

### African Swine Fever Development

A large jump westward was detected earlier this month in the ongoing spread of African Swine Fever (ASF) in Europe. Nine cases have now been confirmed in feral wild boar from a heavily wooded region of south-east Belgium. This giant leap, about 300 miles from the border of the Czech Republic, the previously westernmost reported case, has been attributed as most likely being caused by human transfer of infected goods. Investigations are underway to confirm the source, and work to limit the spread of the virus is being completed to keep it away from commercial pigs, including the pre-emptive culling of over 4000 pigs within the current 240 square mile infection zone.



Courtesy of [www.swinehealth.org](http://www.swinehealth.org)

The importance of preventing any potentially infected material coming onto farm that has its origins in infected areas has never been greater. It is illegal to feed any kitchen scraps to pigs, regardless of origin, due to the risk of contamination with infected pork products.

Pigs infected with ASF will typically present as very lethargic and have high temperatures ( $>40^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), meaning they can often be reluctant to eat, and can sometimes have a bloody scour. Mortality can be up to 100% and skin spots are common as small haemorrhages become visible. For further information, please see our ASF article [here](#).

### National Pig Awards

Many thanks to all of you who nominated us for the NPA Allied Industry Group (AIG) Member of the Year category at the National Pig Awards this year. It is a great privilege to work with all of you and there is still time to vote now! 😊



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## Salt Poisoning

Severe dehydration through lack of water is also often called salt poisoning, leading to an imbalance between the water and salt content of the body. Pigs will drink a lot of water, a good guide being around 1 litre per 10kg of pig, and an interruption to normal water intake can quickly cause the water/salt balance to be disturbed.

Signs in a mild case can be hard to spot, with pigs often appearing slightly dull and unresponsive. As the any dehydration becomes more severe, so do the clinical signs. Pigs may 'dog-sit', press their heads against a surface, or raise and extend their head while sitting and they can topple over as a consequence. Some pigs may circle, collapse and even have convulsions.

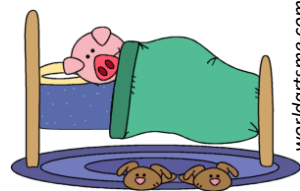
Often these clinical signs are noted after a previously interrupted water source is restored, as the previously dehydrated brain suddenly swells with water and presses against the inside of the skull. In very acute cases, pigs can simply be found dead.

Typical causes of loss of access to water include freezing of pipes in the winter, blocking or breaking of pipes or troughs, or restricted access to drinkers or drinking space – this can be down to overstocking or poor-quality water which the pigs refuse to drink. High salt content in food is often not an issue since a pig will drink more to compensate for normal variations, although any borderline water provision can then lead to a salt imbalance.

Most importantly, if an individual or group of pigs is discovered to be severely dehydrated, do not supply them with plentiful supplies of water straight away since this can lead to irreversible damage or death as described above. Pigs should be slowly rehydrated over several hours by giving them small amounts of water often – if in any doubt, please speak to your vet for further advice.

## Current Clinical Trends – What are we seeing out there?...

We have seen an increase in looseness in both rearing and finishing herds, probably due to the change in ration composition as several round of new grain are coming through the mills at the moment. There have also been odd flares of tail biting at the moment as well, which may be related. Blending of raw materials can help to minimise the gut upset caused the new grain and should be discussed with your nutritionist.



Please remember that it is the time of year when temperatures are dropping overnight and any draughts, in particular, will really be affecting the pigs.

## Feedback

Please let us know if there is anything that you would like including, or more information on, in a future newsletter.

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