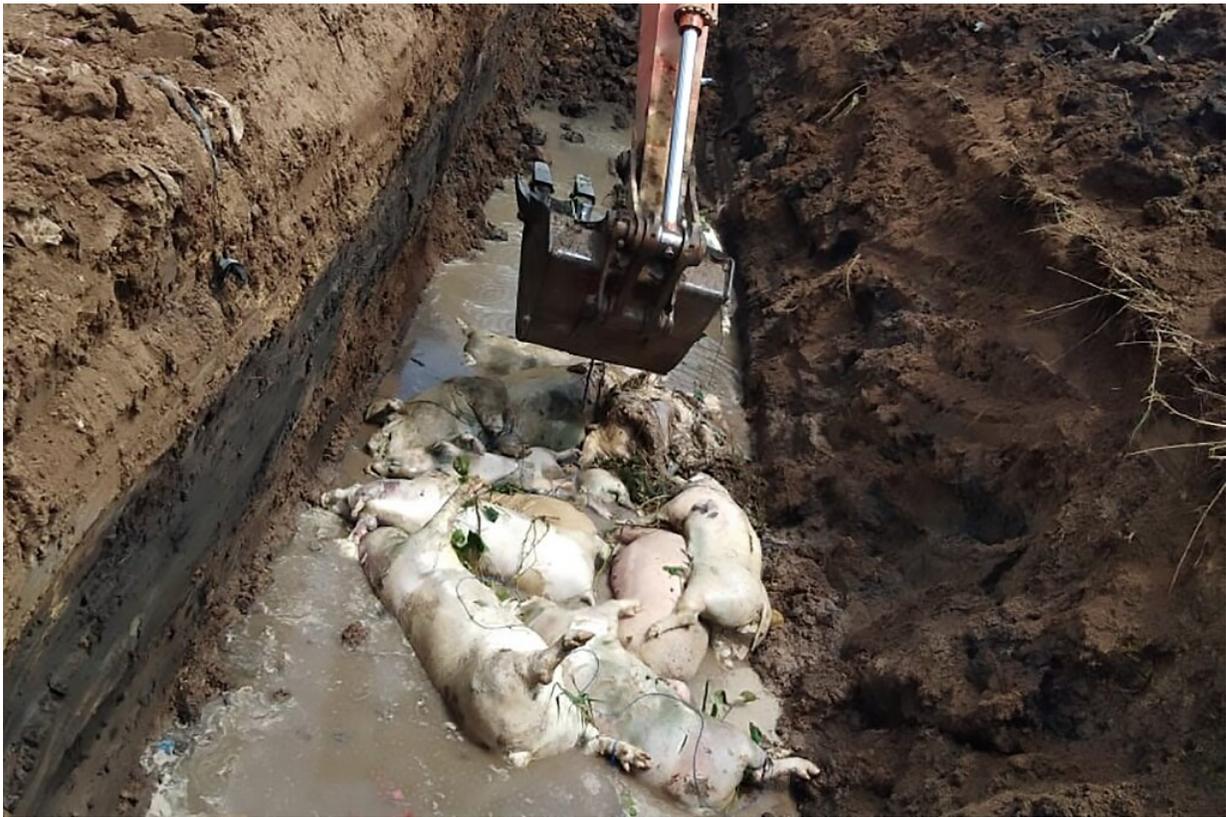


African swine fever kills nearly 30,000 pigs in Indonesia

December 19 2019



Authorities in Indonesia's North Sumatra are burying infected pigs in deep pits.

Tens of thousands of pigs have died from African swine fever in Indonesia's North Sumatra province, officials said Thursday, the first time the virus has been detected in the country.

The disease has devastated swine herds in China and elsewhere in Asia, and initially Indonesia authorities put the death of 27,000 pigs down to hog cholera—a different virus with similar symptoms.

But Fadjar Sumping Tjatur Rasa, an official at Indonesia's Ministry of Agriculture, told AFP that laboratory tests had recorded evidence of African swine fever in 16 regencies and cities in North Sumatra.

"It had never (before) occurred in Indonesia," he added.

While the virus cannot be transmitted to humans, it is almost 100 percent fatal in pigs.

Although Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation—and eating pork is forbidden by the Koran—the country also boasts a small Christian majority in North Sumatra, and Bali is a Hindu island whose signature dish is roast pig.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Agency said it was working with the government on containment, but the outbreak in Indonesia poses unique challenges.

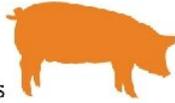
Unlike China, where huge herds are reared and processed in factory-like conditions and outbreaks can be contained, in Indonesia most pigs are raised in backyard sties or on small farms, and sold at markets where the virus can easily spread.

Outbreaks of African swine fever have also been recorded in Myanmar, Laos, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia and East Timor.

African swine fever in Asia

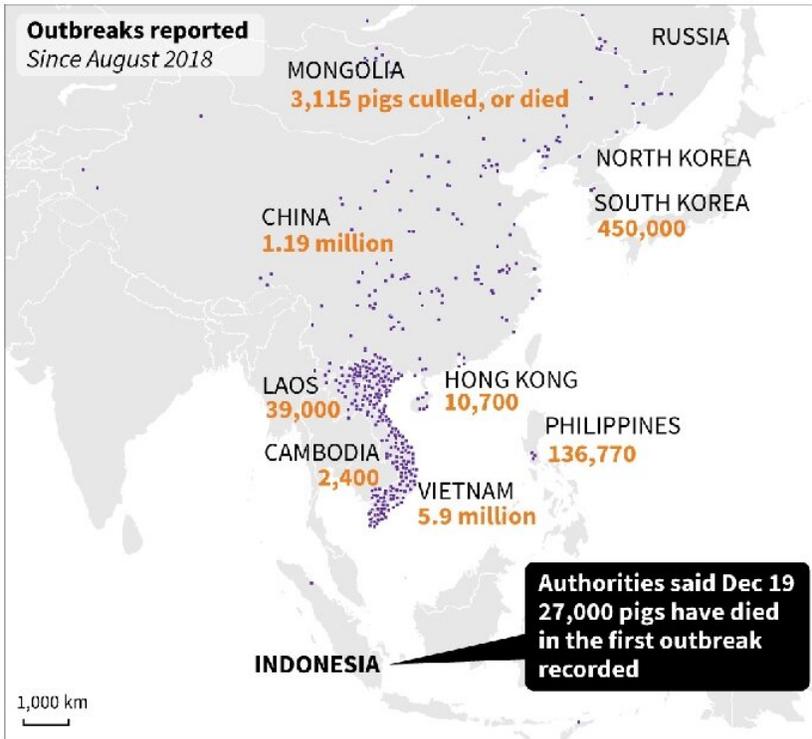
Swine flu

The virus is not harmful to humans but causes haemorrhagic fever in pigs that is almost always fatal



Market price in China

Live pigs, CNY/kg



Source: fao.org/pig333.com © AFP

Map showing parts of Asia, where African swine fever has led to millions of pigs dying or being culled since August 2018

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