RESOLUTION NUMBER: 3 and 12 COMBINED  APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AND EMERGING ANIMAL DISEASES
        COMMITTEE ON SWINE

SUBJECT MATTER: Feed Import Restrictions to Protect Against African Swine Fever
Importation in Feed

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Numerous studies have emerged providing strong evidence that many viruses, including the African swine fever (ASF) virus, can survive and be transmissible from feed. There are also anecdotal reports that feed from foreign sources, particularly Asia, is produced in a manner that makes it susceptible to contamination. Not all United States (US) feed mills pellet the feed they receive, nor are they equipped to do so.

The US swine industry has now taken numerous steps to mitigate a viral threat from imported feed since the imported products have not been stopped by regulatory officials. Feed is often held for an extended period of time prior to use, and viral mitigants, to be used in feed, are being evaluated. A task force in collaboration with the US Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services and Plant Protection and Quarantine was also convened but has not come to a consensus on how to protect the swine industry from viral threats associated with the import of feed ingredients. In February 2020, thirty states and the National Pork Producers Council sent a letter to USDA Secretary Perdue asking that organic soy imports be restricted from countries that are ASF positive. As of September 2020, there has been no response. Further, Canada has led with their initiative to protect swine farmers by using a national responsible imports program to mitigate the risk of contaminated feed ingredients imported from ASF positive countries. Such a program would be beneficial to US swine producers as well.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services, in collaboration with the USDA Trade and Foreign Agricultural Service and other pertinent government agencies such as the United States Food and Drug Administration and USDA-APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine, to restrict the import of feed and/or feed ingredients from countries that are positive for African swine fever and to create enforceable standards for those countries to reduce the contamination threat during harvest and processing of the feed and feed ingredients.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services (VS) appreciates USAHA’s concern regarding the import of feed and/or feed ingredients from countries that are positive for African Swine Fever (ASF). While
the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is the main point of contact, both USDA and FDA are informed of the swine industry’s interest in the potential import bans and development of a “Canada-like” program in the U.S. Both agencies discussed such a program in the Feed Risk Task Force, and reviewed the request received in February 2020. Previous discussions were primarily limited to soybeans (organic and traditional varieties). This resolution expanded that request and appears to be broader to “restrict the import of feed and/or feed ingredients” from ASF-positive countries.

USDA and FDA evaluated the feasibility of an import restriction program for soybeans using both agencies current authorities and resources. Based on the evaluation, neither agency is pursuing a program that focuses on soybean restrictions or additional feed or feed ingredients at this time. Such a ban is resource prohibitive for government agencies; requires significant start-up time; is cost prohibitive for both the animal food and pork industries, has potential immediate negative impacts on trade and in the future; and could result in unintended impacts to both the human and animal food supply chains if all ingredients were restricted by ASF-positive countries.

While we are not pursuing such a program at this time, USDA and FDA commend both the pork and animal food industries for their existing voluntary mitigation measures. Some examples of those measures are responsible importer programs and implementation of voluntary hold times for certain imported ingredients. We believe these are beneficial activities that continue to provide benefit to both the pork and animal food industries. USDA and FDA believe these voluntary programs provide greater flexibility than government-imposed restrictions as voluntary programs can change and adapt quickly with the pace of new science. We commend the pork and animal food industries for their continued cooperation to protect the US pork and animal food supplies.

FINAL RESPONSE:

USDA, APHIS, VS appreciates USAHA’s concern regarding the import of feed and/or feed ingredients from countries that are positive for ASF and the opportunity to respond. While the FDA is the main point of contact, both USDA and FDA are informed of the swine industry’s interest in the potential import bans and development of a “Canada-like” program in the U.S. Both agencies discussed such a program in the Feed Risk Task Force, and reviewed the request received in February 2020. Previous discussions were primarily limited to soybeans (organic and traditional varieties). This resolution expanded that request and appears to be broader to “restrict the import of feed and/or feed ingredients” from ASF-positive countries.

USDA and FDA evaluated the feasibility of an import restriction program for soybeans using both agencies current authorities and resources. Based on the evaluation, neither agency is pursuing a program that focuses on soybean restrictions or additional feed or feed ingredients at this time. Such a program would require significant time to implement, may be cost-prohibitive for both the animal food industry and the pork industry, could have negative impacts on trade now and in the future, and could result in unintended impacts to both the human and animal food supply chains if all ingredients were restricted from ASF-positive countries.

USDA and FDA commend both the pork and animal food industries for their existing voluntary mitigation measures. Some examples of those measures are responsible importer programs and implementation of voluntary hold times for certain imported ingredients. We believe these are beneficial activities that continue to provide benefit to both the pork and animal food industries. USDA and FDA believe these voluntary programs provide greater flexibility than government-
imposed restrictions as voluntary programs can change and adapt quickly with the pace of new science. We commend the pork and animal food industries for their continued cooperation to protect the U.S. pork and animal food supplies.