



African Swine Fever

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Why in News?

China is witnessing **rise in pork prices** because of the rampant **spread of African Swine Fever (ASF)**. The country is the **world's largest pork** (meat from a pig) **producer**.

About ASF

- ASF is a highly **contagious** and fatal animal disease that infects **domestic and wild pigs**. It leads to an acute form of hemorrhagic fever. It was **first detected in Africa** in the 1920s.
- The mortality is close to 100%, and since the fever has **no cure**, the **only way** to stop its spread is by **culling the animals**.
- ASF is **not a threat to human beings** since it only spreads from animals to other animals.

Key Points

- Historically, outbreaks have been reported in Africa and parts of Europe, South America, and the Caribbean.
- However, **more recently** (since 2007), the disease has been reported in multiple countries across Africa, Asia and Europe, in both domestic and wild pigs.
- ASF is a disease **listed in the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code** and thus, reported to the OIE.

World Organisation for Animal Health

- OIE is an **intergovernmental organisation** responsible for improving animal health worldwide.
- In 2018, it had a total of **182 Member Countries**. **India** is **one of the member countries**.

- OIE **develops normative documents** relating to rules that Member Countries can use to protect themselves from the introduction of diseases and pathogens. One of them is the Terrestrial Animal Health Code.
- OIE standards are **recognised by the World Trade Organization** as reference international sanitary rules.
- It is headquartered in **Paris, France**.

African swine fever (ASF)



The infographic provides a comprehensive overview of African Swine Fever (ASF). It features a central image of a piglet and a tick, symbolizing the disease and its transmission. A map of China is highlighted in red, indicating the origin of the 2018 outbreak. A globe shows the spread of the disease to other regions. Various icons, including a biohazard symbol, a warning sign, and a group of people, illustrate the disease's characteristics and impact.

The virus is highly resistant to low temperatures and can survive for extended periods of time in the blood, feces and tissue of infected animals.

ASF is a **highly contagious**, transboundary viral disease (*Asfarviridae* family; *Asfivirus* genus).

It can affect both domestic and wild pigs (wild boars and peccaries). **It is harmless to humans.**

According to the OIE, **24%** of its member countries (48 out of 200) **have reported the disease** as present since 2016.

Typical clinical signs of ASF are similar to those of classical swine fever (which is endemic in several countries of the Americas); therefore, a **laboratory test** is required to distinguish them.

The **peracute** form of the virus causes sudden death with few signs.

African swine fever can be transmitted through **direct contact** between sick and healthy animals. It can also be transmitted **indirectly** through feed containing meat from infected animals (the virus can remain infectious for 3 to 6 months in uncooked pork products); **biological vectors** such as ticks of the genus *Ornithodoros*; and contaminated **inanimate objects** (fomites) that can transmit the virus.

Global alarms went off in August 2018, when an ASF outbreak was first reported in **China**. The disease swept through the entire Asian country and spread to **Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Hong Kong**.

According to official data for this period, more than **2.5 million domestic pigs** have died or been killed— 67.6% of them in Asia over the past 10 months.

Between 2016 and May 2019, there were a total of **10,211 outbreaks in Africa, Europe and Asia**.

Symptoms include **fever, loss of appetite**, low energy, abortion, internal hemorrhages, visible hemorrhages, and even death.

Source: IE