

# PANORAMA

Thematic portfolio



## African swine fever: responding to the global threat



# PERSPECTIVES

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*Small-scale pig production offers a way out of poverty in developing countries, and swill feeding is often the most affordable option and therefore widespread. Unfortunately, it poses a high risk for transmission of African swine fever (ASF). Prohibition rarely succeeds in such settings, so alternatives are required to make swill feeding safe.*

## Introduction

Feeding catering waste as swill is an affordable option for millions of smallholders who raise pigs to improve their household income. Unfortunately, swill derived from leftover food that may contain insufficiently cooked pork poses a risk of both classical and African swine fever, as both viruses can persist for long periods in chilled or frozen pork [1, 2, 3, 4].

## Are bans on swill the only option?

Bans need to be reinforced by inspection, but day-to-day practices in numerous smallholdings cannot be adequately monitored, and therefore bans result in – at best – a false sense of security. Furthermore, while effective risk communication is essential for all approaches, it should focus on the severe consequences of the disease, rather than possible punitive measures, to encourage informed cooperation from pig owners.

## Taking a more constructive and practical approach

Licensing safe food waste products, such as vegetables, is a useful approach but excludes meat. It has been pointed out that vast amounts of waste food discarded by retail outlets and households could be processed into nutritious and safe food for pigs [5, 6, 7, 8, 9], and Japan has made considerable advances in this respect [10, 11]. For large-scale production, industrial-scale factories could be licensed to process waste food, by methods known to inactivate pathogens of concern, into dry pelleted or liquid feeds that would be more affordable than grain-based commercial rations [8]. Alternatively, supported by effective risk communication, food waste could be processed at a cottage-industry or household level to enable its safe use in rural areas or areas of low pig density.

**Table I. Approaches to preventing the introduction of diseases through swill feeding**

Management approach	Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ban on feeding swill by law</li> <li>Licensing of identified safe ingredients for swill feeding</li> <li>Processing to inactivate the relevant pathogens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internationally accepted approach</li> <li>Enables affordable safe feeds that do not contain meat</li> <li>Ensures safety of swill fed to pigs</li> <li>Reduces food wastage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate implementation virtually impossible</li> <li>Potentially nutritious table waste is excluded</li> <li>Requires investment of time and money</li> </ul>

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## DOSSIER

# Management options to mitigate the risk of swill feeding

## KEYWORDS

#African swine fever (ASF), #feeding, #risk.

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