

ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (BCBP) Funding Critical to Foreign Animal Disease Prevention

SITUATION

If a foreign animal disease (FAD) such as Foot-and-Mouth Disease, African swine fever or classical swine fever were to enter the U.S. swine herd, it would cause billions of dollars in losses due to animal deaths, depopulation, disposal and clean-up costs. It would also immediately close the export markets on which U.S. pork producers depend. The most likely path for a FAD to enter the country would be through the importation of infected animals or contaminated products. While the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has the regulatory authority to decline or permit entry of animals and products, the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (BCBP) implements and enforces the USDA rules.

BCBP agriculture specialists and officers at U.S. ports of entry and international mail facilities work to target, detect, intercept and prevent the entry of these potential threats before they have a chance to do any harm. They check containers and trucks for smuggled products and use specialized x-ray machines that detect organic materials. They utilize agricultural canines trained to sniff out meat and plant materials in international airport passenger areas. BCBP is the first line of defense to protect American pork production and the rest of agriculture from disease.



The USDA recently announced additional funding for 60 new canine teams to bring the BCBP's "Beagle Brigade" to full strength, a development welcomed by NPPC. However, BCBP's established staffing levels indicate they are short approximately 600 agricultural inspectors. This is far less than the number of inspectors needed to protect U.S. agriculture in the face of a growing global epidemic of African swine fever and other diseases that threaten plant and animal health in the United States.

NPPC POSITION

NPPC requests that Congress, through the Homeland Security and Agricultural Appropriations Committees, immediately provide critically needed funding for 600 new BCBP agricultural inspectors. NPPC also urges BCBP and the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to negotiate an increase in inspection user fees so stable, long-term funding is available to sustain the level of inspection required to protect U.S. agriculture from the growing threat of pests and diseases.

FAST FACTS

- Foot-and-Mouth Disease, classical swine fever and African swine fever are considered highly transmissible diseases and must be reported to the World Animal Health Organization (OIE). Reporting these diseases would lead to an immediate loss of export markets.
- Recovering from a FAD requires significant, costly efforts related to depopulation, disposal and clean up. Ongoing surveillance testing would be required to prove elimination of a disease and before the OIE could declare the United States disease free. Lengthy negotiations with trading partners following such a declaration would be required to re-open export markets.
- African swine fever has moved through Russia and Eastern Europe since 2007 and in August 2018 was reported in China's swine herd. It has been estimated that the number of sows China has lost to African swine fever is more than the entire U.S. sow herd.



NPPC CONTACTS

Dr. Liz Wagstrom, Chief Veterinarian, wagstroml@nppc.org

Danielle Sikes, Director, Congressional Relations, sikesd@nppc.org; (202) 347-3600

