



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



The Scottish
Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

14 November 2018

To: Hunting/Shooting organisations and land and estate owners

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER (ASF)

I am writing on behalf of all UK Chief Veterinary Officers to inform you that, following a significant increase in the number of cases of ASF, a disease of pigs, in Eastern Europe, and recent western spread to Belgium, the risk of an introduction of this disease to the UK has increased and is causing concern. ASF has been spreading in Eastern Europe since it first entered the European Union (EU) in 2014 from countries further east. In addition to the new cases in Belgium the disease is already present in a number of EU Member States.

Although the disease does not affect humans and there is no food safety risk associated with meat, ASF is a highly contagious and usually fatal viral disease of pigs. An outbreak of ASF would also have a devastating impact on the UK pork industry affecting pig health and welfare and the ability of UK to trade pigs and pork products. If disease also got into feral pig populations it could also have an impact on their health and welfare, and Government would be obliged to put in place restrictions on hunting for a minimum period of at least two years.

I want to take this opportunity to stress the need for everyone travelling to the continent for hunting and shooting or similarly organising these activities in the UK, to take several precautions to reduce the risk of ASF entering the UK. The virus could be introduced in several ways, the main one being native pigs or wild boar consuming imported infected meat or meat products. The virus can survive months to years in smoked, dried, cured and frozen meat and meat products from infected pork or wild boar. Infection could also enter on contaminated boots, clothes, vehicles or equipment.

In order to help reduce the risk of introducing this disease, please do not bring back pork or wild boar meat and meat products to the UK. If such items are brought back, it is vital that they are safely disposed of in sealed bins and are never left in open bins or discarded from vehicles. These items must also never be fed to pigs or wild boar – to do so is illegal, and risks causing their illness and death. Other things hunters can do are:

- Avoid hunting in ASF affected countries (some affected countries are banning hunting).
- Avoid contact with wild boar found dead or sick
- Avoid contact with UK domestic pigs or wild boar on your return.
- Do not bring meat or meat products back to the UK, especially pork or pork products.
- Never feed pigs or wild boar with any meat or meat products – THIS IS ILLEGAL.
- Please do not bring dogs on hunting trips, as ASF infection can survive in their fur.

By taking these measures, hunters and land owners can play their role in protecting the health of our pigs.

Further biosecurity advice and the latest news on ASF can be found on the [Defra](#), [DAERA-NI](#), [Scottish](#) and [Welsh Government](#) websites.

I have also included a leaflet which provides important information for hunters or land and estate owners on how they can help reduce the risk of ASF spreading to the UK. I would be grateful if this leaflet could be circulated among your members along with this letter.

Yours sincerely



Christine Middlemiss Chief Veterinary Officer (UK)

Sheila Voas: Chief Veterinary Officer (Scotland)

Christianne Glossop: Chief Veterinary Officer (Wales)

Robert Huey: Chief Veterinary Officer (Northern Ireland)