

Annual Report

April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

CanSpotASF

Enhanced surveillance activities to protect the commercial swine sector from the impacts of African swine fever



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Disclaimer: Information in the CanSpotASF Annual Report is intended for regional and national stakeholders within Canada and is considered unofficial. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency remains the organization responsible for all official reporting about African swine fever.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

	Organization name (English)	Organization name (French)
AAFC/ AAAC		
	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Agriculture et agroalimentaire Canada
AHC/SAC	Animal Health Canada	Santé animale Canada
ASF/PPA	African swine fever	Peste porcine africaine
ASF EMB	ASF Executive Management Board	
CAHSN/ RCSZ	Canadian Animal Health Surveillance Network	Réseau canadien de surveillance zoosanitaire
CAHSS/SCSSA	Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System	Système canadien de surveillance de la santé animale
CASV/ACVP	Canadian Association of Swine Veterinarians	Association canadienne des vétérinaires porcins
CAVP/ACPV	Canadian Association of Veterinary Pathologists	Association canadienne des pathologistes vétérinaires
CBSA/ASFC	Canadian Border Services Agency	Agence des services frontaliers du Canada
CFIA/ACIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency	Agence canadienne d'inspection des aliments
CSHIN / RCSSP	Canadian Swine Health Intelligence Network	Réseau canadien de surveillance de la santé porcine
CPC/ CCP	Canadian Pork Council	Conseil canadien du porc
CWSHIN	Canada West Swine Health Intelligence Network	
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada	Environnement et changement climatique Canada
NCFAD/CNMAE	National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease	Centre national des maladies animales exotiques
OAHN	Ontario Animal Health Network	Réseau ontarien pour la santé animale
RAIZO		Réseau d'alerte et d'information zoosanitaire





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CanSpotASF is the national surveillance system for early detection of African swine fever (ASF) in swine in Canada. It is part of a complete ASF preparedness and planning system supported by the ASF Executive Management Board (EMB), a joint initiative of the swine sector and federal/provincial/territorial governments. The purpose of this report is to describe the second year of CanSpotASF. The intended audience is stakeholders in the swine sector and governments. The time period for the CanSpotASF Year 2 Annual Report was April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022, Previous work is detailed in the 1st Annual Report (Pillar 2 -Preparedness Planning - Animal Health Canada).

For surveillance purposes, the Canadian swine population can be functionally categorised into three distinct segments; domestic-commercial; domestic-smallholding and wild pigs. Surveillance for ASF for these populations is planned in a stepwise and risk-based manner. As of March 2022, there were two ongoing surveillance tools; passive regulatory surveillance and risk-based testing at approved animal health laboratories. Additional new tools were under development.

ASF has been a federally reportable disease in Canada since 1991. As such, all suspect cases must be reported to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for further investigation. This requirement, referred to as passive

regulatory surveillance, was the first surveillance tool in place. It aligns with the World Organization for Animal Health international standards.

The second CanSpotASF tool, risk-based laboratory surveillance, started as a pilot project in August 2020. It centers on proactive testing of samples collected through routine diagnostic activities at animal health laboratories. Because the clinical signs of ASF can be mistaken for common diseases of swine, and because ASF can be slow-moving and insidious, ASF testing of certain cases, referred to as eligible cases, at approved laboratories offers an opportunity for rule-out testing for ASF.

This annual report includes 2021-2022 surveillance results for the regulatory passive surveillance and the approved laboratory testing, along with an overview of activities completed in 2021-2022 to support ASF detection in smallholdings, and an update on planning for risk-based testing at abattoirs.

Key achievements for 2021-2022 included:

- Completion of a second year of risk-based testing of eligible cases at approved laboratories.
- Completion of the planning and engagement phase for risk-based testing of condemned carcasses at abattoirs.
- Increased veterinary training to support veterinary service delivery to the smallholder swine sector.

KEY RESULT

Between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022, 363 ASF tests were completed. All tests were negative. Of these, five were completed as part of CFIA investigations of suspect cases, and 358 were completed as part of Approved Laboratory Surveillance Testing.



BACKGROUND

African swine fever (ASF) is a serious disease in swine. Canada is an ASF-free country, however, spread of ASF in other regions of the world since 2018 created heightened risk of disease introduction. The detection of ASF in Canada would have significant and immediate impacts (i.e. border closure with immediate stoppage of trade activities). Early detection provides the greatest opportunity to limit the scale and economic impact of an outbreak should one occur in Canada.

Under the *Health of Animals Act* and Regulations, the CFIA is mandated to conduct and evaluate ASF surveillance. In 2019, the CFIA, along with other government agencies and the swine sector, created the ASF EMB, a collaborative ASF preparedness planning group. The primary focus of the EMB was to bring together federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) governments and swine sector representatives to provide guidance on ASF preparedness, including surveillance for ASF in Canada.

The EMB identified surveillance as a priority. In 2019, it created a working group consisting of federal and provincial government, swine sector, academic, and animal health laboratory representatives to:

- 1) Describe existing surveillance initiatives in Canada;
- 2) Determine whether additional surveillance was required in domestic and/or wild populations; and
- 3) Provide recommendations regarding surveillance objectives and activities for both domestic and wild pig populations.

This working group produced a recommendation paper in October 2019 (*African Swine Fever: Surveillance Working Group Recommendations*). As a result, a collaborative working group made up of technical experts from federal and provincial governments, the swine sector and academia, which leveraged existing swine surveillance infrastructure, was formed in January 2020 to champion activities enhancing ASF surveillance. It was named the CanSpotASF Technical Committee (TC).

SURVEILLANCE OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

CanSpotASF is the Canadian national ASF surveillance system. It includes existing and enhanced surveillance activities aimed at protecting the commercial swine sector from the impacts of ASF.

CanSpotASF is designed as a peacetime surveillance system, but it may support capacity building for increased surveillance should there be an outbreak in Canada.

OBJECTIVES

The TC established that *the primary objective of CanSpotASF is to enhance early detection testing for ASF.* A secondary objective is to support the claim that Canada's swine sector remains free of ASF.



SURVEILLANCE PRIORITIES AND PLAN

To establish immediate priorities for CanSpotASF, the TC developed a list of ASF management and surveillance options that could be applied to Canada's domestic and wild pig populations; surveillance objectives and, an inventory of existing work being undertaken by various groups across Canada.

As such, the following priorities were identified:

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

- 1. Develop terms of reference for the TC.
- 2. Develop communications and a reporting structure for CanSpotASF.

SURVEILLANCE PRIORITIES

- 3. Continue the mandatory CFIA passive regulatory surveillance.
- 4. Establish ASF testing of eligible cases at approved laboratories.
- 5. Develop a process for ASF testing of eligible abattoir condemnations.
- 6. Strengthen engagement with smallholdings in ASF prevention and preparedness.
- 7. Assess risk of ASF introduction and transmission to and between commercial, smallholdings and wild pig populations.

Priorities 1 through 4 were completed in Year 1 (2020-2021).

In 2021-2022, the primary focus was feasibility assessment and planning for priority 5. In addition, work continued on priority 6 and some work was undertaken on priority 7. For priority 7, the Canada West Swine Health Intelligence Network (CWSHIN) contracted Politikos Research to conduct a risk analysis on the introduction of ASF in western Canada. It later extended the contract to include a sensitivity analysis of the introduction model. Work on these was completed by the end of March 2022.

PROGRESS ON GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

GOVERNANCE

Terms of reference have been in place since 2020 and include a description of the communication and reporting structure. Since 2020, the TC have established a number of active working groups (Appendix 1, which includes the list of members). The governance structure remained in place throughout 2021-2022 without major changes.

COMMUNICATION

The TC identified communications as a critical part of any collaborative national surveillance initiative, including CanSpotASF. As such, the communications working group was tasked with developing communication processes and producing and distributing needed communication materials. Public communications documents were posted on the Animal Health Canada website (Pillar 2 - Preparedness Planning - Animal Health Canada).



Table 1. Selected CanSpotASF communications documents and activities

Document	Published	Updated
Risk-based early detection at abattoirs: Technical document	Feb 2022	n/a
Risk-based early detection at abattoirs: Information for plant managers	Mar 2022	n/a
CanSpotASF 1st Annual Report (2020/2021)	Jul 2021	n/a
Risk-based early detection at approved laboratories: Technical document	Jun 2020	Mar 2022
Risk-based early detection at approved laboratories: Information for veterinarians	Jun 2020	n/a
Risk-based early detection at approved laboratories: Information for producers	Jun 2020	n/a
CanSpotASF Surveillance of African Swine Fever in Canada: One page overview	Jun 2020	n/a
2021-2022 Communications activities	Provider	Dates
Quarterly surveillance updates (regional and national calls and reports)	CSHIN,	Oct 2021,
	CWSHIN, OAHN, RAIZO, Atlantic	Jan 2022
		Apr 2022
Update to the ASF EMB	TC	Jul 2021
Smallholder swine course for veterinarians – English version	CAHSS	Oct 2021
CFIA staff training for abattoir surveillance	CFIA	March 2022

REPORTING

Quarterly surveillance reports were compiled by the regional swine networks (Atlantic, OAHN, RAIZO, CWSHIN) and the Canadian Swine Health Intelligence Network (CSHIN) (Figure 1). Approved Canadian Animal Health Surveillance Network (CAHSN) laboratories across Canada supplied ASF test data to the regional swine networks who compiled the results. CSHIN brought these results together and produced a single national quarterly report. This information was shared at quarterly regional network and CSHIN calls.

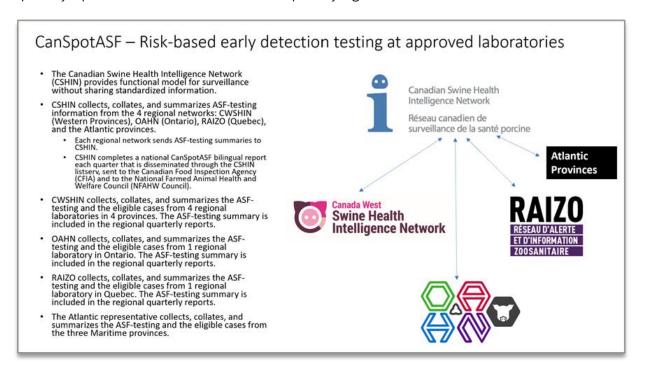


Figure 1. Surveillance results reporting structure for CanSpotASF Approved Laboratory Testing through CSHIN

The Annual Report was compiled by the TC and included separate sections focused on;

- I. Management reporting including governance, planning, implementation, finances, and communications and;
- II. Annual surveillance results reporting including regulatory passive surveillance and risk-based laboratory surveillance.



SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES

ONGOING SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES

CFIA INVESTIGATION OF SUSPECT CASES

As part of Canada's passive regulatory surveillance program, any suspected cases of ASF must be reported to the CFIA immediately for follow-up investigation.

In fiscal year 2021-2022, there were 2 situations involving follow-up as a result of an ASF suspicion, involving the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia (Table 2). Triggers for investigation included; suspicion raised by CAHSN laboratories and suspicion raised at a provincial abattoir. In both situations, samples were referred to the National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease (NCFAD) for testing (RT- PCR); a total of 5 animals were tested. All testing yielded negative results.

Table 2. CFIA passive regulatory surveillance investigations

Month	Prov	Trigger	History / Clinical presentation	Population	Samples tested	Number of Animals Tested	Tests
April 2021	ВС	CAHSN lab referral	Mortality, splenomegaly with multifocal hemorrhage on kidneys, septicemia; sows on site clinically healthy	Domestic - commercial	3 sets of tissues	Tissues from 3 piglets	ASF RT-PCR
May 2021	ON/ QC*	Clinical signs - provincial slaughter plant	Septicemia and splenomegaly	Domestic- commercial	2 sets of tissues	Tissues from 2 sow carcasses	ASF RT-PCR

^{*}Both ON and QC were implicated because the ON abattoir had received the animals from QC.

RISK-BASED EARLY DETECTION AT APPROVED LABORATORIES

Testing of eligible cases at approved laboratories, which started in August 2020, continued throughout the 2021-2022 reporting period. As of March 31, 2022, 523 eligible cases had been tested, of which 358 were tested between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 (Table 3). **All results were negative.**

In March 2021, the testing criteria changed to allow for the testing of any eligible case that included appropriate tissues, whether or not there was a histopathology request. Prior to this, only cases submitted for histopathology could be tested for ASF. This change now provides the option for laboratories and veterinarians to request ASF testing on a higher proportion of eligible cases.

Table 3. Early detection at approved laboratory results for 2021-2022 (table provided by CSHIN)

Maritimes Period / Période	Number of eligible cases / Nombre de cas admissibles	Number of negative cases / Nombre de cas négatifs	Number of positive cases / Nombre de cas positifs
Cumulative 2021-2022 / Cumulatif 2021-2022	22	15	0
Cumulative 2020-2021 / Cumulatif	7	1	0
RAIZO (Quebec) Period / Période	Number of eligible cases / Nombre de cas admissibles	Number of negative cases / Nombre de cas négatifs	Number of positive cases / Nombre de cas positifs
Cumulative 2021-2022 / Cumulatif	277	112	0
Cumulative 2020-2021 / Cumulatif	205	51	0
OAHN (Ontario) Period / Période	Number of eligible cases / Nombre de cas admissibles	Number of negative cases / Nombre de cas négatifs	Number of positive cases / Nombre de cas positifs
Cumulative 2021-2022 / Cumulatif	202	60	0
Cumulative 2020-2021 / Cumulatif	82	17	0
CWSHIN (Western Provinces) Period / Période	Number of eligible cases / Nombre de cas admissibles	Number of negative cases / Nombre de cas négatifs	Number of positive cases / Nombre de cas positifs
Cumulative 2021-2022/ Cumulatif	174	171	0
Cumulative 2020-2021/ Cumulatif	160	96	0
All regions Period / Période	Number of eligible cases / Nombre de cas admissibles	Number of negative cases / Nombre de cas négatifs	Number of positive cases / Nombre de cas positifs
Cumulative 2020-2022/ Cumulatif	1129	523	0

^{*}Disclaimer for Table 3: The number of eligible cases is calculated differently at the participating laboratories and the methodology differs amongst the reporting networks. The discrepancy between eligible cases and tested cases are due to technical factors such as; veterinarian or producer consent was not given, inadequate location information was provided with the submission, or the tissues submitted were not approved by the CFIA for ASF testing. CanSpotASF is a voluntary project.

PLANNING OF NEW SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES IN 2021-2022

Two activities were under development: risk-based surveillance at abattoirs and strengthening engagement of smallholdings in ASF surveillance.

The development of new surveillance activities adopted the following process.

- 1. A working group explored and described practical options.
- 2. The TC reviewed and recommended action to the EMB for consultation and support.
- 3. EMB member organizations committed resources.

RISK-BASED EARLY DETECTION AT ABATTOIRS

The abattoir working group, formed in December 2020, continued to work throughout the period to plan a pilot for early detection surveillance at abattoirs using risk-based testing of certain full carcass condemnations. The working group developed a technical document that detailed which cases would be eligible for testing, and described sampling, testing and response procedures. The technical document was approved by the TC in February 2022 and posted on the Animal Health Canada website (Pillar 2 - Preparedness Planning - Animal Health Canada).

Over the course of 2021, federal plants made the commitment to participate in abattoir surveillance. Federal inspection staff received training on eligibility criteria and on how to collect and submit samples to approved laboratories for testing. Sampling started in April 2022.

With the exception of British Columbia, all provinces have done significant work on outreach to plant managers regarding the surveillance pilot at provincial abattoirs. Training of provincial inspection staff also occurred throughout 2021-2022. It is expected that most provinces will initiate sampling soon after federal sampling begins.

There is some risk that strain on resources caused by the cross-Canada avian influenza outbreak that started in December 2021 may delay sampling and reduce sample numbers for the first six months of the pilot.

STRENGTHEN ENGAGEMENT OF SMALLHOLDINGS IN ASF PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS

In 2020-2021, the smallholding working group identified eight priorities. The working group continued to meet through 2021-2022 to evaluate progress against priorities, share information about various initiatives in the sector and to collaborate on these initiatives wherever possible. Priorities and key initiatives from members of the working group are presented In Table 4.



Table 4. Priorities for the smallholder swine working group and related initiatives

Priority	Initiatives (2021-2022)
Cataloguing and sharing information about surveillance and animal health and welfare initiatives targeted at smallholdings	Ongoing smallholder working group meetings
that are managed by various stakeholders across Canada.	CAHSS resources library
Cataloguing available health management resources for	CAHSS Smallholder page (live)
smallholdings and supporting use of these.	Prairie Swine Centre smallholder ASF website (in production)
Create and promote education on ASF for smallholders.	CFIA study and campaign
Support increased availability of veterinary services for smallholdings and increase smallholder swine training for	CAHSS Course for veterinarians with CE credit (EN)
practicing veterinarians.	OMAFRA project
Assess risk of ASF introduction and transmission between and within smallholdings.	CWSHIN Western Canada African Swine Fever Risk Analysis
Promote and support registration of smallholdings in provincial identification (PID) systems and nationally through PigTrace.	n/a

ASSESS RISK OF ASF INTRODUCTION AND TRANSMISSION TO AND BETWEEN COMMERCIAL, SMALLHOLDING AND WILD PIG POPULATIONS

In December 2020, CWSHIN announced that the network intended to contract out a special project on an *African swine fever risk analysis*. An initial exercise to scope the ASF risk analysis was performed by CWSHIN's Technical Group along with representatives from CFIA and CAHSS. The scoping process resulted in this key question:

Relatively speaking where is the highest (one year) likelihood of an index case as defined by population and geographical area in the four western provinces – and how likely is the case to be detected?

CWSHIN contracted Politikos Inc. and the group immediately held a stakeholder call in March 2021. The report was delivered in November 2021 at which point CWSHIN decided to extend the contract to add a sensitivity analysis, with a final report by the end of March 2022.

COMBINED SURVEILLANCE RESULT

Between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022, CFIA investigations of suspect cases resulted in the ASF testing of five animals. An additional 358 cases were tested as part of the Approved Laboratory Surveillance Pilot. **All test results were negative**.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Governance, management, reporting and activity planning for CanSpotASF were funded through in-kind contributions of federal and provincial governments, the swine sector, swine health intelligence networks, and Animal Health Canada. Federal and provincial governments provided in-kind contributions to train federal and provincial inspection staff for the abattoir pilot.

Provincial governments provided the funding for approved laboratory sample testing.

CWSHIN provided the funding for the Western Canada African Swine Fever Risk Analysis.

FORWARD LOOKING 3-YEAR PLAN

Based on work completed to date, the CanSpotASF TC developed a forward-looking 3-year plan (Figure 2).

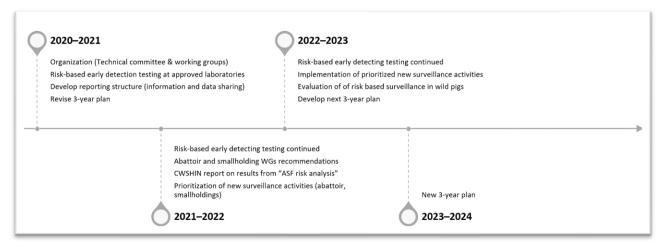


Figure 2. CanSpotASF 3-year work plan

2022 - 2023 GOALS

Based on the CanSpotASF 3-year plan, the deliverables for 2022-2023 are as follows:

- 1. Continue the passive regulatory surveillance.
- 2. Continue risk-based early detection testing at approved laboratories.
- 3. Begin the risk-based early detection testing at abattoirs early in the year and continue until March 2023.
- 4. Continue surveillance results reporting through CSHIN and the regional swine networks.
- 5. Continue the work of the smallholding working group, and the efforts to address priorities.
- Prioritize and recommended next steps to the EMB. One will likely be the development of documentation for risk-based surveillance in wild pigs.



CONCLUSION

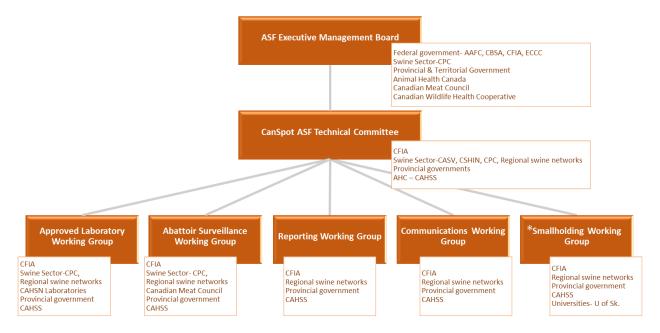
CanSpotASF is the first Canadian initiative in the swine sector to use a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach for governance, planning and implementation of enhanced surveillance for a foreign animal disease.

Achievements for the second year included continuation of the early detection testing at laboratories, and completion of the planning and engagement phase of early detection abattoir surveillance. In addition, the risk analysis and the smallholder swine course for veterinarians were key outputs.

The CFIA investigations of suspected cases remained consistent with previous years and resulted in 5 ASF tests between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022. The Approved Laboratory Surveillance Pilot, launched in August 2020, has provided testing for 523 eligible cases so far, with 358 tests taking place in 2021-2022. **All tests were negative**.

APPENDIX 1

Figure A1. Organizational structure of CanSpotASF under the ASF Executive Management Board



AAFC Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

AHC Animal Health Canada

CAHSN Canadian Animal Health Surveillance Network
CAHSS Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System
CASV Canadian Association of Swine Veterinarians

CBSA Canadian Border Services Agency
CFIA Canadian Food Inspection Agency

CSHIN Canadian Swine Health Intelligence Network

CPC Canadian Pork Council

ECCC Environment and Climate Change Canada

Regional swine Atlantic network, Ontario Animal Health Network (OAHN), Réseau d'alerte et d'information zoosanitaire (RAIZO),

networks Canada West Swine Health Intelligence Network (CWSHIN)

^{*}Smallholding working group works on ASF specific and broader priorities and links to CanSpotASF TC on specific matters relevant to ASF surveillance planning.



CanSpotASF Technical Committee and Working Group members 2021-2022

CanSpotASF Technical Committee Membership

Amy Snow (co-chair) Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Theresa Burns (co-chair) Canadian Animal Health Surveillance System/ Animal Health Canada

Christa Arsenault Government of Ontario

Christian Klopfenstein Canadian Association of Swine Veterinarians

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Heather Arbuckle Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Jette Christensen Canada West Swine Health Intelligence Network / Government Saskatchewan

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