



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

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Programs

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

Washington, DC  
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Dr. Hernan Rojas Olavarria  
Ministerio de Agricultura  
Servicio Agricola y Ganadero  
Department Proteccion Pecuaria  
Avda Buenes 140, Casilla 4088  
Santiago, Chile

SEP 9 2002

Dear Dr. Rojas:

Please accept this expression of my appreciation for the hospitality and cooperation you demonstrated toward the site visit team that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service sent to Chile recently as part of our evaluation of your country's classical swine fever (CSF) status. I believe that significant progress was made in our evaluation process.

During the visit, the team made a commitment to provide you with a written summary of our issues of concern identified during the visit. This letter will summarize the four areas that were identified as potential risk factors for introduction or reintroduction of CSF into Chile.

The four issues relate to diagnostic testing capacity, surveillance, movement of potentially contaminated empty live-haul trucks from adjacent CSF-affected regions into Chile, and the theoretical possibility that CSF in Chile's wild boar population might pose a risk to domestic swine. We have the following comments and recommendations regarding the four issues.

#### 1. Diagnostic testing

Although your laboratory has adequate preliminary screening test for CSF, the team expressed concern regarding the laboratory's capability to confirm diagnosis of CSF. In this regard, the battery of tests currently used is not sufficient to confirm diagnosis in Chile.

The problem is compounded by the fact that the biosecurity level of the laboratory is not sufficient to allow use of live virus. Thus the appropriate positive controls that require live virus cannot be used in Chile. Since samples must be sent to Spain for confirmatory testing, final diagnosis could require several weeks. Disease could spread during this time.

To address this problem, we suggest that your program include additional tests that are recommended by the Office International des Epizooties to conclude CSF diagnosis, such as the fluorescent antibody test with proper control parameters, virus isolation, PCR, and virus neutralization peroxides linked assay. We reiterate our invitation - -made during the site visit- - that you send a representative to our Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory for consultation.

## 2. Surveillance

We request clarification concerning two observations made in connection with your surveillance activities. First, the team noted that surveillance was particularly targeted to Region VIII. In fact, the level of surveillance was higher than appeared to be justified based on the swine population in the region.

In this regard, we are requesting an explanation for the relatively high level of surveillance in the region and, more generally, an explanation for the sampling levels in the country as a whole.

Second, your surveillance data differentiated between “monitoring” and “surveillance” samples. Your reports demonstrated a relatively equivalent number of monitoring samples in 2001 and 2002, but a marked reduction in the number of surveillance samples between 2001 and 2002.

We request an explanation of the distinction between “monitoring” and “surveillance” samples as well as the reason for the marked reduction in surveillance samples in 2002.

## 3. Movement of empty live-haul trucks

The team noted that empty live-haul trucks are allowed to move from Argentina and other potentially CSF-affected regions into Chile without thorough cleaning and disinfection. We are concerned about this practice because of the events that occurred in The Netherlands during its 1997-1998 CSF outbreak. This very severe outbreak was initiated by an empty contaminated live-haul truck that transited from a CSF-affected area in Germany. In fact, the truck had been subjected to cleaning and disinfection procedures, but the procedure was not adequate.

We recommend that this procedure be reviewed to ensure that it does not pose a risk of introducing CSF into Chile from affected adjacent regions. We would appreciate receiving a summary of the results of that review.

4. Theoretical risk of CSF transmission from infected wild boar to domestic swine

We are interested in the possibility that wild boar might reside in certain regions of Chile, and that these animals may have access to CSF-affected regions outside Chile. This could result in the transmission of CSF to domestic swine as a result of exposure to CSF-infected wild boar.

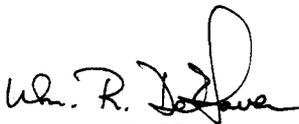
We recognize that there is no evidence to date that wild boar in Chile are infected with CSF. However, no CSF surveillance information has been collected from wild boar, and infected animals might cross the Chilean border from adjacent affected countries.

You suggested that a surveillance study of CSF in wild boar in Chile was under consideration. We encourage you to initiate that study, and we would appreciate the opportunity to review any results you might have available in the near future.

We are proceeding with our risk assessment based on the information gathered thus far. Of course, the results of the evaluation will be influenced by any additional information you can provide on the issues identified in this communication, as well as the progress that is made in the area of diagnostic capability enhancement.

Again, let me thank you for your patience and cooperation. We look forward to working with you to conclude this process.

Sincerely,



W. Ron DeHaven  
Deputy Administrator  
Veterinary Services