

Recognising signs of African swine fever

About African swine fever

African swine fever is an infectious viral disease of domestic and feral pigs resulting in a very high mortality rate (up to 100%) in infected pigs.

There is no vaccination and no treatment currently available. Implementation of an effective biosecurity plan is an important tool to prevent African swine fever.

People cannot be infected with African swine fever.

Australia is free from African swine fever

If it were introduced to Australia, African swine fever would significantly impact pig health and production, leading to wider economic impacts.

This serious disease of pigs continues to spread in Australia's neighbouring countries so it's important to remain on alert. Early detection and reporting is critical to the rapid containment of this disease.

Clinical signs of African swine fever

Signs of African swine fever in pigs can include:

- death (possibly before other signs are noticed)
- fever
- blotching/reddening of the skin, particularly on ears, abdomen and legs
- skin ulcers
- lack of coordination or stiff gait
- difficulty breathing
- abortion
- vomiting
- diarrhoea



Skin blotching is a sign of African swine fever in infected pigs.
Image source: Plum Island Animal Disease Center

Inspect carcasses for

- pinpoint reddening in organs such as heart and kidneys
- reddening of the skin
- enlarged lymph nodes resembling blood clots
- excess fluid around the heart
- enlarged, fragile and/or dark-coloured spleen

Additional signs in feral pigs



Signs of African swine fever may not be readily apparent in feral pigs. Watch for abnormal behaviours such as:

- lack of escaping
- trembling hind legs
- lying stretched out on the ground
- general lack of alertness and mobility

How pigs can become infected

Feral and domestic pigs can become infected with African swine fever virus by:

- eating contaminated pork products and feed
- close contact with infected pigs
- contact with contaminated equipment
- soft ticks, although this has not been tested under Australian conditions

The virus can remain for long periods in blood, faeces and tissues, particularly in chilled and frozen meat and is resistant to several commercially available disinfectants.

To prevent the spread of disease when pig hunting

- wear disposable or washable protective clothing (aprons / gloves / overalls) when handling pig carcasses
- inspect all carcasses and carcass parts for evidence of disease or illness
- clean and disinfect all equipment on site, including vehicles after each night's harvest
- respect all quarantine, biosecurity plans and restrictions that are in place
- beware of cross contamination and take care not to have contact with pigs in multiple locations without prior decontamination

People food is not pig food

The greatest risk of introduction of African swine fever is from visitors and residents illegally bringing infected pork or pork products into Australia and the products being fed to or eaten by pigs.

Feeding meat or meat products to pigs (swill feeding) is illegal in all states and territories. If you suspect that meat is being fed to pigs, report it to Biosecurity Queensland.



All meat and meat products should be disposed of in a secure bin that cannot be accessed by feral pigs.

What is the Queensland Government doing?

Biosecurity Queensland is implementing a range of measures to communicate the risks of African swine fever and swill feeding and is working with stakeholders on improving preparedness for an outbreak.

The government's response if there was an outbreak of African swine fever would include eradication of the disease through a combination of strategies including, quarantine and movement controls to prevent the spread of disease, destruction and disposal of infected animals, decontamination of infected premises and tracing and surveillance to determine the extent of the infection.

What should I do if I suspect African swine fever?

If you suspect the presence of African swine fever you must report it to **Biosecurity Queensland** on **13 25 23** or contact the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline** on **1800 675 888**.

For more information on African swine fever call 13 25 23 or visit qld.gov.au/AfricanSwineFever