

# Amendments to African Swine Fever (ASF) Control Measures in England

Consultation document

February 2022

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We work closely with 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable.

Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Consultation on Amendments to African Swine Fever (ASF) disease control measures, Consultation Coordinator, Defra, 2nd Floor, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX

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#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. African swine fever (ASF) is an exotic notifiable viral disease affecting pigs, wild boar and other porcine animals, which spreads easily and causes high mortality. The UK has never had an outbreak of ASF but the risk of ASF introduction to the UK remains at medium, meaning there is a risk of disease occurring regularly. An increasing number of European countries have reported ASF in the last two years, with large geographical jumps (more than 100km) between some outbreaks. We are proposing to amend domestic legislation in England with additional disease control measures for ASF to facilitate disease prevention and control and minimise the negative impact of an outbreak.
- 1.2. The first case of ASF was reported in the European Union (EU) in 2014 and has since been reported in 16 countries. The disease continues to be present in domestic pigs across eastern Europe and in January 2022 has been confirmed in domestic pigs in North Macedonia, and in wild boar in mainland Italy for the first time. The outbreak in Italy is 800km from the nearest wild boar outbreak in Germany and shows the ability of ASF to spread long distances to a previously unaffected region, often via human-mediated routes. In August 2018, the virus was reported in China and continues to spread, affecting 16 countries as of 2021. ASF continues to be reported in wild boar in Hong Kong and the Malaysian peninsula, and Thailand reported its first case of ASF in domestic pigs in 2022, with the disease spreading rapidly across the country. In July 2021, ASF also reappeared in the Americas after an absence of almost 40 years. To date only two European countries have managed to eradicate the disease: Belgium and the Czech Republic.
- 1.3. There is no approved vaccine for ASF. An outbreak of ASF in the UK would have a significant negative effect on the pig industry, abattoirs, and processors. The current disease control measures regarding ASF in Great Britain are established by The Diseases of Swine Regulations 2014 and are outlined in

- the Disease Control Strategy for African and Classical Swine Fever in Great Britain<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4. These measures include declaring a Protection Zone (PZ) and Surveillance Zone (SZ) (with a minimum radius of 3 km and 10 km respectively) around the infected premises, and a Feral Pig Control Zone (FPCZ) (with a minimum radius of 10 km) where ASF is detected in feral pigs. The aim of these zones is to reduce the likelihood of onward spread of disease by imposing controls on the movement of pigs and pig products.
- 1.5. The new measures proposed through this legislative change focus on ASF regionalisation and would introduce three additional types of Restricted Zones (RZs) in England: RZ I, RZ II and RZ III. These zones would designate distinct regions in the proximity of the ASF incursion, where additional measures would be applied to reduce the risk of spread within and outside of those zones. Additional biosecurity disease control measures are also proposed that will assist in reducing the spread of ASF virus further, enabling trade to resume or continue with trading partners. These new measures will align England with EU legislation and allow trade to continue from unaffected areas in England with the EU and third countries in the event of an ASF outbreak.
- 1.6. The purpose of this consultation is to ask for views on the proposed disease control measures, outlined in Section 4.

<sup>1</sup> 

## 2. How, and why we are consulting with you

- 2.1. The purpose of this consultation is to seek views on the proposed legislative amendment to include additional disease control measures for African swine fever for England in the GB legislation Diseases of Swine Regulations 2014.
- 2.2. This is an England only consultation. The specific amendments proposed in this consultation will have affect only in England. Animal disease is a devolved matter and amendments to the Diseases of Swine Regulations are made separately by each administration. We appreciate the cross-cutting nature of this matter and are aware that the Devolved Administrations are also considering developing policy in this area. We therefore intend to share responses gathered with the Devolved Administrations.
- 2.3. This informal consultation is directed at stakeholders in the pig industry across Great Britain that will be affected by changes to requirements in relation to animal disease control. The consultation is also aimed at bodies that may work with the government or industry as part of animal disease control.

## Responding to this consultation

- 2.4. Please respond to this consultation using the citizen space consultation hub.
- 2.5. By email to <u>consultation.coordinator@defra.gov.uk</u> using the subject line: Consultation on Amendments to African Swine Fever (ASF) control measures in England.
- 2.6. Or in writing to Consultation on Amendments to African Swine Fever (ASF) control measures in England, Consultation Coordinator, Defra, 2nd Floor, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX
- 2.7. Responses should be received by 28th March 2022. This is a 4-week informal consultation.

#### After the consultation

- 2.8. A summary of responses to this consultation will be published on the government website at: www.gov.uk/defra. An annex to the consultation summary will list all organisations that responded, but will not include personal names, addresses or other contact details.
- 2.9. Defra may publish the content of your response to this consultation to make it available to the public without your personal name and private contact details (e.g. home address, email address, etc.).
- 2.10. If you click 'Yes' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, you are asked to state clearly what information you would like to be kept as confidential and explain your reasons for confidentiality. The reason for this is that information in responses to this consultation may be subject to release to the public or other parties in accordance with the access to information law (these are primarily the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs), the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)). We have obligations, mainly under the EIRs, FOIA and DPA, to disclose information to particular recipients or to the public in certain circumstances. In view of this, your explanation of your reasons for requesting confidentiality for all or part of your response would help us balance these obligations for disclosure against any obligation of confidentiality. If we receive a request for the information that you have provided in your response to this consultation, we will take full account of your reasons for requesting confidentiality of your response, but we cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.
- 2.11. If you click on 'No' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, we will be able to release the content of your response to the public, but we won't make your personal name and private contact details publicly available.
- 2.12. There may be occasions when Defra will share the information you provide in response to the consultation, including any personal data with

- external analysts. This is for the purposes of consultation response analysis and provision of a report of the summary of responses only.
- 2.13. This consultation is being conducted in line with the Cabinet Office "Consultation Principles".
- 2.14. Please find our latest privacy notice uploaded as a related document alongside our consultation document.
- 2.15. If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them to: Consultation on amendments to African Swine Fever (ASF) disease control measures, Consultation Coordinator, Defra, 2nd Floor, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX Or email: <a href="mailto:consultation.coordinator@defra.gov.uk">consultation.coordinator@defra.gov.uk</a> using the subject line: Consultation on Amendments to African Swine Fever (ASF) control measures in England.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. African swine fever (ASF) is an exotic notifiable viral disease, affecting pigs, wild boar and other porcine animals, which spreads easily and causes high mortality. This disease can affect all pigs regardless of whether they are kept domestically or living in the wild.
- 3.2. Routes of transmission for ASF include direct contact between pigs/wild boar, or indirectly from transmission via fomites (clothing and footwear, vehicles, feed, bedding, housing), transmission because of environmental contamination and ingestion of infected or contaminated food or feed.
- 3.3. The virus can survive for prolonged periods of time in pork and pork products. Large geographical leaps in outbreaks have been observed, which have been linked with human movement and the transport of the virus in infected food with subsequent ingestion by pigs/wild boar.
- 3.4. An outbreak of ASF can cause significant impacts and costs to both taxpayers and industry. If an outbreak occurs, government intervention is important to eradicate the disease and regain disease freedom as quickly as possible, allowing trade to continue/resume in as reasonable time as possible. A swift response relies on suspect disease being reported to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) as early as possible.
- 3.5. The Disease of Swine Regulations 2014 is GB legislation that outlines the disease control measures to prevent and control the spread of ASF.
- 3.6. Currently in these regulations in case of an outbreak in kept pigs or other porcine animals a 3 km protection zone and a 10 km surveillance zone will be put in place surrounding the infected premises. These zones would prohibit trade and limit movement within and from those zones. Movements of pigs, pig products and any other thing liable to transmit disease, including carcases, pig genetic material or animal feed, are only permitted under licence from the relevant authority. Cleansing and disinfection of the premises, vehicles and other items used for transport, and additional biosecurity requirements in abattoirs, are also subject to the regulation.
- 3.7. The proposed new measures introduced through this legislative change focus on ASF regionalisation and additional disease control measures that will assist in early detection and reducing the spread of ASF virus further, enabling

trade to resume or continue with trading partners. The proposed additional measures will align to current EU control measures for ASF. In April 2021, the EU Commission Implementing Decision (2021/605) set out new special control measures for ASF for EU countries wishing to continue trading with other EU countries and exporting pigs and/or pig products to third countries outside of the EU. Without introduction of these control measures, the EU and other third countries may refuse the import of pigs and/or pig products from England in the event of an ASF outbreak. Multiple UK exporting companies would need to negotiate with receiving countries to allow export in the event of an outbreak.

## 4. Proposal

- 4.1. It is proposed to amend the Diseases of Swine Regulations 2014 with additional disease control measures to improve our response to African swine fever (ASF) in England.
- 4.2. The proposed control measures will add additional Restricted Zones (RZ I, II and III) in addition to the current Protection and Surveillance Zones, with the aim to:
  - Improve early detection of disease, facilitate disease control, and reduce the risk of spread of ASF from an infected premises to the rest of the UK.
  - b. Increase the likelihood of continuing to trade with key trading partners, particularly in the EU, in the event of an outbreak of ASF in England.
  - c. Continue/resume trade/movements with the EU, Northern Ireland and third countries in the event of an ASF outbreak in England.

#### Restricted Zone III (RZ III)

- 4.3. For two or more outbreaks in domestic pigs, an RZIII would be declared around the SZs with a buffer RZI surrounding it. In an RZIII, the requirements would be more restrictive than in the RZI or RZII to ensure no spread of the disease from unknown infected domestic or wild animals.
- 4.4. Requirements in RZ III would include restrictions on movements of:
  - a. live kept animals (pigs or wild boar) for trade and movements to slaughter and to animal-by-product (ABP) approved plants.
  - b. fresh meat and meat products including casings (for sausages).
  - c. germinal products from kept animals.
  - d. ABP, litter, manure and used bedding.
  - e. wild porcine animals (i.e. wild boar, hybrids, or feral pigs), fresh meat and meat products and other products of animal origin and carcases.
- 4.5. Derogations to these restrictions would require a licence from the relevant authority and would only allow movements with additional testing, treatment and/or biosecurity requirements. These are likely to include testing of animals to be moved to slaughter or other premises, and treatment of pork products. These would also be part of RZ I restrictions which acts as a buffer around RZ III.

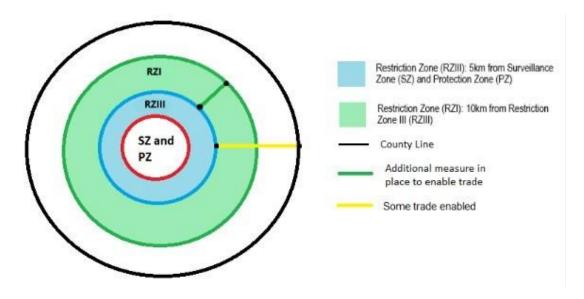


Figure 1 RZ I and RZ III. Please note this is an example diagram and not an accurate representation.

#### Restricted Zone II (RZ II)

4.6. A RZ II would be put in place around an FPCZ (Feral Pig Control Zone), with a buffer RZ I surrounding that. RZ II restrictions would apply to pig keepers within the zone, though these are less severe than those for RZ III, as the disease is not in domestic pigs. The derogations available would enable movements of pigs in RZ II to other premises (subject to other measures and standstill at the destination) or immediate slaughter. They would also allow fresh meat and meat products, germinal products, manure and ABP to move with other measures in place to restrict any potential virus spread.

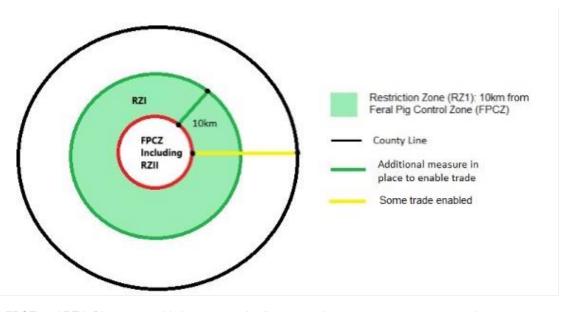


Figure 2 FPCZ and RZ I. Please note this is an example diagram and not an accurate representation.

#### Restricted Zone I (RZ I)

4.7. A RZ I would be put in place around either a RZ II or RZ III, which would act as a buffer between the infected area and the disease-free area. There would be some restrictions in RZ I, though derogations would exist where, on the production of a veterinary risk assessment, the Secretary of State may decide not to put measures in place. These include movement restrictions on consignments of live porcine animals.

#### Measures in Restricted Zones

- 4.8. We are proposing to use a surveillance approach where the first two dead pigs after weaning on each premises are tested by pathogen identification tests for ASF every week in restricted zones I, II and III. This has been used on pig premises in the Czech Republic and Belgium to quickly identify disease. Both countries successfully eradicated ASF in wild boar. The pathogen testing surveillance approach using pathogen identification testing for ASF enabled them to quickly rule out swine fevers in any on-farm deaths. Your views will be sought on the practicality of this approach.
- 4.9. A ban on the movements of wild boar/feral pigs would prohibit movements within England, to other administrations and to third countries. This would apply regardless of the ASF status of England. A derogation would apply for zoos and farmed wild boar, permitting movements under certain circumstances.

#### Additional Biosecurity Measures

- 4.10. The specific additional biosecurity measures to be considered include:
  - a. There must be no direct or indirect contact between kept porcine (i.e. pig-like) animals and at least:
    - i. other kept porcine animals from other establishments.
    - ii. wild porcine animals.
  - appropriate hygienic measures such as a change of clothes and footwear on entering and leaving the premises where porcine animals

- are kept or in establishments where pigs or pig products are processed;
- c. Washing and hand sanitising, and disinfection of footwear at the entrance/exit to the premises where pigs are kept.
- d. The absence of any contact with kept pigs for a period of at least 48 hours after any hunting activity related to wild porcine animals or any other contact with wild porcine animals.
- e. A prohibition on unauthorised persons or means of transport entering the establishment, including the premises, where porcine animals are kept.
- f. Good record-keeping, as a minimum, of persons and means of transport accessing the establishment where the porcine animals are kept.
- g. The premises and buildings of the establishment where porcine animals are kept must:
  - be built in such a way that no other animals can enter the premises and buildings or have contact with the kept porcine animals, their feed, bedding material, animal by-products and litter.
  - ii. allow for the washing and disinfection of hands.
  - iii. allow for the cleansing and disinfection of the premises.
  - iv. have appropriate changing facilities for footwear and clothes at the entrance/exit to the premises where porcine animals are kept.
- h. Stock-proof fencing of at least the premises where the porcine animals are kept and buildings where feed and bedding are kept. This will mean double fencing in areas where there are known to be wild boar/feral pigs or where pig premises are close to neighbours with pigs.
- i. A biosecurity plan taking account of the profile of the establishment and national legislation must be in place; that biosecurity plan shall at least include:
  - the establishment of the 'clean' and 'dirty' areas for personnel appropriate to the farm typology, such as changing rooms, shower, separate dining room.

- ii. the setting up and the review, when applicable, of the logistical arrangements for the entry of new kept porcine animals into the establishment.
- iii. the procedures for the cleansing and disinfection of the facilities, transport, equipment, and personnel hygiene.
- iv. rules on food for personnel on site, including not bringing pork or pork products onto the premises and not feeding leftovers or swill to any pigs on the premises.
- v. a prohibition on the keeping of porcine animals by the personnel, where relevant and if applicable.
- vi. dedicated recurrent awareness programme for personnel on the establishment.
- vii. the setting up and the review, when applicable, of logistical arrangements in order to ensure a proper separation between different epidemiological units and to avoid porcine animals being in contact, directly, or indirectly, with animal by-products and other units.
- viii. the procedures and instructions for enforcement of biosecurity requirements during the construction or repair of the premises or buildings.
- ix. internal audit or self-evaluation for enforcing the biosecurity measures.

## 5. Timeline

- 5.1. Our ambition is to deliver these legislative amendments by 22nd September 2022. An indicative, high-level timeline only can be given at this point.
- 5.2. On this basis, the following high-level timeline will be followed:
  - 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 consultation opens
  - 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022 closure of this consultation and consideration of responses

### 6. Consultation

- 6.1. We would like to hear from you on the following questions. These should be submitted to Citizen space or to the address given at the end of this document, by 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022.
- 6.2. This is an England only informal consultation. We appreciate the cross-cutting nature of this matter and are aware that the Devolved Administrations are also considering developing policy in this area. We therefore intend to share responses gathered with the Devolved Administrations.

6.3. Would you like your response to be kept confidential?
Yes □ No □
If yes, please state what information you would like to be kept confidential and your reasons for confidentiality.
6.4. Please tell us who you are responding as, selecting from the following:
Sector trade body or membership organisation □
Research organisation □
Individual □
Other □ (please specify below)
6.5. What is the name of your organisation?

6.6.	. Your email address
6.7.	Please indicate which location your response relates to, selecting from the following (select all that apply):
	England □
	Northern Ireland □
	Scotland □
,	Wales □
(	Other □ (please specify below)
6.8.	Does your organisation represent multiple parties that will be affected by the control measures to contain ASF?
,	Yes □ No □
	If yes, please give a brief description of who your organisation represents.
	. Were you or your organisation previously aware of the disease control measures for the management of African swine fever in Great Britain? Yes $\ \square$ No $\ \square$
	0. What information on African swine fever and biosecurity would you be interested in receiving from the government? Tick all that apply. African swine fever disease information □ African swine fever international disease monitoring information □
	Biosecurity legal requirements □

Biosecurity best practice □
Other □ (please specify below)
6.11. Which of the following do you think pose the greatest risk in relation to African swine fever disease control?  Human contamination in feral pig areas □
UK Border controls □
Biosecurity practices □
Foreign exports □
General public knowledge of disease □
Other □ (please specify below)
6.12. How far do you agree or disagree that with the proposed measures outlined in this document disease freedom could be declared within 12 months following an outbreak originating in kept pigs?
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □

6.13. How far do you agree or disagree that with the proposed measures outlined in this document disease freedom could be declared within 18 months following an outbreak originating in <u>feral pigs</u>?

Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □
6.14. Our underlying assumptions have been modelled using 2016-2019 trade data. 2020-2021 data is impacted by the coronavirus pandemic as well as changes in trade to countries such as China who have been dealing with their own outbreak of African swine fever during this period. To what extent do you agree this is the correct data to use?
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □
6.15. How far do you agree or disagree that carcase balancing (e.g. cuts of pork such as trotters, ears, etc.) may not be exported in the event of an outbreak?
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □

6.16. How far do you agree or disagree that carcase balancing products would not be absorbed into the domestic market in the event of ar outbreak?
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □
6.17. How long (in hours) would you expect those affected by these changes to take to familiarise themselves with new regulations?
6.18. How far do you agree or disagree that farms have biosecurity plans in place in order to prevent disease outbreaks generally?
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □

Yes □ No □	Not sure $\square$ Not a member of this assurance scheme $\square$
Please give a	reason for your answer:
operate und	ar do you agree or disagree that for farmers who der the Red Tractor Assurance Scheme, these cleansing requirements would be something they would do of?
Strongly disag	gree □
Disagree □	
Neither agree	nor disagree 🗆
Agree □	
Strongly agre	e □
Please give a	reason for your answer:

2 – 3 hours □
4+ hours □
6.23. The proposed biosecurity measures include double perimete (stock-proof) fencing of at least the premises where pigs are kept and buildings where bedding, feed, animal by-products and litter are kept Should these measures apply to all premises, only to premises in areas with feral pigs, or only those premises where feral pigs are within 10 km? Please give reasons for your answer.
Stock-proof fencing should apply to all pig premises $\square$
Stock-proof fencing should apply only to premises in areas with feral pige populations $\Box$
Stock-proof fencing should apply only to premises in areas with feral pigopulations where the feral pigs are within 10 km of the premises $\Box$
None of the above options are suitable $\square$
Please give reasons for your answer.
Flease give reasons for your answer.
6.24. We welcome your views on the implementation of the proposed stock-proof fencing in areas where feral pigs are present. We are proposing to lay the fencing once an outbreak has been confirmed. We are proposing the stock-proof fencing would remain for the duration of the outbreak. This would be done at a cost to the owner or keeper of the premises. To what extent to you agree or disagree with this approach? Please give reasons for your answer.
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □

Strongly agree □
6.25. Will fencing cost roughly £6 per metre, in areas where stock-proof fencing is required?
Yes □ No □ Not sure □
If no, how much would you expect it to cost?
6.26. Will this fencing be able to be laid at a rate of 4 metres per hour?
Yes □ No □ Not sure □
If no, how long would you expect it to take?
6.27. We are proposing to use a surveillance approach where the first two dead pigs after weaning on each premises are tested using pathoge identification testing for ASF every week in Restricted Zones I, II and I for the duration of an outbreak. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach? Please give reasons for your answer.
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □

	Strongly agree	
6.2	28. Under the proposed measures, pathogen identification testing was be required for all pigs that are licensed to move from or within the Restricted Zone III. One approach under consideration for continuous surveillance is to extend this testing to all pigs kept in all Restrict Zones (RZ I, II, and III), including pigs that will not be moved from the kept premises. This includes movement to slaughter. To what extent you agree or disagree with this approach? Please give reasons for your response.	he us ed eir do
	Strongly disagree □	
	Disagree □	
	Neither agree nor disagree □	
	Agree □	
	Strongly agree □	
6.2	29. Is it fair to assume there would be roughly 84 adult pigs in average consignment of pigs moving moved from one location another? This includes movement to slaughter.	
	Yes □ No □ Not sure □	
	If no, how many pigs would you expect in an average consignment?	

6.30. How long do you anticipate it should take for farmers to apply for approval from APHA to move pigs from Restricted Zones?

Please give reasons for your answer.

6.33. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed measures may directly limit the number or range of suppliers in the industry?
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □
6.34. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed measures may indirectly limit the number or range of suppliers in the industry?
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □
6.35. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed measures may
limit the ability of suppliers in the industry to compete?
Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □
6.36. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed measures may reduce suppliers' incentives to compete vigorously?
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □
6.37. How far do you agree or disagree that the proposed measures may limit the choice and information available to consumers?
Strongly disagree □
Disagree □
Neither agree nor disagree □
Agree □
Strongly agree □
6.38. What, if any, are the key barriers to the introduction of the proposed measures that we should be aware of?

6.39.	What, if any, unintended consequences do you think the proposed
measures will have?	
6.40.	Will the proposed measures disproportionally affect any particular
pai	rt of the sector?
	We propose implementing these measures in Autumn 2022. Is this asonable or would a phased approach to implementation be eferable?
6.42. <b>sh</b>	Are there any other (non-regulatory) approaches the government ould consider in the response to African swine fever disease control?
6.43.	Do you have any other comments on this topic?