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ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 26: Other high-level policy issues to be considered by the Executive Committee

INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLERS COULD BE CARRIERS OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

(Presented by Canada (Canadian Food Inspection Agency))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International travellers using our global air transportation network can carry a highly contagious swine (pig) disease known as African swine fever (ASF) across international borders. There is no vaccine or treatment for ASF.

ASF has not been detected in Canada.

ASF is a viral disease that only impacts pigs and is not harmful to humans, which means that Canadian pork is safe to eat. However, ASF poses a significant risk to the health of the Canadian swine herds, the pork industry and the Canadian economy.

The disease can spread rapidly through both direct and indirect contact with infected pigs and pork products. This means that travellers moving between countries can unknowingly carry the deadly pig disease through pork products they carry with them when travelling.

ICAO's support in communicating with their membership the need for travellers to declare when entering Canada, farm visits and all goods (including pork products) acquired while outside Canada.

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| <i>Strategic Objectives:</i> | This working paper relates to Strategic Objectives in Security & Facilitation. |
| <i>Financial implications:</i> | The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is looking to ICAO to assist in communicating to the membership and affiliated organizations the threat of African swine fever. Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) maintains a high level of vigilance and continues to increase contraband detection capacity; however, it is imperative that the global transportation industry help augment the message to help stop the global spread of ASF. |
| <i>References:</i> | www.inspection.gc.ca/asf ; https://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/animal-diseases/african-swine-fever/ |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background on ASF: In the last year, African swine fever (ASF) has been spreading rapidly in Asian and certain European countries. ASF only affects members of the pig family. It is a serious viral disease of pigs that can cause fever, internal bleeding and high death rates. It is highly contagious for pigs and can spread rapidly through both direct and indirect contact with infected pigs or pig products, as well as contaminated farm equipment, feed and clothing. The ASF virus is not transferable to humans and it does not pose a food safety risk.

1.2 Where is ASF found? ASF is routinely found in several African countries. Since 2007, the disease has spread across several countries in central Asia, including China for the first time in 2018, as well as several European countries. Distribution among countries changes, depending on new infections, re-infections and the success of eradication programs.

1.3 How is ASF transmitted and spread through pork products? The virus can survive for several months in fresh pork and processed pork products, which can be a risk for transmitting disease. One of the most common ways ASF is spread from country to country is through people feeding pigs uncooked food scraps or wild pigs consuming food scraps in landfills that are infected with the virus.

2. ROLE OF TRAVELLERS

2.1 Declare: Travellers are reminded to declare all animal and food products at the border to prevent the spread of foreign animal diseases such as African swine fever (ASF). Also, pork or pork by-products from ASF affected countries, regardless of whether it is fresh, frozen, processed or cooked, is also not allowed to be brought into the country.

2.2 If you visited a farm: Travellers are also reminded to take additional precautions when visiting farms, including washing all clothing and footwear worn while travelling to a country that is infected with ASF prior to re-entering Canada. If you have visited a farm or animals, it is crucial that you declare your visit upon re-entry into Canada. Also, if while travelling you had contact with wild boars, postpone any pig farm visits in Canada for at least 14 days.

3. GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ACTION

3.1 Import controls: The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has strict regulatory import controls in place to prevent the entry into Canada of animals and their products and by-products from countries where diseases of concern are known to occur. CFIA works closely with the Canada Border Services Agency to enforce these import controls, with a focus on travellers entering Canada from affected countries, to reduce the risk of these diseases entering Canada.

3.2 Detector Dog Program: The Government of Canada provided funding of up to \$31 million to increase the number of detector dogs at Canadian airports to help prevent illegally imported meat products from entering into Canada. This funding will allow for the addition of 24 detector dog teams over 5 years, bringing the total number to 39 Food, Plant, and Animal Detector Dog Service (DDS) teams.

3.3 International collaboration: A global threat, ASF cannot be addressed in isolation and the Government of Canada is committed to collaboration between international representatives, industry, and the provinces to prevent and mitigate the risk of this animal disease. Canada welcomed over 150 delegates from 15 countries to a Forum on ASF to develop a framework on preparedness planning, enhanced biosecurity, business continuity and coordinated risk communications.

3.4 Outreach to travel industry: The Canadian Food Inspection agency continues to reach out to international airlines flying into Canada, international airport authorities, and air transportation authorities and associations to request assistance in disseminating information to travellers about the risks of ASF and their declaration requirements in Canada. This messaging focuses on monetary penalties associated with failure to declare. Channels for messaging range from website banners on partner websites, to inflight messaging, to signage, to advertisements, to social media and airport announcements.

4. **REQUESTED ACTION**

4.1 Outreach to membership to generate a greater awareness of ASF amongst the travel industry to help inform travellers.

4.2 Encourage membership to consider opportunities within their organization to generate awareness among travellers of their declaration requirements upon entry to Canada e.g. web and social media communications, email notifications and other publications.

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 The support of the ICAO in its leadership role to help communicate this important message about African swine fever is important to Canada's prevention and disease management efforts. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency thanks the ICAO and its membership for reviewing the information outlined here and welcomes opportunities to partner on actions in preventing ASF from being introduced to Canada.

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