



# UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

## 2014 RESOLUTION

### 118<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

OCTOBER 16-22, 2014 ~ KANSAS CITY, MO

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**RESOLUTION NUMBER:** 4, 12, AND 24 COMBINED APPROVED AS AMMENDED

**SOURCE:** COMMITTEE ON IMPORT- EXPORT  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSMISSIBLE DISEASES OF SWINE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND EMERGING DISEASES

**SUBJECT MATTER:** Need for United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services Risk Assessment and Rulemaking prior to Allowing Imports from Countries with African Swine Fever

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#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

For the last few years, African Swine Fever (ASF) has spread from Russia to Eastern European countries. This is a deadly disease of swine for which there is no vaccine available and little hope of a vaccine being developed in the near future. Other than killing the infected animals and applying sanitary measures, there are no tools to control the disease. Many of the cases have been in feral swine, but ASF has also been found in commercial herds in countries with significant commercial production, such as Poland and Lithuania.

Recent media reports indicate the United States is preparing to accept importation of meat from Lithuania. The media reports focused on the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Safety Inspection Service's audit of Lithuania's food safety system to determine equivalence with the United States system. The U.S. industry supports equivalence audits as a means of assuring the food safety of meat and meat products in international trade. Equivalent food safety systems, however, do not address the risk of transmitting a foreign animal disease such as ASF via trade in meat and meat products. That requires a risk assessment by the USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service which to our knowledge has not been done.

The introduction of ASF into the U.S. swine herd would be economically devastating to the U.S. pork industry and other commodities including corn and soybeans. It would cost USDA and the public millions, if not billions, of dollars in disease control expenditures and indemnity payments for infected animals, with little hope of eradication. Export markets would likely be lost immediately, sending prices into an unprecedented downward spiral.

#### **RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association requests that United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) conduct a risk assessment of any country that has African Swine Fever (ASF) - in domestic, wild, or feral swine - which currently exports or seeks to export swine, porcine genetic material, pork or pork products into the United States. USDA-APHIS shall apply this risk assessment as the basis for independent rulemaking as opposed to amendment of current regulations that pertain to other Foreign Animal Diseases. Such rulemaking would include a proposed rule and a comment period. Only after such rulemaking and consideration of comments should imports be considered. If, during rulemaking, USDA-APHIS recommends development of an ASF Free Compartment within such a country, it is requested that producers in the Compartment be required to follow and document the same biosecurity practices as would US producers in the case of an ASF outbreak. These biosecurity practices are outlined in the Secure Pork Supply Plan (<http://www.securepork.org/plan-components.php>).

#### **INTERIM RESPONSE:**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) shares the concerns of the U.S. Animal Health Association and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

APHIS mitigates the risk of introduction of African swine fever (ASF) into the United States by restricting the importation of pork and pork products from ASF-affected regions. Foreign regions that are subject to these restrictions are specified on an APHIS web-based list of ASF-affected regions. These import restrictions apply irrespective of any findings by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, or any other Federal agency, regarding whether the foreign regions meet other separate requirements for eligibility to export to the United States. The APHIS restrictions are effective until the region is removed from its ASF-affected list, which APHIS does only after performing a risk analysis to determine the ASF status of the region.

Most foreign regions in which ASF is present are included on APHIS' ASF-affected list. The exceptions are regions of the European Union (EU), to which ASF has recently spread. In response to the recent spread of ASF in Europe, APHIS is drafting a trade restrictive action for ASF-affected regions of the EU and will add those regions to its ASF-affected list. Adding these geographic regions to the list would subject pork and pork products from these regions to APHIS import restrictions designed to mitigate the risk of ASF introduction into the United States. This action would be similar to the APHIS approach of mitigating the risk of disease incursions into the United States from the EU of other serious diseases of livestock and poultry, namely classical swine fever, highly pathogenic avian influenza, and Newcastle disease. APHIS will continue to monitor available epidemiological information for ASF outbreaks and update its list of ASF-affected regions accordingly.