African swine fever in Estonia

On 21 July 2015, Estonia’s Veterinary and Food Board confirmed the country’s first case of African swine fever among domestic pigs.

African swine fever is a highly contagious viral disease affecting pigs, including domestic pigs and wild boar. It is characterised by high fever, haemorrhages, inflammatory changes in organs and a high mortality rate (up to 100%).

The first case of African swine fever among Estonia’s wild boar population was confirmed on 8 September 2014 when African swine fever was diagnosed in a wild boar found deceased in Hummuli, Valga County. Earlier in 2014, several cases of African swine fever were diagnosed in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

**Other animal species or humans are not susceptible to African swine fever, but they can transmit the virus. African swine fever can cause significant economic damage, including job loss, to the pig farming sector.**

How to prevent the spread of African swine fever? Some simple rules

**Don’t be alarmed – African swine fever does not affect humans.** It is a contagious animal disease affecting domestic pigs and wild boar. However, all persons may become transmitters of the virus.

**Keep away from pig farms and feed processing enterprises**, as people can be transmitters of the African swine fever virus. The virus is highly resistant to environmental conditions, remaining viable for several years in frozen meat, up to 310 days in salted meat, up to 6 months in smoked meat, longer than 6 months in soil, up to 2 months in carcases and up to 11 days in animal droppings.

**Don’t touch the carcase of a dead wild boar!** If you find a dead wild boar in the forest, call the local veterinary centre or the Veterinary and Food Board (+372 605 4750).

**Keep away from all animal feeding places in the forest!**

**Don’t leave food waste in natural areas!** An open compost pile on a farm or in a summer house can become a source of infection for wild boar, if they have access to it. Burial does not help as pigs have a very good sense of smell.

**Clean your clothes and footwear after being in the forest.**

**Don’t bring along animal products from a foreign country.** People who bring along local uncooked pork or pig products from other countries can easily spread the virus. If such food waste ends up in nature or at a pig farm, it can directly lead to the spread of the African swine fever virus. This is why it is not sensible to bring along animal products, particularly fresh meat and meat by-products from a trip. The virus can also survive in frozen, salted, and cured meat, as well as in cold smoked meat and sausages, and it is resistant to moderate heat treatment (60–70 °C). Therefore all infected pig products pose a threat to pigs even in very small quantities.

**Pork can be eaten, it is safe.** All meat marketed in Estonia is under the surveillance of the Veterinary and Food Board and has been controlled. It is not allowed to export live pigs, pigmeat or pigmeat products to other EU Member States from regions infected by African swine fever.

#### Disinfection guide

* Metal and plastic objects, rubber footwear – clean with bleach containing 2.5% chlorine. Cover surfaces with the solution, let soak for an hour, and wash with clean water.
* Textiles, clothes – wash with washing powder or wash and heat at 100 °C for one hour (e.g. in a sauna).
* Leather footwear and objects – wash and treat with a leather care product. Don’t use these footwear or objects if you might come into contact with pigs within 30 days.
* Wood:
	+ Varnished or coloured wood – clean with a chlorine-based bleach.
	+ Porous and/or untreated wood – burn.

**Veterinary and Food Board hotline: +372 605 4750. An answering machine will record your questions and information about African swine fever.**

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**Media inquiries should be sent to the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Agriculture at** **press@agri.ee**

Please take note and act responsibly.