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African Swine Fever (ASF) Confirmed in the Philippines

Report Categories:

Livestock and Products

Grain and Feed

Poultry and Products

Oilseeds and Products

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Report Highlights:

The Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) announced today that 14 out of the 20 samples submitted to the World Animal Health (OIE) Reference Laboratory for Swine Diseases in the United Kingdom have tested positive for African Swine Fever (ASF). ASF is a highly contagious disease that is fatal to pigs, but does not pose a risk to human health. According to the DA, seven areas in two provinces in Luzon have been affected by ASF. These are Rizal Province (Rodriguez and Antipolo) and Bulacan (Guiguinto). The DA reports that a total of 7,416 pigs within the 1-kilometer radius of the affected areas in Rizal and Bulacan have been culled. The results of another test, which will determine strain and virulence of ASF, are still pending. ASF has caused serious production and economic losses in the region, and its impact in the Philippines will depend on the government and private sector's ability to limit its spread from the initially affected areas.

General Information:

The Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) announced today that 14 out of the 20 samples submitted to the World Animal Health (OIE) Reference Laboratory for Swine Diseases in the United Kingdom have tested positive for African Swine Fever (ASF). ASF is a highly contagious disease that is fatal to pigs, but does not pose a risk to human health. According to the DA, seven areas in two provinces in Luzon have been affected by ASF. These are Rizal Province (Rodriguez and Antipolo) and Bulacan (Guiguinto). The DA reports that a total of 7,416 pigs within the 1-kilometer radius of the affected areas in Rizal and Bulacan have been culled. The results of another test, which will determine strain and virulence of ASF, are still pending. ASF has caused serious production and economic losses in the region, and its impact in the Philippines will depend on the government and private sector's ability to limit its spread from the initially affected areas.

<http://www.da.gov.ph/department-of-agriculture-da-bulletin-no-1-abnormal-swine-deaths-in-backyard-farms/>

Philippine Swine Industry

The Philippines total swine inventory is estimated at about 12.7 million head, with backyard population at 8.2 million pigs or 65 percent of the industry. As reported by the Philippine government, 35 percent of hog farms are considered commercial. The government defines backyard as 20 head or below. Although smaller scale, backyard farms are often part of integrated operations, where they receive updated information and protocols on biosecurity. The majority of backyard farms feed their pigs commercial feed, although some farmers resort to swill feeding due to its considerably lower price. There are varying reports to the extent which Philippine backyard farms use commercial feed, especially if swill from hotels or restaurants are readily available.

<http://www.da.gov.ph/department-of-agriculture-da-bulletin-no-2-abnormal-swine-deaths-in-backyard-farms/>

The Philippine hog industry is valued at about P260 billion (\$5 billion), has been growing by about 3-5 percent annually, and accounts for roughly half of total compound feed use. Central Luzon (which includes Bulacan Province) has the highest share of hog production with over 16 percent of total swine inventory, followed by CALABARZON (which includes Rizal Province) with 12 percent share.

Rizal and Bulacan provinces are both part of regions that together produce a significant amount of pork, especially on the commercial side. Rizal province produced 89,976 MT of pork in 2018 (live weight), and is part of CALABARZON Region that has about 1.5 million pigs. (380,000 MT of pork produced region-wide). Bulacan province produced 259,677 MT of pork in 2018 (live weight), and is part of Central Luzon Region, which has about 2.25 million pigs (470,000 MT of pork produced region-wide).

Food Safety and Quarantine Procedures

To ensure food safety and security, the DA reported that they had activated the Crisis Management Task Force on Swine to oversee the implementation of the “1-7-10 Protocol” to manage, contain, and control the situation, as well as provide timely and accurate information. Within one kilometer (km)-radius of infected farms, all pigs tested positive within the area are culled. The DA’s Bureau of Animal Industry and concerned regional field units have set up quarantine checkpoints at strategic locations to prevent the movement of all live pigs, pork, and pork-related products. For swine farms within seven-km radius, BAI and concerned DA Regional Field Offices conduct surveillance procedures, test animals to determine the extent of infection, and limit animal movement. Farms within 10-km radius are required to comply with mandatory disease reporting.

<http://www.da.gov.ph/da-cmtf-bulletin-no-5-on-vigorously-enforcing-1-7-10-protocol-to-manage-contain-and-control-suspected-swine-disease-result-of-confirmatory-test/>

On August 23, the DA also mobilized Quick Response Teams to implement complementary measures. The DA has issued the following administrative orders:

1. Guidelines in securing certificate of farm disease-free status in disease outbreak areas.
2. Revised guidelines on the local movement of swine, pork, pork products, and pork by-products outside disease outbreak areas.
3. Veterinary quarantine movement protocol during animal disease outbreaks/emergencies.

<http://www.da.gov.ph/da-observes-strict-quarantine-food-security-measures/>

The DA has instructed all Provincial and Municipality/City Veterinary and Agricultural Offices throughout the country to strictly enforce food safety measures and observe quarantine procedures. As part of the quarantine procedures, DA prohibits the transportation of live animals, meat products and by-products unless accompanied by a required Veterinary Health Certificate from a licensed veterinarian and a relevant shipping permit from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI). Checkpoints have been ordered to be established in all entry and exit points of all provinces.

<http://www.da.gov.ph/da-cmtf-bulletin-no-4-on-heightened-quarantine-food-safety-measures/>

Swine Indemnity Fund

Initially, the local swine and feed industry stepped up to financially compensate the affected farms. However, the DA has since received ₱82-million (\$1.58 million) fund from the Department of Budget and Management to prevent the further spread of the disease. This includes a ₱3,000 (\$58) financial aid for affected hog raisers, including new piglets for backyard raisers to start again.

Biggest Threats

Countries in the region experiencing ASF have seen swill feeding as a major vector of transmission and the practice would therefore be an area of concern for the Philippines as long as the practice cannot be effectively prohibited and enforced. Moreover, there is a high concentration of commercial farms in Central Luzon, raising the risk of ASF possibly spreading throughout the major production area.

Enforcement at the border remains a problem. While the Philippines welcomes record numbers of Chinese visitors and the holiday season will soon bring back a high number of Filipino workers, commercial shipments of pork from ASF-affected countries are still finding their way through the Philippines porous borders despite their prohibition.

Rays of Hope

There are a couple factors that could mitigate the impact of ASF in the Philippines. First, the DA has proved competent in combatting Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in 2017 and earlier eradicating Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in 2011. Second, as an archipelago, the country's geography should aid efforts in limiting the spread of the disease, compared to countries in mainland Asia. On the map, CALABARZON is region IV-A, and Central Luzon is region III:

Swine Inventories by Province, 2018

