



Livestock Notifiable Disease

Factsheets

Classical Swine Fever

If you suspect signs of any notifiable disease, you must immediately notify a Defra Divisional Veterinary Manager.

Definition

Classical swine fever (CSF) is a highly contagious viral disease of pigs. In its acute form the disease generally results in high morbidity and mortality.

History and spread of the disease in Great Britain

CSF was first confirmed in this country in 1864 and was initially allowed to spread unchecked until 1878, when legislation for its control was introduced. The disease persisted for many years until it was finally eradicated from Great Britain in 1966 (see below for details of outbreaks). Since then there have been sporadic outbreaks in 1971 and 1986.

A more serious outbreak in East Anglia in 2000 affected 16 farms. A total of 74,793 pigs including those on contact farms were slaughtered to eradicate the disease. The cause of this most recent outbreak was not finally established but was most likely the result of pigs eating a contaminated imported pork product.

Clinical symptoms

The symptoms of CSF and African swine fever (ASF) are almost identical and either may occur in chronic or acute form. Laboratory diagnosis is necessary to distinguish CSF from ASF. The incubation period for CSF is variable but is usually between five and ten days. In the acute form pigs develop a high temperature (40.5 degrees C or 105 degrees F), then become dull and go off their food. Other symptoms seen can vary but will include some or all of the following:

- Constipation followed by diarrhoea
- Gummed-up eyes
- Coughing
- Blotchy discolouration of the skin
- Abortion, still births and weak litters
- Weakness of hindquarters.
- Nervous signs including convulsions and tremors in new born piglets.

Differential diagnosis

- African swine fever
- Infection with bovine viral diarrhoea virus
- Salmonellosis
- Erysipelas
- Acute pasteurellosis
- Other viral encephalomyelitis

- Streptococcosis
- Leptospirosis
- Coumarin poisoning
- Porcine Dermatitis and Neopathy Syndrome (PDNS)

How is this disease spread?

The main source of CSF appears to be from pigs eating infected pork or pork products. In this form the CSF virus can remain active for many months.

The movement of infected pigs is a common method of spreading CSF. Apparently healthy pigs may be incubating disease and recovered pigs can excrete the virus for long periods of time.

The virus can exist outside the pig for a long time, so the movement of contaminated vehicles, clothing, footwear and equipment can also spread disease.

What steps are taken to prevent this disease reaching Great Britain?

Great Britain operates strict controls over the import of meat and meat products primarily to guard against the introduction of animal diseases. While these methods are generally effective, it is possible that on occasions meat and meat products infected with an animal disease virus such as swine fever may accidentally enter the country.

If, despite these precautions, swine fever viruses entered the country the risk of them infecting pigs has been reduced by the ban on swill feeding introduced in May 2001 (now included in the Animal By-Products Regulations 2003). Should a pig become infected the spread of the disease would be limited by the controls contained in the Pigs (Records, Identification and Movement) Order 2003 (PRIMO). Further information on pigs identification and tracing can be found on the Defra identification and tracing pages.

PRIMO also requires identification and movement recording control measures which provide invaluable aids in tracing contacts should a pig disease outbreak occur.

What can you do to guard your herd against this disease?

Watch your herd carefully for signs of disease. Wherever possible, purchase stock from known sources. Restrict the movement of persons, vehicles and equipment to and from your premises. When such movements are necessary disinfection facilities should be available and used. Provide a loading/unloading bay, which is solely for the use of incoming and outgoing stock. Follow the Defra Biosecurity guidance.

What should you do if you suspect Swine fever?

If you are the owner, person in charge or a veterinary surgeon attending pigs you must report your suspicions to the Defra Divisional Veterinary Manager at your local Animal Health Divisional Office. You must not move any pig, carcase or anything else (e.g feed or waste) suspected of being infected with CSF until a Defra veterinary inspector has visited and decided whether it is necessary to impose restrictions. If the veterinary inspector suspects the disease, movement restrictions will be enforced and material from the suspect animals will be sent for laboratory diagnosis to establish whether the condition is African or Classical swine fever, or neither. Samples are examined for both these diseases.

Great Britain legislation

The Classical Swine Fever (England) Order 2003 comes into force on 1 October 2003. It enacts the provisions of EU Council Directive 2001/89/EC of 23 October 2001, for the control of Classical swine fever. Similar legislation will apply in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The new Order revokes and replaces existing GB legislation for the control of CSF – the Swine Fever Order 1963, the Swine Fever (Infected Areas Restrictions) Order 1956 and the Swine Fever (Movement Restrictions Areas) Order 2000, as amended.

Compensation

Schedule 3 to the Animal Health Act 1981 says that where an animal was infected with Swine Fever the compensation shall be half the value of the animal immediately before it became infected, and in every other case the compensation shall be the value of the animal immediately before it was slaughtered.

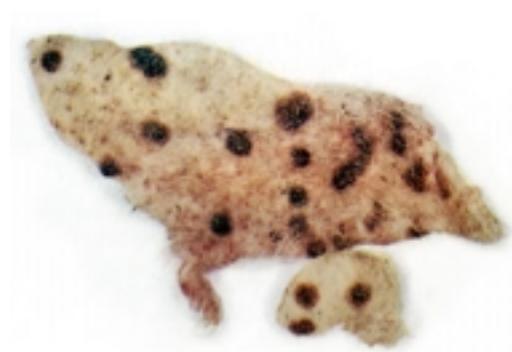
Pictures of the disease



Skin lesions in a pig with Classical Swine Fever (note blue ears).
(Photo credit: Crown Copyright)



Farrowed sow showing severe depression, generalised erythema & conjunctivitis. Rectal temperature $<42.5^{\circ}\text{C}$.
(Photo credit: John MacKinnon.)



The large dark-red lesions of Pig Pox superimposed on a swine fever skin rash.
(Photo credit: Crown Copyright)



Conjunctivitis in a pregnant gilt. Rectal temperature 41.7°C .
(Photo credit: John MacKinnon.)

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