UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

2025 Resolution
129th Annual Meeting
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Denver, CO

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 2 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON SWINE

SUBJECT MATTER: Task force - Use of Aggregate Samples in African Swine Fever/Classical Swine Fever Control Area surveillance Testing Algorithms

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RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, establish a task force composed of industry, state, and federal partners. The specific purpose of this task force is to develop additional options for African swine fever and classical swine fever Control Area surveillance testing algorithms, including the incorporation of aggregate samples.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The ability to effectively respond to a large-scale (multifocal) outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) or classical swine fever (CSF) in the United States (US) is critically important to the US pork industry stakeholders, dependent communities, and the overall security of the national food supply chain.

Current ASF/CSF Control Area testing algorithms—which require collecting samples from 31 individual animals per barn on a recurring basis—are not realistically implementable in the event of a large-scale (multifocal) outbreak in pig-dense regions of the US.

The practical, operational, and fiscal challenges associated with collecting, preparing, and processing 31 individual animal samples per barn were widely recognized as constraints during the comprehensive “Swine Fever Exercise for Agriculture and Response” conducted in 2019.

The use of aggregate samples for detecting ASF and CSF is well-supported by scientific literature. Aggregate samples—most notably oral fluids and processing fluids—have a long-standing record of success in herd-level detection of high-consequence endemic viruses within the US pork industry.

US pork producers and swine veterinarians are proficient in collecting and submitting aggregate samples to the United States Department of Agriculture National Animal Health Laboratory Network laboratories for large-scale testing.

Proactively leveraging the expertise of US pork industry participants to help inform alternative Control Area testing algorithm options—beyond the current primary method of 31 individual animal samples per barn—would be a prudent and responsible step forward. Such efforts would contribute meaningfully to the ongoing enhancement of ASF/CSF preparedness and response plans in the United States.

INTERIM RESPONSE:
The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

APHIS agrees that routinely reviewing and updating surveillance approaches for priority diseases like ASF and CSF is critical to national preparedness. APHIS also agrees that oral fluids show considerable promise as an aggregate sample type for components of the ASF/CSF surveillance strategy and recognizes that the swine industry already uses them widely to detect endemic swine diseases.

APHIS is continuing this work by advancing the science, developing standard methods, and evaluating when oral fluids could be used in USDA programs. We also plan to present and publish new results, including findings from recent studies in Ghana, and work with international partners to explore potential pilot surveillance applications.

APHIS hosted a meeting on December 2-3, 2025, in Ames, IA, bringing together federal, state, industry, and academic partners to collaborate on recent developments in oral fluids evaluation for ASF and CSF. A primary action item from the December 2025 Swine Stakeholder Meeting on Oral Fluids for ASF Surveillance was the establishment of an oral fluid task force to use shared expertise to advance strategies for broader use of oral fluids in swine disease surveillance. As of March 2026, APHIS is actively working with the National Pork Board to establish this group. The priorities in this resolution will be in the task force's work.

Currently, there is limited scientific data to support using processing fluids for ASF/CSF surveillance. Although processing fluids are used successfully for certain endemic pathogens, their diagnostic performance, sample suitability, and feasibility for ASF/CSF detection remain unvalidated. Therefore, APHIS is currently focusing efforts and research investments on oral fluids rather than processing fluids for high-consequence foreign animal disease surveillance but may revisit this in the future.

APHIS remains committed to working with federal, state, and industry partners to expand and refine scientifically sound aggregate sampling options. The goal is to develop practical, scalable surveillance strategies that reduce the burden on producers and responders during an ASF or CSF outbreak.

APHIS appreciates USAHA's partnership and looks forward to continuing to strengthen preparedness and surveillance capabilities together.