African Swine fever (ASF)

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IMPORTANT OUTBREAKS

High mortality means that any outbreak of ASF will be of some importance, if only to the owners of the affected pigs. However, the ASF events listed below are considered to be of particular importance because of the wide-ranging effect that they have had.

- The wave of ASF that swept through Europe after the introduction of ASF into the Iberian Peninsula in 1959/60, reaching the Caribbean and Brazil, and resulting in ASF becoming endemic in the Iberian Peninsula for more than 30 years and apparently permanently in the island of Sardinia.
- The West African pandemic that started in Côte d'Ivoire in 1996 and resulted in ASF becoming endemic in several countries that were not previously infected.
- The outbreaks in the Caucasus that started in Georgia in 2007 and swept through the region, where it appears to have become established in the southern dependencies of Russia bordering the Caucasus with spread to more than 130 foci, some in north-western Russia not far from the borders of Estonia and Finland, creating fears of another introduction into Western Europe.

An increase in ASF activity and movement has been observed in eastern Africa since 1993. Outbreaks occurred in Mozambique south of the Save river for the first time and in Kenya for the first time in 30 years. In 1997/8 ASF was introduced into Madagascar for the first time, where it has become endemic, and from which it spread to Mauritius in 2007, requiring considerable efforts to eradicate it. Tanzania also suffered outbreaks in various parts of the country, and outbreaks occurred in provinces in Zambia not previously affected. Although the sylvatic cycle is present in these countries, all the outbreaks were traceable to movement of pigs and pork and not to contact with the wild hosts and vectors. This is important because it indicates a change in the epidemiology of the disease that is probably linked to the way pigs are kept and marketed, and has most likely been the source of the outbreaks in the Caucasus.