African swine fever (ASF)

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INTRODUCTION

African swine fever (ASF) is a highly lethal viral disease of domestic pigs that manifests as an acute or peracute haemorrhagic fever. Subacute and chronic forms have been described but are unusual under natural conditions. It is caused by a large DNA virus, Asfivirus, the only member of the family Asfarviridae, which was created for it in 2000. It is the only known biologically-transmitted DNA arbovirus. All ASF viruses are considered to belong to a single serotype, but more than 20 genotypes have been identified, most of which occur naturally in eastern and southern Africa. In spite of half a century of research no vaccine is available, although efforts to develop one are ongoing. Its classical area of distribution is southern and eastern Africa, where it exists in an ancient sylvatic cycle between warthogs (Phacochoerus aethiopicus) and argasid ticks of the Ornithodoros moubata complex. It was first recognised as an entity different from classical swine fever in Kenya and was described as such in 1921. Soon after that it was reported from Angola and South Africa. Its arrival in Portugal, probably from Angola, in 1957 and again in 1959, with spread to Spain and subsequently to a number of countries including Brazil demonstrated its catastrophic effects on highly developed pig industries. Its eradication from the Iberian Peninsula took more than 30 years, and it is endemic in the Italian island of Sardinia, as well as in most sub-Saharan African countries where pigs are kept. It was introduced into the Caucasus in 2007 and efforts to eradicate it are ongoing.

(Also refer to the World Animal Health Information Database (WAHID))
Video link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkgcsuS7qHM