



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND & FISHERIES CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

6th August, 2021

Attention: News Editors

MEDIA RELEASE

African Swine Fever Alert in the Caribbean Region

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries wishes to inform the national community that there has been an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the Dominican Republic as reported on July 28th, 2021. The ASF is a highly contagious haemorrhagic viral disease found in pigs. It has a mortality (death) rate of up to 100% in pigs and can therefore have serious economic impacts in countries that rely heavily on pig production and pork exports.

At present, Trinidad and Tobago is **FREE** of the ASF disease and there is **NO IMMEDIATE** threat to the well-being of this country's livestock production. Additionally, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) encourages persons to continue their normal consumption patterns of pork and pork related products, as there are no health risks involved.

Both the MALF and the Ministry of Health (MoH) are collaborating in efforts to monitor the ongoing developments and will update the public as required.

The MALF is however advising persons to take the necessary measures and adhere to the following guidelines to prevent the entry of the African Swine Fever into the country.

How is African Swine Fever Spread?

This Transboundary Animal Disease (TAD) can be spread by live or dead pigs, and pork products. It can also be spread in food scraps and food waste generated by air and sea vessels. Transmission can also occur via contaminated feed and fomites (non-living objects) such as shoes, clothes, vehicles, knives, equipment etc., due to the high environmental resistance of the ASF virus. Individuals therefore have an important role in controlling the spread of ASF.

Treatment and Prevention

Currently there is no approved vaccine or treatment for ASF. Preventing entry of the disease relies heavily on strong border control and biosecurity measures that keep infected pigs and contaminated pork products out of Trinidad and Tobago. Ensuring that there is proper disposal of waste food from aircrafts, ships and vehicles and preventing the illegal entry of live pigs and pork products are therefore key national prevention measures.

Note:

- ASF is NOT a food borne human disease. Humans consuming pork products cannot contract the disease.
- The disease does NOT make humans ill and is not classified as a zoonotic disease.
- ASF can result in significant negative economic impacts and is a threat to national food security.
- The ASF virus is highly resistant in the environment and in pork products. The movement of humans can also spread the disease to pigs.
- DO NOT FEED uncooked meat, restaurant and other human food waste and swill to pigs.

Multisectoral Collaboration

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) is the lead agency in this exercise.
- The MALF is working closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) regarding the disposal of food waste generated on aircrafts, ships, pleasure crafts and other sea going vessels coming from countries with ASF.
- Other stakeholders and border agencies will also be engaged, including National Security (Coast Guard) and Customs and Excise Division along with the air and sea transportation agencies including, cargo carriers.
- Pig producers, farmers and members of the public also have important roles in the prevention of this disease.

As a member of the Public, What Can You Do?

- Do not buy or import illegal 'live' animals into the country.
- Do not buy or import illegal meat products or potentially contaminated items.
- Do not engage in the trade of illegal pork and pork products.
- Do not feed pigs uncooked human food waste.
- Dispose of ALL food waste in appropriate bins at the airport and at all ports of entry into Trinidad and Tobago.
- Contact the County Veterinary Office in your area if there are signs of ill health in pigs.

For additional information please visit the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries website at <https://agriculture.gov.tt/>

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