



# DHS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Master Question List for African Swine Fever Virus (ASFV)

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For comments or questions related to the contents of this document, please contact the DHS S&T Hazard Awareness & Characterization Technology Center at [HACTechnologyCenter@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:HACTechnologyCenter@hq.dhs.gov).



## Science and Technology

DHS Science and Technology Directorate | MOBILIZING INNOVATION FOR A SECURE WORLD

**African Swine Fever Virus (ASFV) – Master Question List**

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**Foreword**

The following Master Question List (MQL) was developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) to provide government decision makers with up-to-date information, which will enable them to appropriately respond to a possible African Swine Fever Virus (ASFV) outbreak. This MQL summarizes what is known and what knowledge gaps exist to address fundamental questions such as, “What is the infectious dose?” and “How long does the virus persist in the environment?” The information provided is a succinct summary to facilitate structured and scientifically guided discussions across the Federal Government without burdening them with the need to review scientific reports, and to prevent duplication of efforts by highlighting and coordinating research.

**Situation Overview**

ASFV is the causative agent of African Swine Fever (ASF), a highly infectious and deadly disease in domestic pigs. The virus originated in Africa, where native hosts include warthogs and bush pigs, neither of which exhibit clinical disease. Domestic pigs are non-native hosts that exhibit signs of fever, respiratory distress, diarrhea, abortion, and sudden death. Of 24 known ASFV genotypes, only genotypes I and II have spread outside of Africa. ASFV began spreading in Eastern Europe in 2007 then spread quickly in Western Europe and China in 2018. ASFV is not a human pathogen; however, an outbreak in the U.S. would result in disruption of the swine industry with the potential for billions of dollars in economic impact due to loss of meat products and culling expenses. In 2021, ASFV was detected in the Dominican Republic and spread to Haiti. According to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH or OIE), the outbreak is still ongoing as of [04 December 2024](#). ASFV has not been detected in the U.S., but the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have increased precautions to prevent importation of the virus. The proximity of this outbreak has caused concern for further spread and motivates evaluation of the threat of ASFV to the U.S.

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION REGARDING AFRICAN SWINE FEVER VIRUS (ASFV)

The cutoff date for information gathering related to this document was [04 December 2024](#).

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03 April 2025

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Major Findings by Topic Area	
Topic	Overview of Current Knowledge
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASFV is a large double-stranded DNA virus with a 170-180 kilobase (kb) genome, and the sole member of its family (<i>Asfarviridae</i>).</li> <li>There are 24 known genotypes of ASFV, but only two (genotypes I and II) occur outside the natural range in Africa.</li> <li>ASFV is the causative agent of ASF.</li> </ul>
<b>INFECTIOUS DOSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The median infectious dose (ID<sub>50</sub>) of ASFV in domestic swine ranges from ~10-10,000 viral particles, but depends on age, body weight, inoculation route, and virus strain.</li> <li>Wild boar and domestic pigs can acquire ASFV infection after exposure via ingestion, intramuscular injection, and respiratory routes.</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSMISSIBILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASFV can spread between swine by direct or indirect contact, as well as through vectors such as soft-bodied ticks.</li> <li>ASFV is highly transmissible, with infected domestic swine each infecting an average of 2.8 other individuals sharing a pen (also called the basic reproduction number or R<sub>0</sub>), although this varies by genotype.</li> </ul>
<b>SUSCEPTABLE SPECIES AND VECTORS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASFV is native to Africa, where hosts include warthogs (<i>Phacochoerus</i> spp.) and bush pigs (<i>Potamochoerus</i> spp.). Neither warthogs nor bush pigs exhibit clinical disease signs.</li> <li>Outside of Africa, domestic pigs (<i>Sus scrofa domesticus</i>), wild bearded pigs (<i>Sus barbatus</i>) in Borneo, Sulawesi warty pig (<i>Sus celebensis</i>) in Asia, and wild boar/feral hogs (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) are non-native hosts that can acquire fatal illness.</li> <li>African warthogs imported into Texas have the potential to become infected without clinical signs. Warthogs in combination with tick vectors have the potential to create a setting for endemic ASFV transmission.</li> <li>Soft-bodied ticks (genus <i>Ornithodoros</i>) are a natural vector in Eastern Africa and Europe. Ticks are required for transmission between warthogs, but not between domestic and/or feral pigs.</li> <li>There is limited evidence for transmission via non-tick vectors such as stable flies and leeches.</li> </ul>

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## TECHNICAL INFORMATION REGARDING AFRICAN SWINE FEVER VIRUS (ASFV)

<b>INCUBATION PERIOD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In natural infections, the time from exposure to development of clinical signs ranges from 3-21 days; domestic and wild swine have incubation periods around 15 days.</li><li>• Less virulent strains produce mild signs, while more virulent strains have a shorter incubation period (around 3 days) and may result in death before clinical signs are observed.</li><li>• In experimental studies, the incubation period depends on exposure dose, exposure route, and virus strain, but clinical signs generally occur within 4 days, with a wide range of 1-28 days</li></ul>
<b>CLINICAL PRESENTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clinical signs vary, depending on host species, in domestic pigs signs include fever, loss of appetite, dull/depressed attitude, red/purple skin lesions, respiratory distress, vomiting/diarrhea/bloody diarrhea, high mortality, sudden death, and abortion.</li><li>• Clinical forms of ASFV include acute, subacute, and chronic. Morbidity is high for all forms of disease; mortality rates vary but can reach 100% in peracute/acute infections.</li></ul>
<b>BIOSURVEILLANCE AND CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The United States has ongoing surveillance efforts in certain geographic areas.</li><li>• <a href="#">Rapid ASFV point-of-care tests and detection methods are being researched to improve early detection and response, and there are multiple field-deployable genetic tests to detect ASFV under study.</a></li><li>• Signs and symptoms of ASF are similar to other pig diseases such as classical swine fever (CSF) and necessitate diagnostic tests to establish causal disease agent. ASF should be considered in swine with febrile disease, disseminated hemorrhage, and high mortality.</li><li>• Differential diagnosis should include CSF and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, porcine dermatitis and nephropathy syndrome, erysipelas, Aujeszky's disease, salmonellosis, other septicemic conditions, and poisoning.</li><li>• PCR is the most sensitive technique and can detect ASFV DNA at early stages of infection (within 3-4 days). Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) can detect antibodies 7-14 days-post-infection (dpi), with utility for confirmation of clinical cases; antibodies may last for months to years.</li></ul>



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## TECHNICAL INFORMATION REGARDING AFRICAN SWINE FEVER VIRUS (ASFV)

<b>VETERINARY MEDICAL COUNTERMEASURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is no approved treatment for ASF.</li><li>• There is no vaccine approved for use in the U.S. However, there are ASF vaccines in use internationally, including NAVET-ASFVAC in Vietnam.</li><li>• A number of vaccine candidates have been investigated internationally, including inactivated vaccines, live attenuated vaccines, and subunit vaccines, but protection and side effects vary.</li><li>• WOAHA warns that even with efficacious vaccines, vaccination alone is not a sufficient disease control measure. Rather, vaccines are part of a robust prevention program that includes vaccinations, strict biosecurity measures, and importation and movement controls.</li></ul>
<b>VIRUS INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 2021, ASFV was detected in the Dominican Republic and spread throughout the country and to neighboring Haiti. According to WOAHA, the outbreak is ongoing as of <a href="#">04 December 2024</a>.</li><li>• As of 04 December 2024, ASFV has never been detected in the United States, however the presence of ASFV in the Caribbean is concerning.</li><li>• Infected animals are the primary source of ASFV, but infection can occur via ingestion of waste food that contains infected pig meat products or unprocessed pig meat.</li><li>• Routes of concern are legal and illegal entry of infected animals or animal products and intentional release of ASFV.</li></ul>
<b>VIRAL PERSISTENCE / ENVIRONMENTAL STABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ASFV has high environmental persistence and can be transmitted via fomites including shoes, clothes, vehicles, glass, metal, rubber, paper, boards, bricks, and equipment. Of note, infection of domestic pigs via fomites is not well characterized.</li><li>• ASFV is stable in raw and processed pork/meat products, showing viability from 16-155 days in room temperature and chilled temperatures; frozen products have shown ASFV viability from 103-118 days, with estimates as long as 1,000 days.</li><li>• Stability of ASFV within carcasses and potential contamination of surrounding area varies by environmental conditions (temperature, time, soil type) and disposal method.</li><li>• Three <i>Ornithodoros</i> species of ticks native to the United States have been identified as possible vectors of ASFV; <i>O. coriaceus</i>, <i>O. turicata</i>, and <i>O. puertoricensis</i>. These species, combined with three competent vertebrate hosts, domestic pigs (<i>Sus scrofa domestica</i>), feral hogs (<i>Sus scrofa</i>), and common warthogs (<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>), could severely complicate response(s) and extend the length of any outbreak, should the virus be introduced into the United States.</li></ul>

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## TECHNICAL INFORMATION REGARDING AFRICAN SWINE FEVER VIRUS (ASFV)

<b>ENVIRONMENTAL DETECTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most field diagnostic kits are based on animal samples and are not made for environmental sampling or even testing animal samples other than recent carcasses.</li><li>• Environmental sampling presents challenges of low concentration as well as microbial or organic contaminants naturally existing in soil or on farm surfaces, which can degrade viral nucleic acid. Ongoing research is focused on environmental detection sampling techniques for increased sensitivity, including the use of pre-moistened swabs for sample collection, inhibition of sample detection inactivators, as well as improved eluants.</li></ul>
<b>DECONTAMINATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disinfectants listed by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act Section 3 labels claims for use against ASFV, are registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and should be used for cleaning and disinfection of infected premises. If a suitable commercially available registered disinfectant is unavailable, a disinfectant approved for use against ASFV under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act Section 18 may be used. The labels and Environmental Protection Agency approval letters from the current Section 18 exemptions are available online from U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.</li><li>• The use of effective disinfectants for cleaning infected premises, trucks, and fomites is an important measure for preventing introductions of ASFV to new areas.</li></ul>
<b>PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The guidance for PPE follows Occupational Safety and Health Administration Level C, which covers most non-zoonotic Foreign Animal Disease events and includes National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health approved respirators, chemical resistant clothing, inner and outer gloves, and boots.</li><li>• PPE guidelines will differ for various tasks associated with ASFV. For instance, the protection required for surveillance and depopulation could differ from the protection required for chemical decontamination, or for working on an infected or uninfected area.</li></ul>
<b>DEPOPULATION AND CARCASS DISPOSAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depopulation of ASFV-infected domestic swine must follow guidelines established by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) for the Depopulation of animals.</li><li>• There are several recommended methods for effective depopulation of confirmed or suspected ASFV-infected swine in an agricultural setting.</li><li>• Carcass disposal and environmental regulations differ by setting and state. A comprehensive list of State-approved methods and regulatory considerations is available from the U.S. Veterinary Compliance Assistance Group.</li></ul>



<p><b>SWINE WASTEWATER TREATMENT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is minimal information about ASFV persistence in farm wastewater systems, though transmission via contaminated water (e.g., during seasonal rains) is suspected in several African communities.</li> <li>• Chemical disinfectants and heat can inactivate ASFV in pig slurry, though effectiveness in wastewater systems needs to be determined.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GENOMICS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ASFV genome is variable in size and can include more than 150 distinct open reading frames (ORFs) encoding multiple proteins via the production of multiple transcripts from the same gene. The functions of some proteins are known, and several are involved in evasion of host defenses.</li> <li>• Multiple genetic evaluations have shown that removal of specific genes reduces the virulence of the virus. However, changes and deletions of other genes allow the virus to still retain virulence.</li> </ul>

Note: In this MQL, **biosecurity** is defined as a series of management practices designed to reduce the risk of disease agents being introduced and spread within animal populations. In broad terms, it refers to anything designed to prevent the transfer of disease-causing pathogens.

### Infectious Dose How much agent will make a healthy pig ill?

#### What do we know?

**The median infectious dose (ID<sub>50</sub>) of ASFV in domestic swine ranges from ~10-10,000 viral particles, but depends on age, body weight, inoculation route, and virus strain.**

- The preferred method for quantifying ASFV infectivity is the median hemadsorption infectious dose (HAD<sub>50</sub>). The HAD<sub>50</sub> is the dose (titer) of virus, measured as hemadsorbing units (HAU), that it would take to infect 50% of inoculated pigs and/or cells *in vitro*. Other common virological methods like median tissue culture infectious dose (TCID<sub>50</sub>) or immunofluorescence assays may be used for ASFV characterization, but these laboratory methodologies are more challenging and time consuming to perform.<sup>1-3</sup> The hemadsorption assay takes advantage of the classical feature of ASFV infected swine monocytes attracting erythrocytes (red blood cells) in a rosette around the monocytes.<sup>1</sup> However, not all ASFV strains are hemadsorbing.

**Some domestic pigs can acquire ASFV infection after exposure to only a few viral particles. The infectious dose varies based on genotype, strain, and route of infection.**

#### *Ingestion*

- The ID<sub>50</sub> in approximately 8-week-old, cross-bred pigs for a genotype II strain through ingestion of contaminated liquid was about 10 TCID<sub>50</sub> units.<sup>4</sup>
- For contaminated dry feed, the ID<sub>50</sub> was considerably higher at 10<sup>6.8</sup> TCID<sub>50</sub> units.<sup>4</sup> Additional studies in which 4-5 week old pigs were fed dry feed spiked with genotype II-contaminated plasma for 14 days did not result in infection at doses of 10<sup>5</sup>.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Intramuscular*

- The infectious dose for a genotype II strain in 7-week-old domestic swine inoculated via intramuscular injection was ≤ 10<sup>2</sup> HAD<sub>50</sub> units.<sup>6</sup> Other studies have shown the dose can be as low as 5 HAD<sub>50</sub> units for 5-6 weeks old<sup>7-8</sup> and 0.1 HAD<sub>50</sub> units in 8-week old pigs.<sup>9</sup> More recent studies on a genotype II strain isolated from wild boar in Asia and inoculated by the intramuscular route into 7 week old Bama minipigs determined the ID<sub>50</sub> to be < 0.1 HAD<sub>50</sub> units.

#### *Oronasal and intranasal*

- Doses for infection via oronasal inoculation were ≤10 HAU for approximately 8-week runts (smallest or weakest of the litter at birth).<sup>11</sup>
- For genotype I strains, Malta'78, and Netherlands'86, the ID<sub>50</sub> was estimated to be ≤ 3.5 log<sub>10</sub> TCID<sub>50</sub> units by intranasal inoculation, while the median lethal dose (LD<sub>50</sub>) was estimated to be ≥ 3.5 log<sub>10</sub> TCID<sub>50</sub> units.<sup>12</sup> Another genotype I strain, Brazil'78, has a reported ID<sub>50</sub> of -0.25 log<sub>10</sub> TCID<sub>50</sub> units.<sup>12</sup>

**European wild boar can acquire ASFV infection after exposure via multiple routes.**

- Studies in wild boars of various ages (9 weeks-10 years) with a genotype II strain was equally lethal at high doses by oral and intramuscular inoculation, suggesting an infectious dose ~10<sup>6</sup> TCID<sub>50</sub> units.<sup>13-14</sup> Lower ranges still need to be defined.
- Doses for infection via oronasal inoculation were ≤10 HAU for approximately 4-month-old runts.<sup>11</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- What are the infectious doses for different breeds of pigs, specifically domestic U.S. breeds

to genotype II strains? Outside of pig production facilities, there are many small farms with various specialty breeds; do these different breeds have the same susceptibility or possess any immunity to genotype II strains?

- What are the differences in infectious dose for various ages of wild boar or warthogs?
- Which infectious dosage and route have relevance to natural disease transmission and best inform policy?

### Transmissibility

How does it spread from one host to another? How easily is it spread?

### What do we know?

**ASFV can spread between swine by direct or indirect contact, as well as through vectors such as soft-bodied ticks.**

- Transmission can occur through:
  - o Direct contact with blood, feces, and oronasal excretions,<sup>11, 13-16</sup> including contact between infected and susceptible wild or domestic pigs;<sup>15, 17-19</sup>
  - o Ingestion of contaminated pig products;<sup>4, 20-21</sup>
  - o Indirect contact through people, vehicles,<sup>22</sup> fomites (e.g., virus transported on shoes, tools, or PPE), aerosols,<sup>23</sup> and contaminated pork products;<sup>15, 24-27</sup>
  - o Limited transplacental transmission;<sup>28-30</sup>
  - o Vector transmission by ticks in the genus *Ornithodoros*;<sup>31-38</sup>
  - o And through ingestion of infectious stable flies (*Stomoxys calcitrans*).<sup>39-42</sup>
- Transmission among soft ticks can occur through many routes of transmission and some can preserve the virus for years.<sup>43</sup> However, their role in the current epidemic is questionable as they do not appear to be involved in transmission over long distances.<sup>44</sup>
- There is no evidence that mosquitoes play a role in ASFV transmission.<sup>45-46</sup>

**ASFV is highly transmissible, with infected domestic swine each infecting an average of 2.8 other individuals sharing a pen (this is the basic reproduction number or  $R_0$ ), although this varies by genotype.<sup>17</sup> ASFV is less transmissible than foot and mouth disease in swine.<sup>47</sup>**

### Evidence-based

- The estimated  $R_0$  for genotype I virus can vary from 1.54 – 18<sup>48 49</sup>.
- The estimated  $R_0$  of genotype II virus can vary from 0.68 – 2.8 within pens and 0.82 – 2.13 between animals in adjacent pens<sup>17, 50-51</sup>
- Aerosol transmission between an infectious pig and a nearby healthy pig with no direct contact is possible, but the role of aerosol transmission in outbreaks is not well-established.<sup>23, 52</sup>
- Animals that recover from initial infection remain persistent carriers, with evidence suggesting they could transmit the virus, including asymptotically, up to 70 dpi.<sup>12, 53-55</sup>

### Model-based

- It is not known what an outbreak in the U.S. would look like but various models have been built to predict outbreak dynamics.<sup>56-61</sup>

- Utilization of field data to create a mathematical model for transmission in Vietnamese pig farms estimated  $R_0$  values of 1.49 (1.05-2.21), 1.58 (0.92-2.56), and 1.46 (1.38-1.57) based on the exponential growth, maximum likelihood, and attack rate methods, respectively. This modeling also suggests that a 80% vaccination rate is necessary to prevent spread of disease.<sup>62</sup>
- Further studies to evaluate the  $R_0$  in Vietnam between farms using indoor production facilities determined a range of 1.41-10.8 depending on the infectious period of 15, 19, or 30 days.<sup>63</sup>
- A study that similarly used field data to create a model for outbreaks in Lao People's Democratic Republic estimated the  $R_0$  to be between 3.08 and 7.80, with transmission rates ranging from 1.10 to 1.66.<sup>64</sup> To effectively inhibit ASF outbreaks, pig movements between farms need to be reduced by 50-75%.<sup>65</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- Is there a threshold for virus or time necessary to transmit between domestic pigs?
- In the wild boar and feral swine population, how long can the transmission chain extend?
- How much are ticks and other vectors involved in transmission in pig farms and among wild boar?<sup>45, 66-67</sup>
- What is known about the presence of ASFV-competent tick vectors in the United States?
- To what extent do scavengers play a role in transmission?<sup>18-19, 68</sup>

#### Susceptible Species and Vectors

##### How many species does it infect? Can it transfer from species to species?

##### What do we know?

ASFV is native to Africa, where hosts include warthogs (*Phacochoerus* spp.) and bush pigs (*Potamochoerus* spp.).<sup>69</sup> Neither warthogs nor bush pigs exhibit clinical disease signs.<sup>69</sup> Outside of Africa, domestic pigs (*Sus scrofa domesticus*),<sup>70</sup> wild bearded pigs (*Sus barbatus*) in Borneo,<sup>71</sup> Sulawesi warty pig (*Sus celebensis*) in Asia,<sup>71</sup> and wild boar/feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*)<sup>70</sup> are non-native hosts that can acquire fatal illness.

- Peccaries are thought to be relatively resistant to ASFV,<sup>72-73</sup> but additional work is required to characterize them as a potential reservoir in the United States.
- Along with warthogs (*Phacochoerus africanus*) and bushpigs (*Patamochoerus larvatus*), red river hogs (*Patamochoerus porcus*) can be infected with ASFV and not display any clinical signs, and act as natural reservoir hosts.<sup>74</sup> African warthogs were imported into Texas for hunting purposes, escaped captivity, are reproducing in Texas, and have the potential to become infected without clinical signs. These animals along with tick vectors could create a setting conducive to endemic ASFV transmission.<sup>75</sup>
- There is currently no evidence that non-suid mammals act as a reservoir for ASFV.<sup>10, 76-78</sup>

**Soft-bodied ticks (genus *Ornithodoros*) are a natural vector in Eastern Africa and Europe.<sup>79</sup> Ticks are required for transmission between warthogs, but not between domestic and/or feral pigs.<sup>76</sup>**

- In the United States, there are at least three species of potentially competent tick vectors (*Ornithodoros coriaceus*, *Ornithodoros turicata*, and *Ornithodoros puertoricensis*).<sup>76, 80</sup> In one study from 1987, *Ornithodoros coriaceus* collected in California were shown to harbor and transmit ASFV for more than 440 days, but resulted in 40% of ticks dying and trans-ovarial passage was not demonstrated. *Ornithodoros turicata* collected in Florida were shown to

transmit ASFV to pigs 23 days post feeding. *Ornithodoros puertoricensis* collected in the Dominican Republic and Haiti were shown to become infected and transmit ASFV to pigs up to 239 days post feeding and trans-ovarial transmission was demonstrated.<sup>81</sup>

- Three *Ornithodoros* species of ticks native to the United States have been identified as possible vectors of ASFV; *O. coriaceus*, *O. turicata*, and *O. puertoricensis*. These species, combined with three competent vertebrate hosts, domestic pigs (*Sus scrofa domesticus*), feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*), and common warthogs (*Phacochoerus africanus*), could lead to outbreaks in the United States if the virus is introduced.<sup>76, 82-84</sup>
- Different tick species within *Ornithodoros* appear to have different capacities to transmit individual strains of ASFV.<sup>33</sup> The ASFV Uganda strain has an extremely low infectious dose in 70-75% of *Ornithodoros moubata porcinus* ticks of  $10^{0.9}$ - $10^4$  HAD<sub>50</sub>, with persistence of virus in the tick for 15 months. In contrast, the ASFV Tangani strain only produced a persistent infection in 5% of these ticks and required  $10^4$ - $10^5$  HAD<sub>50</sub>.<sup>36</sup>
- There is no evidence that ASFV can replicate in hard ticks or that hard ticks can transmit ASFV.<sup>85 45</sup>

#### There is limited evidence for transmission via non-tick vectors.

- The stable fly (*Stomoxys calcitrans*)<sup>39-40</sup> has been linked to transmission, and has been demonstrated under experimental conditions when pigs eat flies that have fed on infected blood within 24 hours.<sup>86</sup>
- ASFV was not detected in *Culicoides punctatus*, *Obsoletus* biting midges, mosquitoes (*Aedes* spp., *Anopheles* spp., *Culiseta annulata*), or *Haematopota pluvialis* tabanid beetles collected from wild boar habits, suggesting they do not contribute to ASFV transmission.<sup>45</sup>
- ASFV DNA was detected in *Stomoxys calcitrans* and *Culicoides* spp. collected from locations experiencing outbreaks in domestic pigs. It was not confirmed if infectious virus was also present.<sup>87</sup> ASFV DNA was also detected in several families of non-biting flies (*Calliphoridae*, *Sarcophagidae*, *Fanniidae*, *Drosophilidae*, and *Muscidae*) in locations experiencing outbreaks in domestic pigs. It was not confirmed if infectious virus was also present.<sup>42</sup>
- Under experimental conditions, an ASFV genotype II strain could survive in leeches and could be transmitted to pigs that consumed the leeches and water contaminated by the infected leeches; however, it remains unclear how leeches may contribute to natural spread of ASFV.<sup>88-89</sup>
- Under experimental conditions, ASFV could survive in nine gastropod (snail) species, and all but two of these species extended the circulation of the virus when compared to the virus in water without gastropods. While this study did acknowledge that gastropods are a part of the diet of wild and free-grazing domesticated pigs, they did not provide supporting evidence that the gastropods could directly cause infection through ingestion.<sup>90</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- What are the tissue tropism and infection dynamics in different host and carrier species?
- What is the vector competence of U.S. vector species (e.g., *Otobius megnini*, *Ornithodoros lagophilus*, *Ornithodoros kelleyi*, *O. coriaceus*, *O. turicata*, *O. puertoricensis*)? Has transmission from parent to offspring been demonstrated in these tick species?
- How often do soft-bodied ticks interact with domestic and feral swine in the United States?
- What are the preferred mammalian hosts for the U.S. soft tick species that are competent for



ASFV?

- Do potential vectors such as flies and leeches contribute to natural spread of ASFV?<sup>86, 89, 91</sup>

### Incubation Period

**How long after infection do symptoms appear? Are animals infectious during this time?**

#### What do we know?

**In natural infections, the time from exposure to development of clinical signs ranges from 3-21 days; domestic and wild swine have incubation periods around 15 days.**<sup>72, 92</sup>

- Less virulent strains produce mild signs, while more virulent strains have a shorter incubation period (around 3 days) and may result in death before clinical signs are observed.<sup>72, 93</sup>
- Pigs experimentally infected with a highly virulent I ASFV isolate shed infectious virus before the onset of clinical signs, and were generally infectious for 3-7 days overall.<sup>17</sup> The latent infection period (onset of infectiousness) showed a median of 4.5 days.<sup>64, 94</sup>
- For genotype II, the latent period averaged at 3.6 days by blood titration detection, but follows closely with the incubation period, with animals having detectable virus in their blood just prior to or immediately following the onset of fever, and they can remain infectious at a minimum of 1-6 days during acute infection.<sup>6, 64</sup>

**In experimental studies, the incubation period depends on exposure dose, exposure route, and virus strain, but clinical signs generally occur within 4 days, with a wide range of 1-28 days.**<sup>6-7, 52, 54, 95-99</sup>

- For genotype II strains, clinical illness can last 6.3 days on average (range 0-18), indicating that death can be rapid in experimentally infected individuals.<sup>100</sup> The duration of infectiousness is broad, ranging from 1-40 days, depending on the virulence of the ASFV strain.<sup>6, 48, 100</sup>
- The incubation period for genotype II strains, with swine experimentally inoculated by various routes, is approximately 4 days with a range of 1-28 days.<sup>6-7, 95, 98-101</sup>
- Like domesticated pigs, the incubation period was variable and dependent on exposure location, dose, and animal age. In general, incubation periods in wild boars ranged from 11 days to 4 weeks.<sup>102</sup> [An experiment by another team indicated that wild boars exposed to a genotype II strain intranasally had shorter incubation periods \(4 days\) when compared to infected domestic pigs \(7 days\).](#)<sup>103</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- Are incubation periods genotype-dependent? Are there some strains with longer incubation periods than others, and are animals infected with these strains contagious prior to the presence of clinical signs?
- What are the incubation periods for wild boar and warthogs for genotypes and strains of ASFV that have not yet been tested, and does the onset of infection correlate with that timeline or vary based on the animal?

### Clinical Presentation

**What are the signs and symptoms of an infected animal?**

#### What do we know?

**Clinical signs include fever, loss of appetite, dull/depressed attitude, red/purple skin lesions, respiratory distress, vomiting/diarrhea/bloody diarrhea, high mortality, sudden death, and abortion.**<sup>93</sup>



- There are 24 known ASFV genotypes, and clinical presentation may differ for these genotypes.<sup>104</sup>
- Depending on the virulence of the isolate, pigs can develop different clinical forms of disease that are distinctly described as peracute, acute, subacute, and chronic.<sup>72, 93, 104-106</sup>
- Clinical signs also vary depending on age,<sup>107</sup> breed, route of exposure, and whether the virus is endemic to the region.<sup>72, 93</sup> Clinical symptoms in several individuals may need to be observed before clinical diagnosis is pursued.<sup>108</sup>

#### ***Peracute Clinical Form***

- Clinical signs of peracute infection occur within 3-7 days and include high fever (40.5-42°C), loss of appetite, hemorrhage, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, abortion, and inactivity.<sup>72, 108-110</sup> Swine may die before onset of clinical signs.<sup>72, 74, 93, 109-111</sup>

#### ***Acute Clinical Form***

- Clinical signs of acute infection tend to appear after 3-7 days and include fever, lack of appetite, increased respiratory rate, and weakness or depression.<sup>103, 109, 111</sup> Other signs include hemorrhages or blue-purple spots on ears,<sup>110</sup> abdomen, and/or hind legs; ocular/nasal discharge; reddening or necrosis of skin; vomiting/constipation/diarrhea; and abortion in pregnant sows.<sup>93</sup>
- Death may occur as early as 6 days (highly virulent strains) or up to 20 days (moderately virulent strains).<sup>93, 103, 110, 112-113</sup>

#### ***Subacute Clinical Form***

- Clinical signs of subacute infection are similar to acute infection, but are generally less severe and may show initially as prodromal signs of fever, apathy, and reduced feed intake and may also include swollen joints and fluctuating fever.<sup>7</sup>
- Duration of illness can be 5-30 days.<sup>110</sup> Subacute infections may be found in endemic areas, with mortality ranging from 30-70%, with some dependence on age of population, and death occurring within 7-45 days.<sup>74, 93, 110</sup>
- Infection with an attenuated strain can produce a mild or subclinical disease.<sup>114</sup>

#### ***Chronic Clinical Form***

- Chronic infection is generally caused by low-virulence isolates that do not immediately kill the host.<sup>115</sup>
- Clinical signs of chronic ASF occur 14-21 dpi.<sup>93</sup> Chronic infections have variable, mild clinical signs, complicated diagnoses, and develop over 2-15 months.<sup>109-110</sup> Survivors may carry the virus for life.<sup>110</sup>

#### **Morbidity is high for all forms of disease; mortality rates vary, but can reach 100% in peracute/acute infections.**<sup>72, 93</sup>

- Lethality ranges from <20% in chronic forms to 30-70% in subacute forms, and up to 100% overall.<sup>92-93, 110, 103, 111</sup>
- All members of the pig family are thought to be susceptible to infection; however, African wild pigs, warthogs, and bush pigs, are frequently asymptomatic carriers of ASFV.<sup>72, 93, 110</sup> Warthogs exhibit transient viremia, but the mechanisms of tolerance are not well understood.<sup>116</sup> Early historical accounts indicate that peccaries (*Tayassu* spp., also called javelinas), pig-like animals similar to warthogs, may be resistant.<sup>72-73</sup>

**What do we need to know?**

- Variable presentation of clinical signs complicates diagnosis. What signs can be used for early detection?<sup>35</sup>
- Are warthogs able to clear virus without showing clinical signs, or do they tolerate viremia without clinical signs?

**Biosurveillance and Clinical Diagnosis****Are there tools to diagnose infected animals and herds?****What do we know?**

**The United States has ongoing efforts in place to continuously monitor for ASFV to protect U.S. swine against the virus. A protection zone with increased surveillance, biosecurity, and sanitary policies was established for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to minimize the risk of ASFV spread to the continental U.S. due to detection in Hispaniola in 2021.<sup>72</sup>**

- The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness & Response Plan (FAD PReP) sets guidelines for surveillance and biosecurity of ASFV.<sup>72</sup>
- Passive surveillance is ongoing in the United States for swine and relies on laboratory personnel, veterinarians, swine producers, or other stakeholders' suspicion of a case of ASF.<sup>72</sup> Suspected cases are reported to local, state, and Federal animal health officials, after which samples are collected by a FAD Diagnostician.<sup>117</sup>
- Active surveillance (the routine collection of whole blood and serum samples from healthy animals) occurs in Florida, Texas, Georgia, Louisiana, New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands as these areas have been identified to have a higher risk of introduction than swine in other areas.<sup>118</sup>

**There is currently no global biosurveillance framework for ASFV.**

- There are four WOA reference laboratories for ASFV: CSIRO Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (Geelong, AU), Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (Onderstepoort, S. Africa), Centro de Vigilancia Sanitaria Veterinaria (VISVET) (Madrid, Spain), and Pirbright Institute (Surrey, UK).

**Symptoms of ASF are similar to other pig diseases such as CSF and necessitate diagnostic tests.<sup>110</sup> ASF should be considered in swine with febrile disease, disseminated hemorrhage, and high mortality.**

- Clinical signs of acute disease cannot be used to distinguish ASF from CSF and other pig diseases that have similar clinical presentation and mortality rates; laboratory tests are needed for a definitive diagnosis.<sup>93, 110</sup>
- Differential diagnosis should include CSF and porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, porcine dermatitis and nephropathy syndrome, erysipelas, Aujeszky's disease, salmonellosis, other septicemic conditions, and poisoning.<sup>72, 93</sup>
- Clinical evidence can be non-specific, so active surveillance should be based on rapid diagnostic testing.<sup>109, 119</sup> Testing should include a combination of both virus and antibody tests to provide serological and virological differentiation, as animals may be in different stages of disease.<sup>93, 119</sup>
- In the case of acute infection, death may occur before antibodies are produced.<sup>109</sup> Blood sampling, for both PCR and serological analyses, is essential for the accurate diagnosis of

ASF and provides the highest probability of detection of the disease.<sup>120</sup> While not common, a few naturally occurring non-hemadsorbing strains (i.e., strains that do not attract red blood cells) exist that produce acute infection.<sup>121</sup>

### **Rapid ASFV detection methods are being researched to improve early detection and response.<sup>122-125</sup>**

- PCR is the most sensitive technique and can detect ASFV DNA at early stages of infection (3-4 days post-infection).<sup>110</sup> ELISA can detect antibodies 7-14 dpi, with utility for confirmation of clinical cases;<sup>110</sup> antibodies may last for months to years.<sup>70, 119</sup> [Commercially available ELISA, lateral flow, and PCR kits are available for use with blood, serum, and oral fluids from pigs, but some may not be available in the U.S.<sup>125-128</sup>](#)
- ASFV genome and antibodies are detectable in meat exudate and provide an alternative method for disease surveillance.<sup>129</sup>

### **What do we need to know?**

- What biosurveillance systems can be implemented in endemic areas?<sup>130</sup>
- Should *Ornithodoros* species-specific surveillance occur throughout the United States to monitor ASFV presence?<sup>131</sup>
- How can diagnostics be improved to overcome current short-comings?<sup>70</sup>

### **Veterinary Medical Countermeasures**

#### **Are there effective vaccines and treatments to limit or prevent infection and/or spread?**

#### **What do we know?**

**There is no approved treatment method for ASF for use in the United States.**

- To prevent the spread of disease, the United States' response plan includes containment of infected populations by quarantine and movement controls, tracing and surveillance, and depopulation.<sup>72</sup>

**There is not an approved vaccine for use in the U.S. Several vaccine candidates have been tested and some approved for use outside of the U.S., including inactivated vaccines, live attenuated vaccines, and subunit vaccines, but protection and side effects vary.**

#### ***Inactivated Vaccines***

- Inactivated ASFV vaccines have not demonstrated protection.<sup>132-135</sup>

#### ***Attenuated Vaccines***

- Researchers with USDA Agricultural Research Service have recently identified a promising deletion mutant live attenuated vaccine NAVET-ASFVAC, which is produced using the Georgia 07 isolate (a genotype II ASFV) ASFV-G-ΔI177L strain. It is the first commercially available ASF vaccine in the world and has been approved for domestic commercial use in Vietnam.<sup>135-136 137 138</sup> A drawback to this vaccine is that it does not allow differentiation of infected from vaccinated animals (DIVA). This vaccine is the same as virulent ASFV except for the deleted I177L gene.<sup>137-138</sup> This vaccine passed a test in April 2022 confirming that the virus does not undergo a reversion to virulence, which is required for regulatory approval.<sup>139</sup>
- Live, attenuated vaccines (LAVs) have had some success at protecting pigs from subsequent challenge,<sup>95, 140-146</sup> though this protection does not usually extend to other ASFV strains.<sup>147-148</sup> LAVs can spread the virus to other pigs and cause chronic ASF that later regains virulence or limiting fertility.<sup>149-150</sup>

- Real-time PCR assays (qPCR) have been developed that detect the difference between infected and pigs vaccinated with three recombinant live, attenuated vaccine candidates.<sup>151</sup> Research on DIVA through PCR and ELISA-based methods are ongoing.<sup>152-153</sup>

### Subunit Vaccines

- Protein subunit vaccines, which help generate antibodies, have shown some protective efficacy against ASFV,<sup>154-156</sup> though the effects are not universal.<sup>157-158</sup>
- Other subunit vaccines, delivered by viral, bacterial, or plasmid vectors have also been developed,<sup>149</sup> and have granted either no,<sup>159-161,162</sup> partial,<sup>160, 163</sup> or robust<sup>164</sup> protection from ASFV. Similarly, vaccines based on DNA constructs also exhibit variable protective efficacy, and efficacy is dependent on the virulence of the ASFV challenge virus.<sup>165-168</sup>
- There has been some evidence of vaccine-induced disease enhancement, where vaccinated pigs have developed more severe disease upon secondary challenge.<sup>166, 168</sup>

### WOAH warns against risks associated with using poor quality or non-compliant vaccines<sup>169</sup>

- Poor quality vaccines do not convey protection but could also lead to recombination with field strains to generate novel strains.<sup>169</sup>
- WOAH warns that even with efficacious vaccines, vaccination alone is not a sufficient disease control measure. Rather, vaccines are part of a robust prevention program that includes vaccinations, strict biosecurity measures, and importation and movement controls.<sup>169</sup>

### What do we need to know?

- What factors contribute to vaccine or immune-mediated disease enhancement?
- What factors contribute to the lack of protective efficacy among challenge strains?
- Can antibodies limit viral load and transmission potential in treated swine?<sup>170</sup>
- Are there treatments/interventions that could be implemented prior to the onset of clinical signs to prevent culling of herds?
- Can alternatives to ASFV challenge experiments for determining vaccine efficacy be created?<sup>171</sup>
- What are the barriers for designing a test for DIVA?<sup>108</sup>
- Are there treatments that reduce transmission potential in already-infected swine?

### Virus Introduction and Spread

#### What are the risks of the virus entering the United States through agricultural/food vectors?

### What do we know?

In 2021, ASFV was detected in the Dominican Republic and has since spread throughout the country and to neighboring Haiti.<sup>99</sup> According to WOA, the outbreak is ongoing as of 04 December 2024.<sup>172</sup>

- As of 04 December 2024, ASFV has never been detected in the United States, however the presence of ASFV in the Caribbean is concerning.
- In response to the detection of ASFV in the Dominican Republic, USDA APHIS suspended interstate movement of all swine and swine products from U.S. territories, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands due to their proximity to the United States, as well as passenger and



trade movements with the Dominican Republic, until mitigation efforts were instated.<sup>173</sup> A FAD protection zone was established around Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The USDA also enhanced ASF surveillance in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, combined sampling and testing for CSF with ASF, and continued efforts to remove feral swine in Puerto Rico. Finally, continued efforts between the USDA and CBP include increased inspections of flights from the Dominican Republic to ensure proper disposal of garbage to reduce the risk of ASFV importation.<sup>173</sup>

**Infected animals are the primary source of ASFV, but infection can occur via ingestion of waste food that contains infected pig meat products or unprocessed pig meat. Routes of concern are legal and illegal entry of infected animals and animal products or intentional release of ASFV.**<sup>131</sup>

- There is a risk of viral incursion via pathways that may include live pigs, semen, swine products/by-products, wildlife, feed (animal and plant origin; supplements), fomites, and regulated garbage. A qualitative assessment of the likelihood of ASFV entry into the United States determined that illegal entry of products/by-products through air passenger baggage and foreign mail is the largest potential pathway. The risk is considered to be high, with low uncertainty.<sup>72, 174</sup>

**Human-mediated import likely contributed to the spread of ASFV in Europe and elsewhere, possibly through illegal importation of infected meat, hunting tourism, or fomites associated with farmers, farming professionals, and importation of bedding.**<sup>175</sup>

- It is estimated that limited travel and decreased restaurant food waste due to COVID-19 has reduced ASFV importation in Japan, as the illegal importation of pig products to meet tourism needs is the largest potential for ASFV entry into Japan.<sup>176</sup>
- While there is a decreasing trend of legal imports in swine products and by-products into the United States from ASFV affected countries, there has been no change in the amount of confiscated illegal products from ASFV affected countries at ports of entry. There has been an increase in the monthly number of merchant ships and value of imported goods and percentage of commercial flights from ASFV affected countries.<sup>177</sup> It is estimated that >90% of the risk from ASFV importation via air travel involves five airports from China and eastern European countries.<sup>178</sup>
- Illegal entry of pork, ham, and sausage products is a potential pathway for introducing ASFV.<sup>174</sup> Although fomites and feed ingredients are potential pathways, there are minimal data on transmission.<sup>179-180</sup>
- A recent assessment determined that in 2020, moderate- and high-risk ingredients from ASFV-positive countries represented 3.1% of all ingredients imported into the U.S.<sup>181</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- What is the stability of infectious virus on fomites (e.g., on footwear)?<sup>108</sup>
- How much contaminated meat would a pig need to eat to become infected, and would the strain of ASFV (virulence, infectivity) impact the viability of introducing the disease to an endemic area (i.e., would one or two pigs eating the material be enough to introduce the disease to a swine population)?
- How can the risk of transmission via fomites (e.g., food baths, cargo hold fogging) or passenger travel (e.g., public education, signage) be reduced?
- What is the prevalence of ASFV in circulating swine products?

- What is the prevalence of ASFV in seized/illegal/non-permitted pork products at U.S. ports of entry?

### Viral Persistence and Environmental Stability How long does the agent live in the environment?

#### What do we know?

**ASFV has high environmental resistance and can be transmitted via fomites including shoes, clothes, vehicles, glass, metal, rubber, paper, boards, bricks, and equipment.<sup>26, 182-183</sup> Of note, infection of domestic pigs via fomites is not well characterized.<sup>20</sup>**

- Dried ASFV persists on non-porous and porous fomites at 42°C, 33°C, and 25°C for 1–2, 6-12, and 11-17 days, respectively.<sup>26</sup>
- In one experiment, ASFV remained at a detectable level as determined by hemadsorption units in water for three weeks at 22 – 24°C, while genomic DNA was detected for up to five weeks.<sup>90</sup>

**ASFV is stable in raw and processed pork/meat products, showing viability from 16-155 days in room and chilled temperatures; frozen products have shown ASFV viability from 103-118 days, with estimates as long as 1,000 days.<sup>15, 51, 184</sup>**

- ASFV is viable in blood, feces, and tissues, including pork products that are uncooked/undercooked. The virus is highly resistant to temperature and pH fluctuations,<sup>72, 109</sup> and is extremely stable at low temperatures.<sup>184</sup>
- In unprocessed pig meat, the virus is stable for weeks to months;<sup>15</sup> heating to 70°C for 30 minutes destroys the virus.<sup>109</sup> Stability in salted and smoked/cured meats ranges have been reported from 30-399 days.<sup>15, 184</sup> *In vivo* experiments showed detection in Italian salami, pork belly, and loin, up to 18, 60, and 83 days, respectively.<sup>185</sup>

**Infectious virus can be shed and detected in urine and feces for approximately 2 weeks, depending on environmental temperature. Excretions should be considered a viable pathway for transmission.<sup>186</sup>**

- Of biological samples collected 5 dpi, feces were the least sensitive for ASFV detection in subclinical infections, whereas splenic homogenate was the most sensitive. From highest to lowest, the probability of detecting ASFV in these samples was: spleen > lymph node > tonsil > serum > feces.<sup>187</sup>

**Stability of ASFV within carcasses and potential contamination of surrounding area varies by environmental conditions (temperature, time, soil type) and disposal method.<sup>188-190</sup>**

- Biosecure carcass disposal remains a high priority due to assumed high viral stability and loads in infected carcasses.<sup>191</sup> In one study in Lithuania, ASFV genome was detectable in previously buried wild boar carcasses up to 440 days post-burial, although infectious ASFV could not be isolated.<sup>192</sup> Using an Estonian 2014 isolate, another study suggests that infected carcasses may remain infectious for nearly 2 years.<sup>193</sup>

**ASFV is stable in animal feed (half-life of 2-14 days),<sup>194-195</sup> which is a potential route of transmission.**

- Feed trucks have been implicated as a potential mechanical fomites capable of spreading ASFV to production sites, as they were commonly detected as PCR positive for ASFV in one study.<sup>180</sup>
- Although spray-drying of infected porcine plasma can inactivate ASFV (a laboratory spray



drying process reduced infectious ASFV by  $2.11 \log_{10}$  TCID<sub>50</sub>/mL),<sup>196</sup> spray-dried porcine plasma dietary supplements experimentally contaminated with ASFV maintained infectivity for 5 weeks at 4°C. A  $> 5.7 \log_{10}$  loss was observed when the supplements were stored at 21°C for 2 weeks.<sup>197</sup>

- The stability of ASFV varies depending on feed matrices and storage temperature.<sup>195</sup> Infectious ASFV was most stable in soybean meal, and found to retain infectivity for at least 112 days at 40°F, at least 21 days at 68°F, and at least 7 days at 95°F.<sup>21</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- What is the stability of ASFV in agricultural or transportation settings and what are suggested hold times for ASFV degradation on commonly used farm equipment?
- What is the stability of ASFV in hydrolyzed proteins, gelatin, collagen, calcium phosphate, and rendered fats?<sup>198</sup>
- What considerations should be given to handling and transportation of feed related products under unknown conditions?
- Does rendering or other manufacturing activities decrease amount of or inactivate ASFV and is this process dependent?
- Is it beneficial in a domestic setting to till the contaminated soil with some type of pH modifying agent?<sup>188</sup>

#### Environmental Detection

##### What methods are available for detecting the agent in the environment?

##### What do we know?

**Rapid ASFV detection methods are being researched to improve early detection and response including in environmental samples.**<sup>122-124, 199</sup>

- PCR is the gold standard for the detection of ASFV,<sup>200</sup> with both real time PCR (rtPCR)<sup>2, 180, 200-201 202-203</sup> and quantitative PCR (qPCR)<sup>204-205</sup> used for environmental detection. qPCR testing for environmental DNA (eDNA) can be performed to detect viral DNA in water and soil samples;<sup>204</sup> however, qPCR can sometimes lead to false negatives in low viral load or environmental samples. Droplet digital PCR (ddPCR) is a third generation PCR technique that can be used for ASFV and has a detection limit of 1.97 copies/reaction, which is 19 times more sensitive than qPCR.<sup>205</sup> Other near-field-based testing using amplification of nucleic acid such as loop-mediated isothermal amplification or recombinase polymerase amplification (RPA) can also be used.<sup>203206</sup>
- Detecting infectious virus in the environment can be achieved by performing virus isolation followed by hemadsorption tests; however, some ASFV is non-hemadsorbing. Virus isolation must be performed in a Biosafety Level 3 laboratory in non-endemic countries.<sup>2, 150</sup>
- Environmental sampling presents challenges of low concentration as well as microbial or organic contaminants naturally existing in soil or on farm surfaces, which can degrade viral nucleic acid. Ongoing research is focused on environmental detection sampling techniques for increased sensitivity, including pre-moistened sample collection swabs or sponges, inactivation of detection inhibitors, as well as improved eluants.<sup>199, 201-202</sup>
- Rapid diagnostic point-of-care tests for animal disease diagnosis from animal blood or tissue exist, but caution must be taken as most field diagnostic kits are not made for environmental sampling or even testing animal samples from carcasses.<sup>207</sup> Recently commercial rapid detection kits for environmental sampling have become available, including kits from RingBio, Flashtest, and TianLong.<sup>208-210</sup>

- There are multiple field-deployable genetic tests to detect ASFV under study, including MatMaCorp's portable ASFV detection system.<sup>211-213</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- Can methods other than virus isolation be used to detect infectious virus?
- At what level would genetic material detection in the environment be relevant to spread/transmission of ASFV?

#### What do we need to know?

##### Decontamination

#### What are effective methods to kill the agent in the environment?

##### What do we know?

**When decontaminating ASFV, the first course of action recommended is use of disinfectants listed by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Section 3 labels claims for use against ASFV, which are registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).<sup>214</sup>**

- If a suitable commercially available EPA and state-registered disinfectant is unavailable, a disinfectant approved for use against ASFV under Section 18 of FIFRA (i.e., a Section 18 disinfectant) be used according to its Section 18 label. The labels and EPA approval letters from the current Section 18 exemptions are available online from APHIS.<sup>214</sup>

**The use of effective disinfectants for cleaning infected premises, trucks, and fomites is an important measure for preventing spread of ASFV to new areas. Care should be taken to use a disinfectant specifically approved for ASFV.**

- In an agricultural setting and for the disinfection of transportation vehicles the recommended decontamination options are Virkon S (10 minutes), Neogen Viroxide Super (10 minutes), Clearon Bleach Tablets (30 minutes), Virocid (10 minutes), Klor-Kleen (30 minutes), Klorsept (30 minutes), Klorkleen 2 (30 minutes), and Accel Concentrate Disinfectant Cleaner (5 minutes).<sup>214</sup> This efficacy may be improved by allowing farms to remain empty for 1 to 2 weeks.<sup>215</sup>
- Additional disinfectants listed under FIFRA Section 18 for use when registered disinfectants are not available include: sodium hypochlorite (15 minutes non-porous, 30 minutes porous), citric acid (15 minutes non-porous, 30 minutes porous), and Benefact (15 minutes on non-porous surfaces inside and outside aircraft).<sup>214</sup>

**ASFV is stable at low temperatures and survives freezing. However, it can be heat inactivated at 56°C for 70 minutes or 60°C for 20 minutes. ASFV can be inactivated at pH 11.5 in serum-free medium. Serum increases the resistance of the virus (e.g., at pH 13.4, resistance lasts up to 21 hours without serum, and 7 days with serum).<sup>72, 92, 184, 216</sup>**

- A detailed decontamination table with benefits and limitations of multiple methods is available from USDA APHIS<sup>217</sup> or from The European Cooperation in Science and Technology.<sup>218</sup>
- Disinfection of feed products can be challenging; additives, heat inactivation, and strict adherence to storage guidelines can reduce ASFV contamination in animal feed. Strict adherence to storage processes is crucial to reduce virus contamination.<sup>198</sup> Heat treatments (30 minutes at 70°C; 5 minutes at 85°C) increase viral decay and reduce the risk of contamination in feed.<sup>219</sup>
- Ultraviolet-C (UV-C) treatment (at 3,000 J/L) and spray-drying can reduce up to 99.99% (4 log<sub>10</sub> TCID<sub>50</sub>/mL) ASFV in dried animal feed.<sup>196</sup> UV-C treatment of water-inactivated ASFV

after 30 minutes at 110-120  $\mu\text{W}/\text{cm}^2$  or within 3 seconds at 3,600  $\mu\text{W}/\text{cm}^2$ .<sup>220</sup>

**Other disinfectants have been evaluated in the literature but may not be registered or approved for use against ASFV.**<sup>92, 110, 215, 221-223</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- What variables are most important when deciding the best decontamination method for ASFV (i.e., cost or waste generated)?
- What are the risks of recontamination of animal feed post-processing or during transport?
- What are the inactivation kinetics of ASFV under various heat treatment conditions for different feed matrices?
- Current analytical methodologies have significant limitations in sensitivity, repeatability, ability to detect viable virus particles and association with infectivity. How can this be improved?<sup>224</sup>

#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

##### What PPE is effective and who should be using it?

##### What do we know?

**The guidance for PPE follows Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Level C, which covers most non-zoonotic FAD events and includes NIOSH-approved respirators, chemical resistant clothing, inner and outer gloves, and boots.**

- OSHA classifies PPE into four levels of protection. The levels range from D (lowest level of protection) to A (highest level). Most non-zoonotic FAD events, including ASFV, will require Level C protection for biosecurity, which provides standard contact and droplet precautions, which includes protection for the body, hand, foot, eye, face, head, hearing, and for the respiratory system, and should be chosen based on hazards. In most cases, protective equipment that can be cleaned and disinfected will be required. Respiratory protection will depend on the specific situation and environmental risks.<sup>72</sup>
- In addition to the zoonotic and biosecurity risks, other factors influence the selection of PPE that veterinary responders should wear, including:
  - o Tasks that individuals must perform and the extent of physical work involved.
  - o Physical conditions such as ambient temperature and relative humidity independent of the event.
  - o Amount of time PPE must provide the necessary level of protection.
  - o Classification of premises involved.<sup>225</sup>
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recommends having the following items when working with ASFV on a farm: one pair of quality gumboots that are easy to clean and disinfect, disposable biosecurity suit, waterproof suit (in cold and wet countries), safety glasses, overshoes or boot covers, examination gloves, plastic mat, buckets (three ), detergent, disinfectant (approved for ASFV), scrubbing brushes (two), refuse bags, biohazard bags), Ziplock bags, disinfectant wipes, and GPS device to record geocoordinates.<sup>93</sup>

**PPE guidelines will differ for various tasks associated with ASFV. For instance, the protection required for surveillance and depopulation could differ from the protection required for chemical decontamination, or for working on an infected or uninfected area.**<sup>72, 226-227</sup>

- Additional general (non-ASFV specific) information can be found in FAD PReP Standard Operating Procedures (SOP): Health and Safety/Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).<sup>225</sup>
- Though ASFV is not a threat to public health, responders may be exposed to other health hazards; prevention of adverse human health events related to emergency response efforts is extremely important. For general information, please see the National Animal Health Emergency Management System (NAHEMS) Guidelines: Health and Safety and NAHEMS Guidelines: Personal Protective Equipment. In an incident, refer any health and safety questions or concerns to the Safety Officer or other designated response official.<sup>225</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- What types of PPE efficiently reduce viral spread during remediation efforts yet are permissive to the tasks at hand?

#### Depopulation and Carcass Disposal

#### What are the most effective methods of depopulation and disposal of infected carcasses?

##### What do we know?

**Guidelines for the depopulation of animals set by the American Veterinary Medical Association must be followed when euthanizing swine.** <sup>228</sup> There are several methods for effective depopulation of confirmed or suspected ASFV-infected swine in an agricultural setting, including inhalant gases, penetrating or non-penetrating captive bolt, electrocution head to heart, veterinarian-administered anesthetic overdose, and in certain permitted circumstances, gunshot, ventilation shutdown or sodium nitrate.<sup>217</sup> Gunshot and penetrating bolts are biosecurity risks due to the possibility of blood contamination, but may be the only effective depopulation method in certain locations.

<sup>228 217</sup>

- The method and procedures used for depopulation will depend on available resources and the population dynamics of susceptible animals on the premises, which requires location-specific planning and preparation that is addressed in the FAD PReP/NAHEMS Guidelines and SOP: Mass Depopulation and Euthanasia (2011).<sup>225</sup>
- Farmers are encouraged to comply with reporting suspected ASF cases to minimize losses that could occur if an outbreak occurred, with economic compensation tailored to underlying socioeconomic considerations.<sup>108, 229</sup>

#### Carcass disposal and environmental regulations differ by setting and state.<sup>217</sup>

- A comprehensive list of approved methods and regulatory considerations is available from the U.S. Veterinary Compliance Assistance Group.<sup>230</sup>
- The authority in charge of carcass disposal regulations may vary by circumstance. If the disposal of carcasses is necessary beyond what is legally allowed, the competent authority must be contacted to approve plans.<sup>228</sup>
- [Composting of whole carcasses with a sustained windrow daily temperature  \$\geq 55^{\circ}\text{C}\$  inactivated infectious ASFV in samples from swine spleens within five days although viral DNA remains detectable for at least 28 days.](#)<sup>231</sup> [Horizontal grinders, typically used for vegetative debris, are being investigated as a way to increase the efficiency of composting carcasses on farms in less time.](#)<sup>232-233</sup>

#### Tools and SOPs for depopulation exist.<sup>234</sup>

- USDA APHIS maintains a Carcass Management Dashboard, which contains information on disposal options for planning or response purposes.<sup>217, 234</sup>



- NAHEMS guidelines/SOPs includes detailed activities that are essential to prepare for and manage an FAD outbreak.<sup>225</sup>
- To minimize transmission to domestic pigs through infected wild boar carcasses, especially in areas where free-range farming is practiced, wild boar carcasses should be identified and properly disposed of as quickly as possible.<sup>192, 235</sup>

#### What do we need to know?

- Are there other depopulation and disposal methods that would limit environmental viral transmission?
- Are there options for depopulation, disposal, and decontamination that take into account swine numbers, body weight, housing, handling, local environmental, or soil conditions? Are current techniques effective in killing the virus and preventing spread to the environment?
- Are there alternative methods that could be easily performed in resource-limited countries/regions that would still be effective?

#### Swine Wastewater Treatment Is on-farm wastewater a significant risk of transmission?

##### What do we know?

**There is minimal information about ASFV persistence in farm wastewater systems, though transmission via contaminated water (e.g., during seasonal rains) is suspected in several African communities.<sup>236</sup>**

- Studies have shown that highly pathogenic avian influenza RNA (another important agricultural pathogen) in wastewater can contaminate the water supply of nearby farms and households,<sup>237</sup> which is a potential route for ASFV, as organic material in wastewater can protect the virus from inactivation.<sup>235</sup> In fact, ASFV sequences were found in samples from a wastewater treatment plant in Spain.<sup>238</sup> ASFV was also detected in farming wastewater samples in China in late 2017 and early 2018, prior to initial ASFV reports.<sup>239</sup>
- Pig slurry can harbor ASFV for 84-112 days depending on temperature<sup>240</sup> and ASFV can survive in pig feces for 11 days at room temperature.<sup>241</sup>
- Contaminated water sources can harbor ASFV for 50-60 days, with colder temperatures facilitating persistence.<sup>242</sup>

**Chemical disinfectants and heat are able to inactivate ASFV in pig slurry,<sup>243</sup> though effectiveness in wastewater systems needs to be determined.**

- USDA APHIS provides guidance for decontamination in slurry, including heat (50°C for 24 hours or 60°C for 15 minutes) or 1% solutions of NaOH or Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> (for 5 minutes at 4°C).<sup>217</sup>
- In 2023, the U.S. EPA and APHIS published a report on the feasibility of management of swine lagoons (waste lagoons containing solid and liquid manure, rainwater, and wastewater storage) following ASF outbreak. While there are potential options, most are not possible or practical, such as chemical disinfection of the entire lagoon, UV treatment or heat treatment of the entire lagoon, thermophilic anaerobic digestion or AD (only if the farm already has an AD system in place), aeration, or physical structural containment of the lagoon. Overall, there is still minimal information and research on this topic.<sup>244</sup>
- Other studies are investigating the efficacy of treating wastewater with NaOH or Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub> in reducing the virus.<sup>245</sup> Heat as a method to inactivate the virus is also being investigated, with temperatures of 56°C for 90 seconds being shown to inactivate the virus.<sup>243</sup> Finally,

decontamination of wastewater with ozonated water is also being investigated.<sup>222</sup>

### What do we need to know?

- What are typical concentrations of ASFV in on-farm wastewater plants and can these values be used to conduct qualitative or quantitative risk assessment associated with the threat of wastewater plants in disease transmission and disease recovery?
- Does heat treatment of wastewater provide similar viral inactivation as heat treatment of pig slurry?
- What additional options are needed for effective treatment of wastewater to mitigate risk of viral spread?
- How long does ASFV persist in wastewater specifically, accounting for enhanced protein content compared to water?
- Do procedures such as aerobic thermophilic stabilization (i.e., liquid composting) or anaerobic digestion sufficiently inactivate ASFV in pig slurry?
- Are there ways to treat natural reservoirs near farms that may be a source of accumulating farm wastewater runoff that are not processed through wastewater treatment plants?

### Genomics

#### How do genotypes and strains of the virus compare to each other?

#### What do we know?

**ASFV is a large double-stranded DNA virus with a 170-180 kb genome,<sup>246</sup> and the sole member of its family (*Asfarviridae*).<sup>183</sup>**

- ASFV is endemic to Sub-Saharan Africa and was first identified in Kenya in 1921.<sup>70</sup>

**There are 24 known genotypes of ASFV, but only two (genotypes I and II) are outside the natural range in Africa.**

- There are currently 24 genotypes of ASFV based on the sequences of the p72 gene, with all 24 genotypes being present in Africa over time with genotypes I and II found outside of Africa.<sup>247</sup>
- African outbreaks of ASFV are associated with a highly diverse pool of viruses of multiple genotypes, even within relatively restricted geographies.<sup>248-255</sup>
- Genotypes are regularly identified in regions where they were previously thought to be absent, suggesting that many genotypes may have distributions encompassing most of Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>248, 250-252, 254-255</sup>
- Up until 2007, genotype I was the only ASFV strain to have spread beyond Africa. In 1957 genotype I was found in Lisbon, Portugal and subsequently spread.<sup>247</sup> A second outbreak in 1960 led to outbreaks into Spain, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy, Malta, the islands of Cuba and Hispaniola, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Brazil.<sup>247</sup> In September 2023, a genotype II outbreak was identified in an area in Italy historically affected by genotype I.<sup>256</sup>
- In June of 2007, ASFV was found in the country of Georgia that matched genotype II found in Africa. Since then, genotype II has diversified and spread to other areas including Europe and Asia.<sup>70, 247</sup> In 2021, ASFV was detected in the Dominican Republic and spread throughout the country and to neighboring Haiti.<sup>99</sup>

**The ASFV genome is variable in size and can include more than 150 distinct ORFs**



**encoding multiple proteins via the production of multiple transcripts from the same gene. The functions of some proteins are known, and several are involved in evasion of host defenses.**<sup>249, 257</sup>

- ASFV evolves faster than other large DNA viruses; its evolutionary rate is closer to that of some RNA viruses<sup>258</sup> with recombination playing a major role.<sup>249, 259</sup> While the major capsid protein involved in cell entry does not appear to be under selective pressure,<sup>260</sup> at least one immune evasion protein appears to be a hotspot for recombination,<sup>259</sup> suggesting diversification in the proteins responsible for evading the host immune system.
- Genomic analysis of genotype II strains over time show high overall identity between type II strains in different regions.<sup>261</sup> In fact, the globally circulating strain maintains > 99.9% sequence identity with the strain that emerged from Africa around 2007.<sup>250, 262-265</sup> Despite the similarity, *in vivo* studies have shown variability in virulence,<sup>266-269</sup> suggesting more work is needed to understand the genomic markers related to virulence.<sup>270-271</sup>

**Multiple genetic evaluations have shown that removal of specific genes reduces the virulence of the virus. However, changes and deletions of other genes allows the virus to still retain virulence.**<sup>150, 272</sup>

- Studies with virulence-associated genes of ASFV genotype II strains have shown the ability to attenuate the virus and provide protection to swine from homologous (same genotype) strains, providing an available approach for vaccine development.<sup>273-275</sup>
- Some studies indicated that deletion of target genes resulted in less dangerous ASFV strains. Of note: deletion of EP153R, EP402R and MGF\_360-12L-14L genes caused a decrease in pathogenicity, deletion of 11 genes within the MGF300 and MGF360 regions showed reduction in virulence compared to the parent strain, deletion of the H240R gene decreases infectious titer, deletion of the H108R gene resulted in a less virulent ASFV, and deletion of the E184L and DP148R genes resulted in reduced virulence and immune protection compared to non-deletion strains.<sup>276-279</sup>

#### **What do we need to know?**

- What is the true diversity of ASFV in Africa, and are there meaningful biological differences between genotypes that may have operational consequences?
- What is the probability of spread of other ASFV genotypes from Africa and how does evolution affect that probability?
- Are there any differences in sequence between viruses isolated from the main tick vector *Ornithodoros* and a similar genotype isolated from pigs or hogs?
- What are the range of host cell (swine macrophage) receptors?
- What are the functional genomics of ASFV proteins and how do they impact infection and disease presentation?

### Commonly Used Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym/Term	Definition	Description
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	N/A
ASF	African Swine Fever	Disease caused by ASFV
ASFV	African Swine Fever Virus	Causative agent of the disease African Swine Fever (ASF)
CBP	Customs and Border Protection	N/A
CSF	Classical Swine Fever	Disease caused by Classical Swine Fever Virus; virus is highly contagious in swine
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation	N/A
DHS S&T	U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate	N/A
DIVA	Differentiation of ASFV-Infected from Vaccinated Animals	N/A
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid	N/A
ELISA	Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay	Assay used to detect the presence of antibodies to a specific protein
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	N/A
FAD	Foreign Animal Disease	N/A
FAD PReP	Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness & Response Plan	N/A
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	N/A
FIFRA	Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act	N/A
GARA	Global African Swine Fever Research Alliance	N/A
GPS	Global Positioning System	N/A
HAD <sub>50</sub>	Median Hemadsorbing Dose	Dose necessary to result in hemadsorption in 50% of cultured cells; used as a standard measure of viral particles (e.g., it required 10 <sup>3</sup> HAD <sub>50</sub> to produce clinical signs in exposed pigs)
HAU	Hemadsorbing Unit	Reaction occurs in erythrocytes in the presence of hemagglutinin, which is used to quantify hemagglutinin-producing viruses
ID <sub>50</sub>	Median Infectious Dose	Dose required to cause an infection in 50% of subjects
IZ	Infection Zone	N/A
LAV	Live Attenuated Vaccine	N/A
LD <sub>50</sub>	Median Lethal Dose	Dose required to cause a lethal effect in 50% of subjects

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## TECHNICAL INFORMATION REGARDING AFRICAN SWINE FEVER VIRUS (ASFV)

Acronym/Term	Definition	Description
MQL	Master Question List	N/A
MVAV	Modified Vaccinia Ankara Virus	Attenuated strain of vaccinia virus that is used as a vaccine against smallpox and monkeypox
NAHEMS	National Animal Health Emergency Management System	N/A
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health	N/A
ORF	Open Reading Frame	Stretches of DNA between a start and stop codon that may contain genes encoding proteins
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration	N/A
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction	Assay used to amplify RNA or DNA molecules representing a specific sequence target that are present in a sample
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment	Equipment intended to protect individuals against hazardous environments
QDM	Quantum Dot Microsphere	N/A
qPCR	Quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction	Assay used to determine the number of RNA or DNA molecules representing a specific sequence target that are present in a sample
$R_0$	Basic Reproductive Number	Average number of new infections that each case is expected to generate in a population where all individuals are susceptible to infection
RNA	Ribonucleic Acid	N/A
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure	N/A
TCID <sub>50</sub>	Median Tissue Culture Infectious Dose	Dose necessary to infect 50% of tissue cells.; used as a standard measure of infectivity (e.g., it required 10 <sup>3</sup> TCID <sub>50</sub> to produce clinical signs in exposed pigs)
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture	N/A
UV	Ultraviolet	Light with wavelength in the 100-400 nm range
VISVET	Centro de Vigilancia Sanitaria Veterinaria	N/A
WOAH or OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health	N/A

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