

# USDA declares national swine fever emergency

LANCASTER — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared an animal health emergency exists since the presence of African swine fever in Haiti represents a serious threat to the United States swine industry and consequently, to the national economy.

Taken to initiate measures for countering spread of the highly contagious disease to the United States, its territories and possessions, the action was jointly agreed to by the out-going and incoming Administrations.

The emergency declaration specifies that the "...emergency arising out of the existence of African swine fever in Haiti, a very close neighboring country, constitutes a threat to the swine in-

dustry of the United States."

Puerto Rico is considered especially vulnerable to ASF, because it is located approximately 75 miles from the Island of Hispanola, shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In turn, active tourism and trade between Puerto Rico and the United States would make it difficult to prevent spread to the mainland. There is no effective vaccine or treatment for ASF.

The declaration authorizes "a program in cooperation with the Government of Haiti, and with other governments and international organizations or associations, in carrying out operations or measures to eradicate, suppress or control

African swine fever in Haiti or to prevent or retard African swine fever or vectors thereof from being introduced to and disseminated into the United States."

The Haitian government has requested assistance in combating the disease. Mexico and Canada have expressed interest in cooperating in the eradication effort.

ASF first invaded the western hemisphere in 1971. That outbreak, in Cuba, resulted in destruction of a half-million hogs. In 1978, the disease was confirmed in the Dominican Republic, and Brazil, with Haiti becoming infected in 1979. Cuba experienced a second outbreak early in 1980, which was rapidly eliminated.

The Dominican Republic elected to slaughter its entire swine population in order to eliminate ASF.

With a loan provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development and technical assistance from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the slaughter program was complete in September 1980, and, after a period of surveillance, the country is now restocking with new pigs.

African swine fever is a highly contagious virus disease affecting only swine. Its symptoms in the acute form include high fever, red blotches on the skin, internal bleeding, collapse of the animal and nearly 100 percent death losses

in the herd.

The disease spreads rapidly like virulent forms of hog cholera. A milder, chronic form of ASF, with reduced death losses, has been experienced in some countries.

The disease is spread by infected live pigs and pork products, contaminated garbage, feed or water, contaminated premises, clothing, footwear, and improper disposal of infected carcasses.

Eradication of ASF is possible only by quarantining all farms in the vicinity of an outbreak, destroying all infected and exposed swine, surveying swine herds and cleaning and disinfecting all infected and exposed farms.



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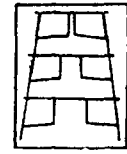
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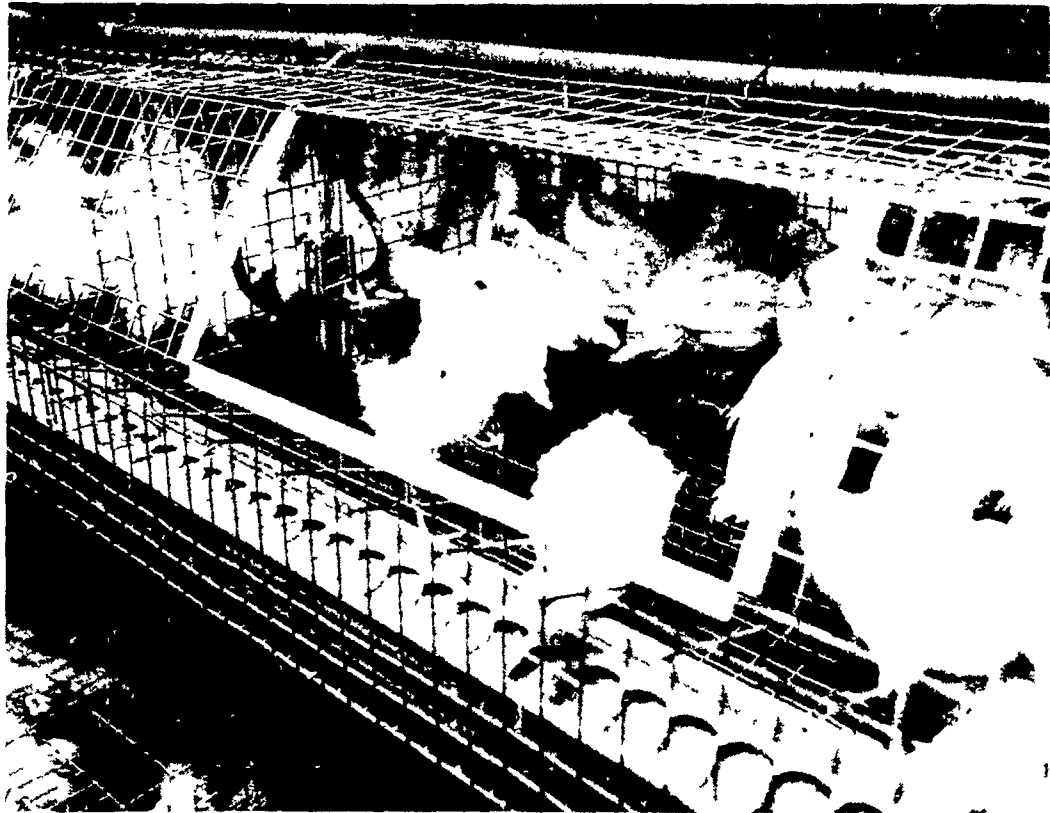
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