



Marketing and
Regulatory Programs

1400 Independence
Avenue SW
Washington,
DC 20250

Voice 202.720.4256
Fax 202.720.5775

TO: Brenda Aguilar
Office of Management and Budget Branch Chief

THROUGH: Ruth Brown
Department Clearance Officer

FROM: Jenny Moffitt
USDA Under Secretary

Kevin Shea
APHIS Administrator

Rosemary Sifford
Veterinary Services Deputy Administrator

SUBJECT: Request for Emergency Approval of a New Information Collection Relating to a Federal Order Revising Federal Order DA-2021-0002 to Authorize the Movement of Certain Swine Products and Swine Byproducts Under Specified Conditions from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

SUMMARY: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is submitting to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) an information collection request for an emergency 6-month approval for information collection activities connected to the prevention of African swine fever (ASF); in particular, conditions for transport of swine products and/or byproducts from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

APHIS' primary mission is to protect the health of U.S. agriculture and natural resources against invasive pests and diseases. This includes the prevention, control, and eradication of animal diseases to safeguard animal, plant, and human health. Disease prevention is the most effective method for maintaining a healthy animal and plant population and for enhancing the United States' ability to compete globally in animal and animal product trade. In situations where a disease risk is sufficiently severe and fast-moving so that the regular regulatory process cannot provide adequate relief, APHIS employs Federal Orders to set trade restrictions quickly to control, eradicate, or prevent a disease threat. APHIS currently has pending a Federal Order that in part sets restrictive conditions for the transport of swine products and/or byproducts from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands as part of its effort to prevent African swine fever from entering the United States.

BACKGROUND: ASF is a contagious hemorrhagic disease of wild and domestic pigs. It is often characterized by high morbidity and mortality rates. Some isolates can cause animal death as quickly as a week after infection. There is no effective treatment for ASF-infected swine and no vaccine. The disease can be spread by contact with other affected animals and products made from such affected animals. ASF is a notifiable disease to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The disease does not pose a risk to human health or food safety. ASF is a critical threat; the disease

has spread globally in recent years, and the United States has millions of susceptible swine, including feral swine.

ASF is currently widespread and endemic in sub-Saharan Africa, parts of West Africa, and Sardinia. In the last decade, ASF has spread through Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. In the last few years, the disease has continued to spread in the European Union, primarily in wild boar. In August 2018, China reported the first ASF detections in its domestic swine population. ASF continued spreading widely throughout Asian countries in 2019 with additional outbreaks reported between 2020 and 2021. The disease has spread to the Western Hemisphere with the Dominican Republic reporting an outbreak in August of 2021.

As of December 1, 2020, the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service identified an inventory of 77.5 million hogs and pigs in the United States. According to the USDA National Animal Health Monitoring System, the U.S. swine industry is worth more than \$22.5 billion, which without proper preparation could be put at risk if ASF was introduced into the United States.

An ASF outbreak of any size or type, particularly a multistate outbreak, would likely have an immediate, sizeable, and lingering economic impact for an extended period. An outbreak would instantly disrupt international exports of meat, meat products, and swine byproducts. The value of lost exports would be a substantial detriment to the economy and would also affect interstate commerce. Farms would shut down, causing unemployment and costs both on-farm and in related sectors such as feed production and supply. In addition, an ASF response effort would involve direct costs for depopulation, indemnity payments, animal disposal, disinfection, and movement control measures. Consumers would sustain additional indirect costs and potentially suffer food insecurity. The lack of a vaccine makes prevention of disease entry of utmost importance, and thorough preparation for an emergency response crucial. If ASF were to be detected in the United States, there would be severe economic impacts on U.S. livestock producers, their communities, and the economy.

As noted, the Dominican Republic is currently reporting a significant outbreak of ASF. While ASF is not known to occur in Puerto Rico (PR) or the United States Virgin Islands (USVI), the proximity of PR and the USVI to the Dominican Republic, the frequency of passenger travel and international mail shipments between the Dominican Republic and PR and the USVI, and the frequency of small-scale commercial agricultural trade between the Dominican Republic and PR and the USVI are issues of concern. They have led APHIS to identify several pathways for the possible introduction of ASF from the Dominican Republic to PR or the USVI. Moreover, there are known commercial and feral pig populations in both territories, and historically there were no restrictions on the interstate movement of live swine, swine germplasm, swine products and swine byproducts from PR or the USVI into the continental United States. Accordingly, APHIS is issuing a Federal Order restricting the interstate movement of the following commodities, from PR and the USVI as follows:

Movement of live swine and swine germplasm is suspended.

Processed swine products and byproducts from PR and the USVI as cargo must:

- Be accompanied by a VS transport permit and/or supporting documentation or both confirming that the products were treated according to APHIS requirements below:
 - Fully cooked by a commercial method in a container hermetically sealed promptly after filling but before such cooking, so that such cooking and sealing produced a fully sterilized product which is shelf-stable without refrigeration; or
 - Heated by other than a flash-heating method to an internal temperature of at least 69 °C. (156 °F.) throughout after the bones had been removed.
 - For pork rind pellets (pork skins) that were cooked in one of the following ways in an establishment that meets these requirements:
 - *One-step process.* The pork skins must be cooked in oil for at least 80 minutes when oil temperature is consistently maintained at a minimum of 114 °C.
 - *Two-step process.* The pork skins must be dry-cooked at a minimum of 260 °C for approximately 210 minutes after which they must be cooked in hot oil (deep-fried) at a minimum of 104 °C for an additional 150 minutes.

Delays in obtaining approval of this information collection could have significant repercussions on the Agency's ability to respond efficiently and effectively as events unfold early in an outbreak. APHIS will collect information using existing permit forms. As multiple pathways for infection are possible, all likely sources of virus introduction should be mitigated, and producers should work to minimize the risk of spread from imported animals.

Thank you for your time and consideration.