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## **African Swine Fever: Advice for Travelers**

**Helena, Mont.** – The Montana Department of Livestock (MDOL) is asking Montanans to be aware of the potential risk of introduction of African Swine Fever (ASF) and other foreign animal diseases. ASF is not a zoonotic disease, so it does not affect people and is not a food safety concern. However, an outbreak of ASF in the U.S. would cause major economic losses to multiple industries and greatly disrupt swine production.

There are several regions throughout the world dealing with outbreaks of ASF in both wild boar and domestic hog populations. Countries affected by the outbreaks include China, Belgium, Romania, Hungary, and Ukraine, as well as parts of Africa. These current ASF outbreaks are a good reminder of the risk posed by all foreign animal diseases.

ASF is a highly contagious virus, causing significant illness that is often fatal to pigs. There is no vaccine or treatment available for ASF. ASF can be spread directly from pig to pig, by certain species of ticks, when pigs consume contaminated feed or when contact is made with contaminated objects. The ASF virus can survive for extended periods of time in contaminated raw, partially cooked, cured or smoked pork products. This virus is also suspected to survive in animal feed ingredients. ASF and other foreign animal diseases can be spread when food leftovers are fed to swine. This practice is called garbage feeding and is regulated in Montana.

“We are asking the public to take an active role in preventing the introduction of African Swine Fever,” said State Veterinarian Dr. Marty Zaluski. “International travelers should be aware that visiting foreign farms or bringing meat products back to the U.S. can result in the introduction of disease into our nation.

Montanans who travel abroad should understand the following:

- Do not bring products containing pork or other meats back to the U.S.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect all footwear and clothing worn near any type of agricultural operation abroad.
- Declare any travel made to agriculture operations abroad, to the Customs and Border Protection representative upon your return.

Folks with questions or concerns about ASF can contact the State Veterinarian’s office at MDOL (406-444-2043) or visit the Center for Food Security & Public Health website [www.cfsph.iastate.edu](http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu).

The mission of the MDOL is to control and eradicate animal diseases, prevent the transmission of animal diseases to humans, and to protect the livestock industry from theft and predatory animals. For more information on the department, visit [www.liv.mt.gov](http://www.liv.mt.gov).

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