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Post: Accra

Ghana Confirms Outbreak of African Swine Fever

Report Categories:

Livestock and Products

Pest/Disease Occurrences

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Report Highlights:

Ghana confirmed the outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in five (5) districts in the Central Region of Ghana in May 2018. Ghanaian officials applied immediate disease control measures including culling of 898 hogs in five districts in the affected region. Informal trade with neighboring countries and the lack of compensation to affected farmers often complicates response and quarantine efforts, and unsubstantiated reports associate the Ghanaian outbreak with a larger outbreak in neighboring Côte d'Ivoire that began in late 2017. Pork imports to the two countries totaled \$22 million in 2017.

General Information:

Ghana first reported an outbreak of ASF in September 1999. Since 2009, there have been almost yearly outbreaks. In May 2018, Ghanaian authorities recorded an outbreak of ASF among pigs in the Central Region of Ghana, situated on the country's coast. According to Government of Ghana (GOG) sources, the current ASF outbreak occurred in a cluster of pigsty in a suburb of the regional capital, Cape Coast, on May 1, 2018. By May 18, the mortality rate stood at 83%.

Once Ghana confirmed the virus' presence, the Veterinary Services Directorate (VSD) applied immediate measures as per the country's ASF Contingency Plan, which includes biosecurity measures, and strengthening and designation of the surveillance and protection areas to prevent the spread of the virus. The GOG also banned the movement, slaughtering, and sale of pigs in the Central Region. However, by July 2018, the disease spread to five (5) districts in the region due to movement of pigs and pork products despite heightened measures to prevent such occurrences. VSD also urged pig farmers to cooperate with the GOG to ensure swift destruction of animals, in the interest of the farmers and the industry. VSD officials destroyed about 898 pigs, with barns cleaned and thoroughly disinfected. Owners of affected pig farms received no financial compensation.

According to GOG officials, the lack of compensation for farmers further complicates controlling disease outbreaks. Farmers are reluctant to report signs or incidences of ASF to VSD, knowing that they will lose pigs without compensation. There are past reports of farmers secretly burying and even dumping pigs in the ocean to avoid culling efforts. The GOG and members of the Pig Farmers Association confirmed that to date there are no registered outbreaks outside the Central Region.

To the west, Côte d'Ivoire reported an ASF outbreak to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in October 2017, located in the Northern districts of Ferkessédougou and Korhogo. Ivorian officials continue to submit weekly follow-up reports to OIE, and last recorded pig fatalities as recently as July 6, 2018. In total, Côte d'Ivoire reported 4,746 animals affected and 4,546 deaths. Unofficial reports from the Ghanaian side suggest that fishermen informally brought diseased pigs into the Central Region on the coast of Ghana after purchasing the animals at reduced prices in Côte d'Ivoire. However, as Côte d'Ivoire's reports to OIE suggest no ASF presence beyond the north of the country since the October 2017 outbreak began, it is not yet clear if the outbreaks are in fact connected. FAS Accra continues to monitor the situation.

The pig industry in Ghana registered very significant growth in the last decade. Although most of the farms are small-scale, pig numbers increased to over 650,000 and pork products are in high demand. The growth in pig production is generally due to the increasing number of urban, middle-income consumers. Ghana's pork imports were small and steady over the past five years, totaling \$2.6 million in 2017. Côte d'Ivoire has a smaller domestic herd than Ghana, estimated between 350,000-400,000, but total consumption is likely higher as evidenced by strong import demand. Côte d'Ivoire's pork imports totaled \$19.4 million in 2017, registering growth of nearly 60% over the last five years.

One of the major challenges facing the local industry is ASF, which can cause mortalities of up to 100 percent of affected herds. The disease posed enough of a threat to motivate the FAO to mobilize experts

and develop resources for a 'Regional strategy for the control of African swine fever in Africa' in 2017. While the role of cross-border trade with Côte d'Ivoire remains unsubstantiated in this particular instance, transboundary movement of animals and animal products presents an additional challenge to official response efforts when disease outbreaks occur.