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Thematic portfolio



African swine fever: responding to the global threat



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Control measures are required both before departure and on arrival to effectively prevent the transmission of African swine fever (ASF) across borders. Collaboration with the relevant organisations is paramount to deliver the message to international travellers to neither bring in nor take out any prohibited animal products, and also to implement strict border control measures at the port of entry.

The transmission of viruses, including ASF virus (ASFV), is often mediated by humans, and one of the major pathways of the global spread of ASF is the international movement of people and goods. As of 26 December 2019, the Animal Quarantine Service (AQS) of Japan had detected 86 pork products that tested positive for ASFV by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) in passenger luggage from ASF-affected countries, and live virus was isolated from two of these. This demonstrates the extremely high risk of ASF incursion by such pathways into ASF-free countries (including Japan), and the urgent need for strict border control measures.

Measures are required both before departure and on arrival to effectively prevent the introduction of ASF. To achieve this, concerted efforts and close collaboration between public- and private-sector stakeholders is of the utmost importance.

Collaboration with relevant organisations for effective risk communication

Collaboration with relevant organisations is key to reaching various types of international travellers, to urge them to neither bring in, nor take out, any prohibited items on arrival or departure. Embassies, airlines and travel agencies have good access to international travellers. Japan has requested airlines to make an in-flight announcement and show posters at check-in counters. Collaboration is also taking place with relevant organisations to inform foreign workers and international students coming to Japan. Foreign postal services have been notified through the Universal Postal Union.

Border control measures at the port of entry

To implement border control measures on arrival, Japan has increased the number of detector dogs and animal quarantine officers to detect the illegal entry of animal products. With the close cooperation of the Customs Office, the livestock products declaration form has been revised to increase the visibility of prohibited animal products that require a passenger declaration. In addition, penalties for the illegal transport of prohibited animal products are now more stringently enforced, especially for malicious or repeated cases.

[More information is available from the website of the Animal Quarantine Service of Japan \(AQS\)](http://dx.doi.org/10.20506/bull.2020.1.3127)

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DOSSIER

Border control measures to prevent the introduction of ASF

Lessons from the Japanese experience

KEYWORDS

#African swine fever (ASF), #border control, #communication, #Japan, #quarantine, #risk, #transboundary animal disease.

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