



E: [Animal.Health@gov.scot](mailto:Animal.Health@gov.scot)

26 May 2022

Dear registered pig keeper,

## **AFRICAN SWINE FEVER**

I am writing to you about the current threat of African swine fever (ASF), a contagious, notifiable, deadly, viral disease of pigs. There is no vaccine and disease may occur in, and spread between, domestic and feral pigs, and wild boar. You may already be aware that ASF is having disastrous impacts on the pig industry in Europe, Asia and the America's, including the death of millions of pigs worldwide. ASF has now reached our close neighbours in Germany and Italy. If ASF reaches the United Kingdom, it could have serious effects on the health and welfare of our pigs, including rare breeds, and would have serious economic consequences for the Scottish pig industry. It does not affect humans. You can find more information about ASF at [www.gov.scot/africanswinefever](http://www.gov.scot/africanswinefever).

I am asking all pig keepers across Scotland to work with us in preventing the entry and spread of ASF by applying good biosecurity measures, observing the swill feeding ban and preventing contact between your stock and feral pigs.

### Use Biosecurity.

Biosecurity is a set of practical measures designed to reduce the risk of the introduction, establishment and spread of animal diseases, infections or infestations to, from and within an animal population. There is no "one size fits all" solution – biosecurity should be adapted to present risks. You should always get professional advice from your private vet as part of health planning procedures.

Biosecurity measures that you can do:

- Be vigilant and report suspicion of disease immediately.
- Minimise movement of animals, people, equipment and vehicles on and off the premises
- Ensure you provide foot dips and brushes for anyone entering the farm. Use [General Orders Government approved disinfectant](#) at the recommended dilution rate.
- Quarantine incoming pigs and house them in isolation away from the main herd.
- Use a known and approved source of semen for artificial insemination.
- Avoid sharing equipment between premises, even within the same business. If this is not possible, equipment should be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected between premises.



- Any vehicle used to transport a pig must be cleansed and disinfected to a strict standard before and after each use.
- Ensure that your non – UK resident workers do not bring products of animal origin back from visits to their homeland.

### Pig Feed.

The ASF virus can survive for long periods in raw, cooked, and frozen meat. Previous classical swine fever and foot and mouth disease outbreaks have been caused by the illegal feeding of waste food to pigs. Be vigilant that passers by or seasonal workers do not discard left over food into your pen's. Feed brought on should be of high quality and from reputable sources. It is illegal to feed pigs with kitchen or catering waste. This practice is prohibited under Animal By-Products legislation, guidance is available from: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/animal-health-welfare/animal-by-products>

### Feral pigs in Scotland

Feral pigs and wild boar are susceptible to exotic diseases, such as foot and mouth disease and ASF. Wild boar are considered to be a non-native species in Scotland. Pig keepers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their pigs do not escape. It is an offence under Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to release any type of pig, including wild boar or to allow them to escape from captivity. Unchecked, escapes from collections, wild boar farms or intentional illegal releases could result in widespread establishment of feral pig populations throughout Scotland. The Scottish Government has asked Nature Scot to gather information on the existing populations of feral pigs in Scotland and to provide advice on management options to deal with them. You can report wild boar / feral pig sightings in Scotland:

- Online – <https://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/>
- By email – SEARS email: [info@sears.scotland.gov.uk](mailto:info@sears.scotland.gov.uk)
- By phone – SEARS 24/7 customer service phone line: **08452 30 20 50**

Currently the primary responsibility for controlling feral pig populations lies with individual land owners, and where feral pigs are present, land managers are encouraged to control feral pig numbers to manage their impacts on agriculture and the environment.

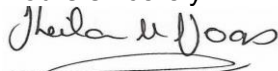
### Prevent feral pigs accessing your property

Boar are large, strong animals and adept at breaching many standard fencing designs. Weld mesh or high tensile wild boar netting is the most suitable material to use, and fences should be at least 1.8 m high and should be buried 0.5 m below ground. It is recommended that fencing is supplemented by a minimum of one strand of outrigger electrified wire (a suspended strand of electric wire inside the un-electrified fencing), approximately 0.5 m above ground level. Fences should be checked regularly to ensure they are kept secure and in good repair. The use of barbed wire is not appropriate, except as a single strand at ground level where wild boar digging under fences are a problem.

### Preventing the spread of disease

The Scottish Government works to ensure that Scotland is not only prepared for a disease outbreak, but that it does everything it can to prevent an outbreak of ASF. I hope you will play your part and review your current biosecurity measures, take care with pig feed and report any sightings of wild boar or feral pigs. Please see the attached biosecurity leaflets. If you would like to know more please contact my official [clive.brown2@gov.scot](mailto:clive.brown2@gov.scot) in the first instance.

Yours sincerely



Sheila Voas  
Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland