

Basic Steps for Foreign Animal Disease Preparedness

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Key Points

- The current African Swine Fever situation in China and Europe makes Foreign Animal Disease preparedness even more crucial
 - There are steps that can be taken to prepare a site for a Foreign Animal Disease and to improve the probability of continued animal movement
 - Many producers are already doing these steps in some form and taking the practices to the level of documentation can add benefits when dealing with other diseases such as PRRS and PED
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As African Swine Fever (ASF) has been moving rapidly through China and Europe, the possibility of a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) event in the United States becomes more of a possibility. In the event of an FAD, state and federal animal health officials will limit movement of animals and animal products to limit disease spread.

Movement permit requirements are decided by regulatory officials from each state's animal health department, but there are steps producers can take to help them mitigate chances of infection and to increase their likelihood of receiving a movement permit during an FAD. These steps are also outlined on the Secure Pork Supply (SPS) plan website. SPS is a collaboration between USDA APHIS, Pork Checkoff, Iowa State University, and the University of Minnesota.

Basic Steps:

Establishing location and site information:

A site must have a Premises ID Number (PIN) in order to move pigs or pig products. A PIN includes the 911 address and latitude and longitude coordinates of the actual location of the pigs. Having this information allows state and federal animal health officials to determine if a site is within control or quarantine zones based on its location to infected sites. The PIN is also imperative for allowing accurate tracking of pig and supply movement into the farm and identifying any connection to infected sites. It is important to validate that the location information points to the swine location and not an alternative house or building. Additionally, it is good to have information on farm contact such as manager and owner phone numbers and emails, number of animals, and if any other species are present on site.

Proof of biosecurity measures:

Being able to demonstrate the biosecurity measures of a production site will greatly improve permitting chances because good biosecurity helps ensure lower infection risk. The SPS supplies a biosecurity self-assessment checklist (http://www.securepork.org/Resources/SPS_Biosecurity_Self-Assessment_Checklist--IndoorProduction.pdf) covering the areas that should be included in a biosecurity plan. These areas are staff training, vehicles and equipment, personnel, wildlife and insects, manure management, carcass disposal, animal and semen movement, feed, and establishing protection of the pig herd such as a line of separation, perimeter buffer, disinfection station, and access points, including a map of the site. Being able to track movements in and out of the farm as well as between production sites is highly beneficial. A biosecurity manager should be appointed to write and manage the biosecurity plan.

Disease Monitoring and Epidemiological Information

In the event of an FAD, producers will be asked to provide epidemiological information and confirmation based on monitoring that there is no evidence of infection. Much of the epidemiological information that may be requested overlaps with the SPS biosecurity plan outline, such as knowing movement of equipment, incoming animals, products, and feed, and inter-site movement of personnel. Regular recorded monitoring of the animals allows a producer to provide confirmation that no clinical signs of an FAD have been observed. To make this effective, staff performing the monitoring must know how to identify the diseases and records must be consistent. Additionally, samples can be stored and used to prove that the herd has been and remains negative. The SPS provides resources in both Spanish and English detailing disease identification for FAD's, an example questionnaire of epidemiological information that may be requested, and resources for disease monitoring and emergency response. These resources can be found at <http://www.securepork.org/pork-producers/disease-monitoring/> and <http://www.securepork.org/Resources/SecurePorkSupply-Questionnaire.pdf>.

These steps can be labor intensive with no clear immediate return, particularly the development of a biosecurity plan and regular monitoring records. This understandably can make them a low priority as producers deal with many resource decisions and demands on a daily basis. In light of this, it is important to remember that having these steps prepared will be invaluable for maintaining animal movement and continuity of business in the case of an FAD. Many of the steps or questions being used in these tools, like awareness of movement into and out of the farm, regular monitoring for clinical signs, and good biosecurity measures are things producers often do already. These steps simply put them into finalized and recordable forms. The process can also benefit the farm by showing biosecurity gaps and improving monitoring practices and records that are relevant to diseases such as PRRS, PED, and influenza.

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