

South Korea confirms first swine fever outbreak

September 17 2019



Millions of pigs have been culled across Asia in a bid to curb the spread of the disease

South Korea on Tuesday reported its first cases of African swine fever, becoming the latest country hit by the disease that has killed pigs from

China to North Korea, pushing up pork prices worldwide.

Five [pigs](#) found dead at a [farm](#) in Paju, a city near the inter-Korean border, were confirmed to have been infected with the virus, an official with Seoul's agriculture ministry told AFP.

"At this point, it's too early to confirm if the case stemmed from the North," the official added.

Seoul's agriculture minister Kim Hyun-soo said 3,950 pigs from three farms in Paju were to be culled.

The country has raised its animal [disease](#) alert to the highest level and a nationwide 48-hour ban on the movement of pigs was issued, he added.

The virus is not harmful to humans but causes [haemorrhagic fever](#) in pigs that is almost always fatal.

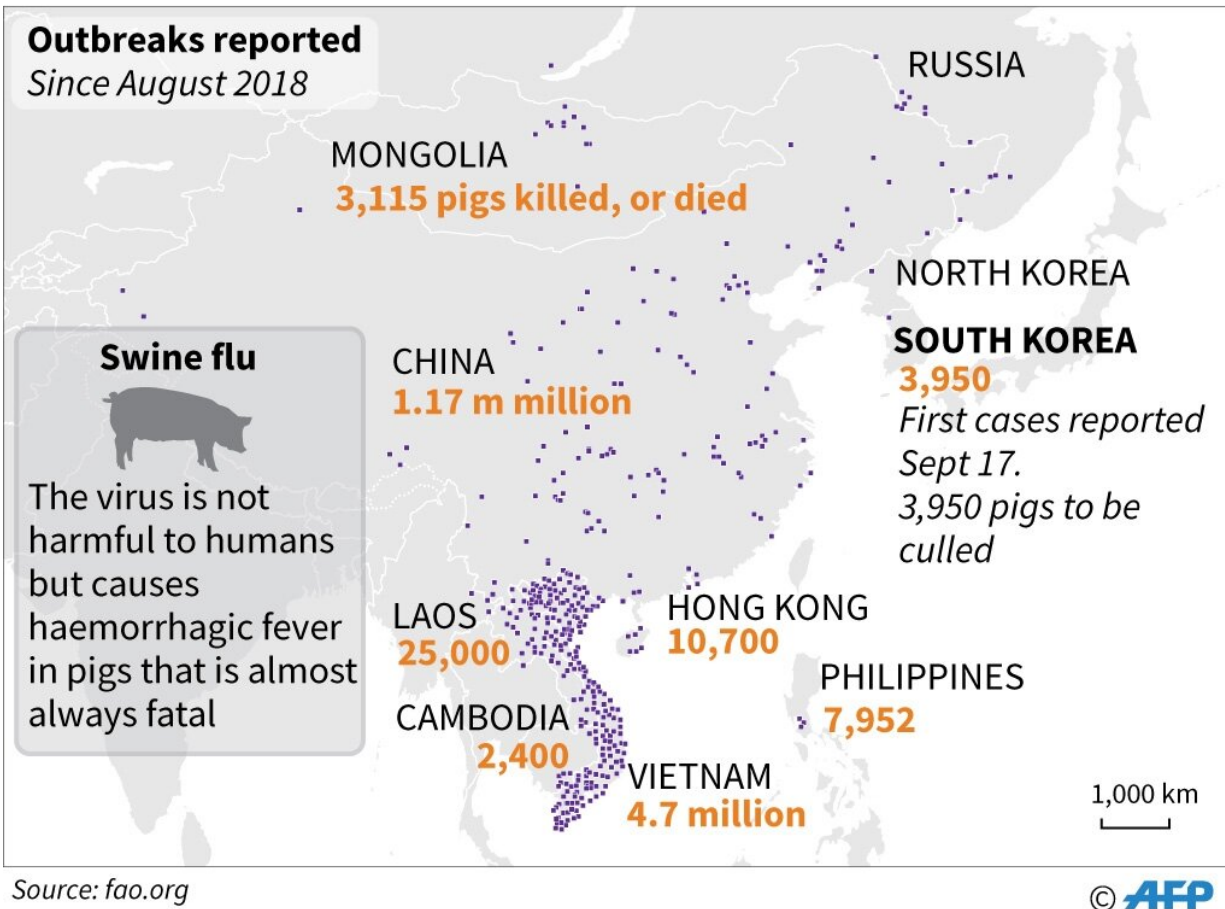
There is no antidote or vaccine and the only known way to prevent the disease from spreading is a mass cull of affected livestock.

Although this was the first confirmed outbreak of African swine fever in the South, the country has battled a number of animal diseases in the past.

In 2014, outbreaks of avian flu in poultry farms resulted in the culling of more than 500,000 birds.

A 2011 outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease resulted in the culling of nearly 3.5 million cattle, pigs and other [animals](#).

African swine fever in Asia



Map showing parts of Asia, where African swine fever spread has led to millions of pigs being culled since August 2018, as of Sep 17, 2019, according to FAO.

The confirmed cases in the South came around three months after Pyongyang told the World Organisation for Animal Health that dozens of pigs had died from the disease at a farm near the Chinese border, according to the South's agriculture ministry.

In June, Seoul said the disease was "highly likely" to enter the country

from the North and ordered fences to be erected at farms along the border to prevent possible contact between pigs and wild boar.

There are around 6,700 pig farms across South Korea and pig farming accounts for 40 percent of the total livestock industry.

In May, the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization said pork prices had risen by up to 50 percent both in China and on the Chicago futures exchange as a result of the outbreak.

Last month, it said almost five million pigs in Asia had died or been culled because of the spread of the disease.

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