

**COSTA RICA DECLARES ITSELF FREE  
FROM CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER**

Communication from Costa Rica

The following communication, received on 15 October 2009, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Costa Rica.

1. According to the official records kept by Costa Rica's National Animal Health Service (SENASA), there has been no confirmed case of classical swine fever (hereinafter referred to as CSF) in the country for more than ten years. The last reported occurrence of CSF was in 1997 and resulted in the sanitary slaughter of all animals infected with, suspected of carrying, or exposed to the virus in the village of México in the canton of Upala (Huetar Norte region).
2. The Costa Rican government, through SENASA, has developed a series of surveillance, control, prevention and eradication measures, such as training for the staff concerned and the creation of both a surveillance programme and a national swine health programme run by high-level professionals.
3. The control measures adopted include the implementation of modern and highly sensitive diagnostic tests by the veterinary services laboratory (LANASEVE), such as ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) and PCR (polymerase chain reaction).
4. Furthermore, a programme has been established with five basic principles, as follows:
  - CSF is a notifiable disease within national territory in accordance with Executive Decree No. 23368-MAG of 14 June 1994, amended pursuant to Executive Decree No. 24407-MAG of 8 June 1995, and Executive Decree No. 34669-MAG of 8 July 2008, published in Official Journal *La Gaceta* No. 156 of 13 August 2008; the latter lists the notifiable animal diseases, including CSF, and reiterates that all citizens are legally bound to report cases of CSF.
  - The active surveillance measures include an early detection system. SENASA has conducted specific serological studies in order to detect or eliminate infection by the CSF virus throughout the whole country and has thus ensured, by means of a rigorous semi-annual sampling system, ongoing active epidemiological surveillance throughout Costa Rica, in particular in the Northern Zone and on the northern border, which represent a high sanitary risk.

- Measures have been taken to prevent the introduction of the disease by means of stringent import and quarantine controls. SENASA's Department of Animal Quarantine is responsible for laying down the requirements governing the importation, exportation and transit of animals and products and by-products of animal origin subject to veterinary control which are to be applied at the country's various points of entry and exit, in compliance with international agreements and existing Costa Rican legislation, thus constituting the first level of control to prevent the entry and spread of disease causal agents.
- No vaccinations are given against the disease, rather other sanitary measures are adopted, such as prohibition of the use of CSF vaccines, passive surveillance through the follow-up of all reported, suspected and detected cases, and active surveillance through targeted sampling.
- The disease is not known to exist in the country's wild animal populations. OIE data reveal no epidemiological link as far as CSF is concerned between peccaries (wild animals found in Costa Rica) and domestic pigs. According to a clarification issued by the OIE, only the species *Sus scrofa* is susceptible to CSF; peccaries belong to the species *Tayassuidae* and are not therefore considered susceptible to CSF.

5. As stipulated by the OIE, a State or region must basically comply with the above-mentioned requirements in order to have CSF-free status; consequently, in accordance with established international standards, Costa Rica meets the necessary requirements and therefore declares itself to be a "country free from classical swine fever".

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