

CANADIAN PORK PRODUCER PRIORITIES FOR THE 2019 FEDERAL ELECTION



Providing additional resources to address the threat posed by African swine fever.

African swine fever (ASF) is not a food safety issue. However, the virus kills pigs and it would destroy a globally competitive, \$24 billion sector; a sector that is responsible for 100,000 jobs located in both small rural communities and large urban centres.

Canada exports 70% of its pork production either as pork or live animals. An ASF outbreak would result in the immediate closure of our export markets and unless we can quickly respond, the loss of the pork sector. Canada's experience with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) provides firsthand evidence of what we can expect – although the situation in hogs will be much worse.

The disease is present in Africa, Europe, Russia, China and is now rapidly spreading through southeast Asia. A combination of extensive personal travel, trade between Canada and these regions, and a rapidly increasing viral load, means there is a growing risk of ASF coming to North America.

Fortunately, all is not lost. Canada has a very strong, well-established animal health system. Our producers know how to raise healthy pigs and they have the backing of a wide range of animal health specialists from veterinarians to world-leading researchers. The animal health system is also buttressed by an extensive animal health laboratory network and a strong regulatory system at both the federal and provincial government levels.

Producers know they have a critical role. They have invested heavily in traceability, biosecurity, extension and research. They collaborate with their colleagues across Canada and work closely with their local governments. They are active at the international level.

The four cornerstones of an effective emergency management plan are: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Recognizing that investing heavily in preparedness and planning is the most efficient, cost-effective use of resources, we have focused our efforts in these areas. Within this space, there remains much work to be done.

The pork sector believes there are four key priorities:

1. **Wild Pigs:** The risk posed by wild pigs must be addressed. Wild pigs host and spread diseases, putting the industry at risk. This invasive species must be eradicated.
2. **Biosecurity** measures - both on the farm and at ports of entry must be enhanced to ensure the disease doesn't enter Canada or our farms.

3. **Zoning:** The ability to identify, establish and control the zone around a disease outbreak is critical to rapid disease eradication and maintaining access to Canada's pork export markets. Investments in traceability and disease surveillance capacity are necessary. In addition, the Government of Canada must negotiate zoning recognition agreements with governments in key export markets.
4. **Public awareness:** Everyone must do their part to prevent ASF from being introduced in Canada and understand the impacts if it ever is. The challenges of communicating with a wide range of differing stakeholders, both before and during an outbreak, must be addressed. As an example of the complexity of the task, Canada must be able to simultaneously communicate with its 7,000 commercial pork producers, an additional 7,000 small-scale or "backyard" farms, colleagues in the United States and Mexico, and consumers in Canada and in key export markets. Each group requires a unique solution.

Producers are asking for continued collaboration and multi-year funding from the federal government to address these four ASF priorities.

To learn more about Canadian pork producers' priorities for the 2019 federal election please visit www.cpc-ccp.com and follow the Canadian Pork Council on twitter: @cdnpork.