

2018
Bishopton Pig
Team would like
to wish you a
Happy New Year

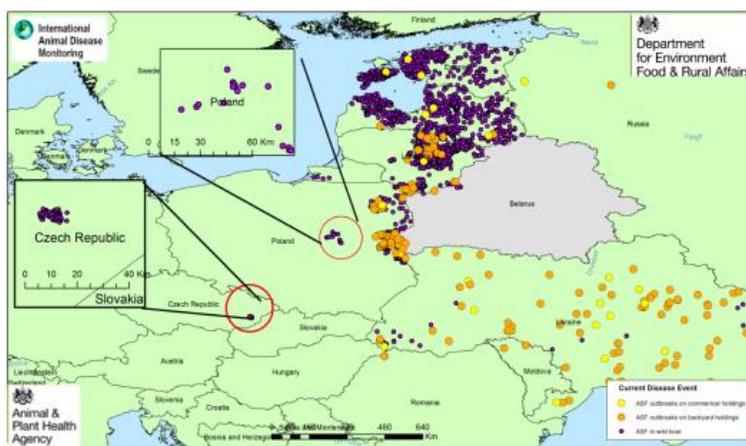


African Swine Fever Update

African Swine Fever (ASF) is a notifiable disease that has been present now in Europe for over 2 years. Infection with the virus that causes ASF can result in pigs having high temperatures, abortions, skin discolouration, bloody diarrhoea and high mortalities (up to 90-100% in those affected).

As shown on the map, there have been a steady cluster of cases up until mid-July when there was a new case of ASF in a wild boar in the Czech Republic. This represented a significant geographical jump away from the previous cases shown.

In mid-November, there were also several new cases of ASF in wild boar in Poland. Since May 2014 there have been multiple cases of ASF confirmed in wild boar and backyard pigs in eastern Poland, but this recent case is the first time that the disease has been found further west.



Recent African Swine Fever outbreaks domestic pigs and wild boar in 2017
[Insets: wild boar cases in Czech Republic and Poland]

Courtesy of the APHA

This geographical jump to western Poland raises concern as it shows that the virus can be spread unpredictably within eastern Europe. It also raises concern regarding the potential spread of the disease into neighbouring Germany and western Europe.

Please can we remind all pig keepers to **not feed kitchen waste to pigs**. ASF can be transmitted by feeding pork products, or kitchen waste that has come into contact with pork products, to pigs. Kitchen waste includes vegetarian or vegan products that could have come into contact with infected meat. Meat, even when frozen, can remain infectious for months. Please [click here](#) to read our full article on ASF.

Link between Tail Biting and Disease

The EU-wide collaboration, FareWellDock, have reported some of their latest findings on the relationship between clinical disease and tail-biting. Anecdotally, there have always been links made between pigs being unwell and a tendency to tail-bite. Work carried out by a team in Norway has recently demonstrated that sick pigs will behave differently around pen-mates compared with healthy pigs. Two types of illness were looked at in the study; osteochondrosis (joint disease) and respiratory disease. It was found that animals with joint disease were treated differently by their healthy pen mates, whereas animals with respiratory disease demonstrated different behaviours towards the other healthy pigs. This was generally seen as forms of bullying behaviour, i.e. more ear-biting and tail-biting.

The researchers also injected the animals with a specific bacterial protein called endotoxin in order to stimulate the immune system. They found that, three days after injection, the pigs that received the protein were treated differently by the other pigs in their group, just like those with joint disease above. In human medicine, there are specific chemicals released in the body that are thought to be the drivers of withdrawal behaviour and changes in mood, and these can be used in certain treatments for cancer and liver disease. These same chemicals were found in the pigs that were given the bacterial protein and showed altered behaviour. Humans can also feel the need to remove themselves from company when we feel ill and, if this is the same in pigs, then any situation where they are not able to distance themselves from other pigs might drive the altered behaviour that was seen.

This research is the first to directly link disease and altered behaviour in pigs – the researchers are now looking towards ways of potentially intervening to try and stop these behaviours from appearing.

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

At the moment we are seeing an increase in scour in the farrowing period in piglets that are under one week of age. If you have any concerns please do speak to your vet so that the cause of the scour can be investigated and preventative strategies put in place.



As shown in our October newsletter, please [click here](#) to view, born alive has been on a steady increase for the last few years. This is particularly shown in analysis of the top 10% and top third of farms. Over the last 2 months we have noticed that this increase seems to be halting and born alive is currently remaining more constant.

Please discuss any issues that you may be having with your vet.

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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