



PRESIDENCY OF THE  
**COUNCIL OF  
MINISTERS**  
EIGHT CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



Office of the  
Spokesperson

September 27, 2019

## **Press release**

### **African swine fever in Timor-Leste**

Since the beginning of September 2019, there were registered a number of cases of infection and deaths of pigs in Timor-Leste, caused by African swine fever. Many of these cases have been reported by the owners of the pigs in Díli. To identify the disease, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAP) collected samples of affected pigs and sent them to a laboratory in Australia for testing.

The results of the laboratory tests conducted in Australia confirmed that African swine fever (ASF) has already entered Timor-Leste and that 41% of the samples were contaminated with the disease.

Up until September 19, 2019, in Díli, the MAP recorded nearly 400 cases of pigs who died and another 400 that are contaminated with the disease.

Historically, Timor-Leste has been free of African Swine fever. In order to guarantee this, Decree-Law No. 21/2003 on the quarantine regime, and specifically in its article 56, defines that the importation of pigs and products derived from countries affected by African swine fever is prohibited.

When the disease began to spread in the Asian region, the MAP organized a seminar on the disease on June 13, 2019, as a preventive measure. The aim of this seminar was to hold a technical discussion between the MAP and other directly relevant public services, such as



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customs, AIFAESA, PNTL, UNTL, or SERVE, to study the possibilities of biosecurity reinforcement and control in Timor-Leste, regarding this animal disease.

African swine fever is a viral disease of African origin. Although it has already been a known disease for many years, so far no treatment or vaccine has been found to prevent or treat the disease. At this time there is an outbreak of African swine fever in the Asian region. Until September 2019, the Asian countries in which there is already confirmation of the outbreak are China, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Laos, Myanmar, North Korea and Mongolia (FAO data, 2019).

In Timor-Leste, African swine fever puts at risk about 400.000 pigs with more than 70% of Timorese families dependent on the raising of pigs for their livelihoods.

Regarding public health issues, the MAP clarifies that African swine fever is not a zoonotic disease, i.e. the disease does not pose a risk to humans.

The immediate action that is currently underway is a suspension of the movement of pigs between Dili and the other municipalities. The services of the control posts for the transport of animals were reinforced and, with cooperation of the security authorities, measures were implemented to restrict the movement of animals, namely pigs, between Dili and the other municipalities.

The MAP is in close cooperation with the Government of Australia, to take measures such as testing the samples, in order to have definitive confirmation of contamination with African swine fever.



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The MAP is also, in conjunction with the World Organization of Animal Health, also known by the acronym OIE, producing information materials to explain the disease and the precautions to take. **ENDS**



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