Stay tuned for an upcoming workshop in your area this summer.

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