United States Animal Health Association
2019 Resolution
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RESOLUTION NUMBER: 4, 9, 15, and 16 COMBINED APPROVED AS AMENDED

SUBJECT MATTER: African Swine Fever (ASF)/Classical Swine Fever Surveillance Program and Tissues for Official ASF Testing in National Animal Health Laboratory Network Laboratories

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

African and Classical swine fever (ASF and CSF) viruses are infectious diseases of pigs and spread readily in pig populations. Neither ASF or CSF are zoonotic diseases and do not affect people. The different ASF and CSF virus genotypes vary in virulence from highly pathogenic strains that cause near 100% mortality, to low virulence strains believed to cause carrier states that can be difficult to diagnose. Clinical signs of ASF and CSF viruses in infected swine are often indistinguishable from any number of other systemic diseases endemic to United States (US) swine.

The recent emergence and ongoing spread of ASF among wild, non-commercial, and commercial pig populations in a growing number of countries presents a substantial risk to swine health and pork production globally. CSF continues to infect pigs in the Caribbean and Japan, as well as several other countries. In the event of an introduction of ASF or CSF into the US, early detection would be paramount to an effective response and recovery effort. Effective and real-time surveillance strategies that utilize state of the art diagnostic technologies are critical components of Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) preparedness.

In recognition of the above, on June 1, 2019, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) implemented an active ASF Surveillance Program at USDA, National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories that supplemented an already existing CSF surveillance program. This program tests case-compatible diagnostic lab submissions for the presence/absence of ASF and CSF via a real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR). This is a tremendous step forward in enhancing ASF and CSF surveillance efforts in US swine. Long-term sustainability and efficiency of this ASF/CSF Surveillance Program and the continuous improvement of all FAD diagnostic capabilities and surveillance efforts at the USDA, NAHLN laboratories is of utmost importance to US pork industry stakeholders.

Pooling tissue samples for real-time PCR testing is a common practice used in group, premises, or herd level diagnostic investigations of swine. Pooling of tissues samples (spleen, lymph node, or tonsil) enhances the cost effectiveness and sustainability of surveillance programs and increases the number of case-compatible submissions that can be tested with the finite amount of funding available.

Some swine facilities do not have a Premises Identification Number (PIN) (e.g., non-commercial or infrequent submitters to veterinary diagnostic laboratories). While the goal

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remains for all producers to have a PIN, removing the requirement for a PIN on laboratory accessions would expand the breadth and reach of this surveillance program to be more inclusive of case-compatible veterinary diagnostic laboratory submissions from all swine operations.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to validate and approve the items listed below. Collectively, these efforts aim to enhance the cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and breadth of coverage provided by the African Swine Fever (ASF)/Classical Swine Fever (CSF) Surveillance Program.

The USDA-APHIS ASF/CSF Surveillance Program at USDA, National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratories shall:

- Validate methods and implement a provision for using pooled samples for ASF/CSF polymerase chain reaction testing from case-compatible diagnostic case submissions, and

- Revise the premises identification number requirement so as not to exclude cases from the ASF/CSF Surveillance Program, provided traceability of the sample is assured.

Foreign animal disease (FAD) diagnostic capabilities and capacities at USDA-APHIS NAHLN laboratories shall:

- Continue to expand the number of ante-mortem sample types (e.g., oral fluids, processing fluids, swabs, serum) approved for FAD diagnostic testing that are well suited for herd level detection and high-throughput test methods at veterinary diagnostic laboratories, and

- Expand the number of assays, testing methodologies (nucleic acid and antibody detection, and sequencing analysis) and reagent supplier options approved for FAD diagnostic testing conducted at USDA-APHIS NAHLN laboratories.