



Pacific Horticultural &
Agricultural Market Access
Plus Program
Supported by Australia and New Zealand

Friday 22 April, 2022

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

African Swine Fever Action Plan launched

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (“BAF”) with the assistance of Pacific Horticultural & Agricultural Market Access Plus Program (“PHAMA Plus”), the Ministry of Agriculture (“MOA”) and other stakeholders pulled resources to develop an Action Plan to keep Fiji safe African Swine Fever (“ASF”) and boost preparation in the event of any possible outbreak. The official handing over the documents to BAF was done on 12 April 2022.

The documents handed over include:

1. National ASF Action Plan for Fiji
2. National Implementation Plan for National ASF Action Plan
3. ASF Response Strategy for Fiji
4. Biosecurity Code of Practice for Rearing Pigs in Fiji
5. Discussion paper on “Relief Recovery Mechanisms Emergency Animal Disease Outbreaks”

The Action Plan and related documents guide the implementation of nationally agreed actions for a strategic and risk-based approach to enhance Fiji’s ability to prevent the introduction of ASF, detect it early if it is introduced and to prepare for a swift response.

ASF is a highly contagious viral disease that affects and kills wild and domesticated pigs. The disease is transmitted through direct contact with infected pigs and indirect contact through ingestion of contaminated feed and fomites (clothes, vehicles and farming equipment). With no vaccine or known cure, ASF has been identified as one of Fiji’s top animal health priorities in recognition of the potential to severely impact on commercial and subsistence pork production, as well as our social and cultural environments.

In November 2020, BAF signed an MOU with PHAMA Plus to support Fiji’s preparedness in case of ASF.

“Over the past two years, Fiji has worked hard on implementing necessary precautions against ASF mainly for preventing entry into the country. Our collaboration with PHAMA Plus and MOA helps to boost those precautionary measures and improve border security as well as capacity building for emergency preparedness,” BAF Acting Chief Executive Officer Surend Pratap said.

“As part of our collaboration, PHAMA Plus assisted BAF to procure PPE, disinfectants and surveillance equipment in order to enhance Fiji’s preparedness mainly to respond during an outbreak situation. Additionally, countrywide training programs were conducted for the animal health workforce that represents BAF and MOA. In the same note molecular diagnostic capacity of BAF animal laboratory was also enhanced with this project and BAF team now able to diagnose ASF with methods of ELISA, PCR and Rapid test kits. Farmer training and awareness programs were also conducted from the commercial level to the subsistence level around the country to raise farmer awareness about ASF.”



Pacific Horticultural &
Agricultural Market Access
Plus Program
Supported by Australia and New Zealand

The documents were prepared by Impact Consulting Group (ICG) for PHAMA Plus, by drawing on input and feedback from a diverse group of experts and stakeholders gained through a national workshop in 2020, followed by a number of consultative sessions. This input has assisted the identification of the core biosecurity activities to prevent, detect and prepare for ASF, and to validate the actions proposed in these documents.

“We are not taking any chances on African Swine Fever and therefore we are undertaking various training of our own staff and commercial farmers, should there be a case of outbreak, should there be a slip. These were the trainings that were undertaken by BAF in collaboration with PHAMA Plus with the Ministry, our staff and the commercial parts,” Fiji’s Minister of Agriculture Dr. Mahendra Reddy said while addressing Parliament on Monday 4 April 2022.

In 2019, BAF took swift action by banning the personal importation of pork and pork related products into Fiji due to the limited traceability of the disease with personal consignments and the increased global transmission of ASF. BAF currently only allows commercial imports of pig products from Australia and New Zealand, which are free from ASF.

“While Fiji is currently free of ASF, it is a threat to the Pacific with the disease now present in Papua New Guinea and with the easing of travel restrictions. PHAMA Plus is pleased to support efforts to keep Fiji ASF free and safeguard livelihoods that depend on pigs,” PHAMA Plus Team Leader Andrew Piper said.

“In addition to working in Fiji, PHAMA Plus continues to support the Government of PNG to manage the ASF outbreak and with the Pacific Community (SPC) to strengthen animal health capacity in the region. This includes having technical specialists available, awareness raising and distribution of diagnostic kits to test pig health in the field.”

According to the 2020 Fiji Agriculture Census, about 8,515 farming households are involved in pig farming with a total known stock of 58,420 pigs in the country.

ENDS

Farmers and pig owners particularly need to be on the lookout and report any unusual symptoms or deaths of pigs to their nearest BAF office or notify the team via info@baf.com.fj or Animal Health Surveillance Number 5997.

For media queries, BAF Acting Communications & Public Relations Executive Kritesh Sharma on ksharma@baf.com.fj OR PHAMA Plus Communications Manager Filipe Naigulevu on f.naigulevu@phamaplus.com.au