

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on African Swine Fever (ASF)

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Q1. What is African Swine Fever (ASF)?

Ans. African Swine Fever (ASF) is a highly contagious viral disease that affects pigs. It causes severe illness and death in all species and age group of pigs.

Q2. Does ASF affect humans?

Ans. No, ASF does not infect humans, is not zoonotic and is not a public health risk.

Q3. Can people get ASF by eating pork?

Ans. No, people cannot get ASF from eating pork or pork products.

Q4. Which animals are affected by ASF?

Ans. ASF affects only domestic pigs and wild pigs. It does not affect other animals.

Q5. What causes ASF?

Ans. ASF is caused by the African Swine Fever Virus (ASFV), a highly stable DNA virus.

Q6. Is there any treatment for ASF in pigs?

Ans. No, there is currently no effective treatment for ASF.

Q7. Is there a vaccine for ASF?

Ans. There is no available and approved vaccine in India and in most countries for routine ASF prevention and control.

Q8. How serious is ASF?

Ans. ASF is very serious and deadly viral infection because it can kill up to 100% of infected pig's population.

Q9. How does ASF spread?

Ans. ASF spreads through:

- a. Direct contact with infected pigs
- b. Indirectly through feeding contaminated pork products
- c. Contaminated vehicles, equipment, clothing, and footwear
- d. Movement of infected pigs

e. Contact with infected carcasses.

Q10. Can ASF spread through pig feed?

Ans. Yes, feed contaminated with the ASF virus can spread the infection in pig population.

Q11. Can ASF spread through swill feeding?

Ans. Yes, feeding kitchen waste or food scraps containing ASF contaminated pork is a major risk.

Q12. What are the signs of ASF in pigs?

Ans. Common signs include:

- a. High fever
- b. Loss of appetite
- c. Weakness
- d. Red or bluish skin
- e. Vomiting
- f. Diarrhoea
- g. Difficulty breathing
- h. Sudden death

Q13. What is the first sign farmers may notice?

Ans. A sudden loss of appetite and high fever are often the first signs.

Q14. Can pigs die suddenly from ASF?

Ans. Yes, some pigs may die without showing obvious signs.

Q15. How long after infection do signs appear?

Ans. Usually between 4 and 19 days after ASF virus enter the body.

Q16. What should a farmer do if ASF is suspected?

Ans. Immediately report the case to the nearest Veterinary officer.

Q17. Should sick pigs be sold?

Ans. No, sick pigs should never be sold or moved as it spread the infection.

Q18. Should dead pigs be thrown into rivers or forests?

Ans. No, dead pigs should be disposed of according to veterinary advice.

Q19. How should ASF carcasses be disposed?

Ans. Usually by deep burial or incineration.

Q20. Can ASF survive in dead pigs?

Ans. Yes, the virus can survive for a long time in pig carcasses.

Q21. Can ASF survive in pork products?

Ans. Yes, the virus can survive in processed, frozen, and cured pork products for months.

Q22. Can dogs or cats spread ASF?

Ans. Dogs and cats do not get ASF, but they may mechanically carry contaminated material and transmit the infection.

Q23. Is ASF the same as Classical Swine Fever (CSF)?

Ans. No, they are different diseases of pigs caused by different viruses. African Swine Fever (ASF) and Classical Swine Fever (CSF) are both highly contagious viral diseases caused by different viruses in pigs.

Both CSF and ASF present nearly identical clinical signs and post-mortem lesions that cannot be reliably distinguished in the field. However, disease progression and death due to ASF is generally more rapid within 6-13 days, while CSF usually has a slightly slower clinical progression.

Mortality rate due to ASF is very high often 90-100% in acute cases, but it is variable in CSF often 30-50%.

Nervous system disorders such as convulsions, incoordination, and tremors are more prominent in acute cases of CSF, but are less commonly seen in ASF.

Vaccination against CSF is effective mean for prevention and widely used in India including Meghalaya, whereas for ASF at present there is no commercially approved vaccine available in India. Prevention and control of ASF relies on strict biosecurity measures.

Clinical signs of CSF and ASF are very similar, including high fever, loss of appetite, depression, skin discoloration etc. Clinical signs alone cannot reliably differentiate CSF from ASF. Laboratory test confirmation is essential to identify and confirm the causative virus of the disease.

Q24. Can ASF spread through vehicles?

Ans. Yes, trucks and vehicles used for transporting pigs can spread the virus.

Q25. Why is bio-security important?

Ans. Bio-security prevents disease from entering and spreading within pig farms.

Q26. What is bio-security?

Ans. Bio-security means measures taken to keep disease away from animals.

Q27. How can farmers improve bio-security?

Ans. Farmers can improve bio-security by

- a. Restrict visitors
- b. Disinfect footwear
- c. Clean vehicles
- d. Use dedicated farm clothing
- e. Avoid swill feeding
- f. Using effective disinfectants for farm entry exit and premises.

Q28. Should visitors be allowed into pig pens?

Ans. Only when necessary and after proper sanitation.

Q29. Why should new pigs be quarantined?

Ans. To ensure they are not carrying diseases before mixing with other pigs.

Q30. How long should new pigs be quarantined?

Ans. At least 30 days.

Q31. Can ASF spread through pig markets?

Ans. Yes, pig markets can facilitate disease spread if infected animals are present.

Q32. Should pigs be moved during an ASF outbreak?

Ans. Only if permitted by Veterinary authorities.

Q33. What should farmers do before entering pig sheds?

Ans. Wash hands, disinfect footwear, and wear clean clothes.

Q34. Can contaminated equipment spread ASF?

Ans. Yes, feeders, waterers, ropes, and tools can carry the virus.

Q35. Can ASF spread from one village to another?

Ans. Yes, through movement of infected pigs, people, vehicles, and contaminated materials.

Q36. Why should farmers report pig deaths immediately?

Ans. Early reporting helps prevent disease spread and protects other farms.

Q37. How can farmers recognize an ASF outbreak?

Ans. Multiple pigs showing fever, weakness, off feed and sudden deaths within a short period.

Q38. Can recovered pigs still spread ASF?

Ans. Some recovered pigs may carry the virus for a period and pose a risk.

Q39. What should farmers do after handling sick pigs?

Ans. Wash hands and disinfects clothing and equipment.

Q40. Can ASF survive in the environment?

Ans. Yes, the virus can survive for long periods in contaminated environments.

Q41. What disinfectants work against ASF?

Ans. Approved disinfectants such as bleaching powder etc recommended by veterinary authorities should be used.

Q42. Why is cleaning important before disinfection?

Ans. Organic matter like manure reduces the effectiveness of disinfectants.

Q43. Can ASF spread through pig manure?

Ans. Yes, manure from infected pigs can contain the virus.

Q44. Is ASF a notifiable disease?

Ans. Yes, ASF must be reported to veterinary authorities.

Q45. What happens when ASF is confirmed?

Ans. Authorities may impose movement restrictions and disease control measures.

Q46. Why are movement restrictions imposed?

Ans. To prevent the disease from spreading to new areas.

Q47. Can backyard pig farms get ASF?

Ans. Yes, both backyard and commercial farms are at risk.

Q48. Who is responsible for ASF prevention?

Ans. General public, consumers and everyone involved in pig farming, transport, trade, and slaughter.

Q49. What is the best way to protect pigs from ASF?

Ans. Taking strict bio-security measures and early reporting of suspected ASF cases.

Q50. What is the key message for pig farmers?

Ans. "Report early, stop pig movement, strengthens bio-security, and never feed swill."
