African swine fever and smallholder farmers

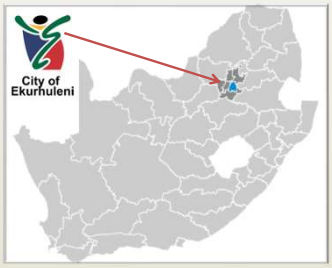
Thapelo Rametse[1], Mary-Louise Penrith[2], Anthony F Craig[1,2], Machabedi Mokgahla[4], Juanita van Emmenes[1,3], Jose Pablo Gomez-Vazquez[5]

[1.] Agricultural Research Council - Onderstepoort Veterinary Research, Onderstepoort, 0110, Pretoria, South Africa. [2.] University of Pretoria, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases, Onderstepoort, 0110, Pretoria, South Africa. [3.] University of Pretoria, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Department of Production Animal Studies, Onderstepoort, 0110, Pretoria, South Africa. [4.] Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Germiston, 1401, Johannesburg, South Africa. [5.] Center for Disease Modelling and Surveillance (CADMS), University of California, Davis, CA 95616, USA.

INTRODUCTION

African swine fever (ASF) has become a global concern, with Gauteng experiencing significant outbreaks in 2012 and again from 2019 to 2024. These outbreaks are linked to the domestic cycle, involving pig-to-pig transmission. While the South African government has implemented measures like quarantine and movement restrictions, poor compliance continues to undermine efforts to control the disease.

STUDY AREA



DATA COLLECTION

- Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and observation.
- The data were collected between July 2023 and November 2024.
- The target respondents (95) were smallholder pig farmers who were either affected or not affected by ASF outbreaks.
- The data collected were about the farm, husbandry, biosecurity, access to veterinary services, pig movement and disease awareness.

DATA ANALYSIS

- Data were captured in Microsoft Excel.
- The data were analysed using descriptive statistics.
- Counts, percentages, and frequency distribution were among the frequency measures employed.

RESULTS

ABOUT THE FARMS

84.2% of farmers kept their pigs permanently in pens

40% enclosures had soil

36% cement.

BIOSECURITY

- No visitors close to their pigs (77.9%).
- Farmers shared equipment with other holdings (56.8%).

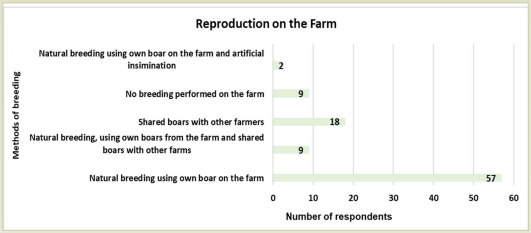
Used excrement as fertilizer (36.8%)

disinfecting was not practiced (70.3%)

(6.3%) didn't clean their pig pens.

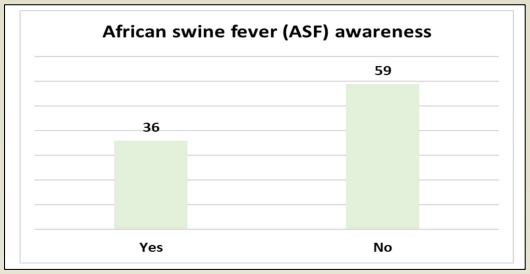
HUSBANDRY

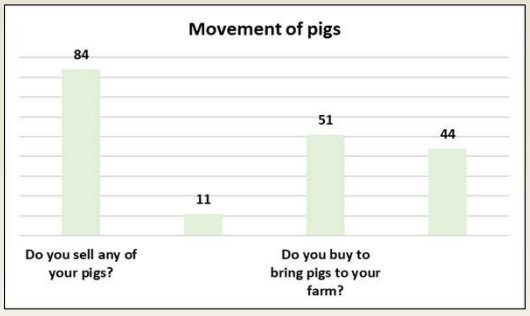
- Farmers indicated that they do not cook the non-commercial feed (85.3%) before they feed it to their pigs.
- Farmers do feed their pigs with waste containing meat products (41.1%).



VETERINARY CARE

- The results demonstrated a lack of veterinary care from 41 farmers (43.2%). Furthermore, (n=7) farmers use veterinary services as well as self-treating their pigs.





DISCUSSION

Pig farming offers economic relief for many households, especially in Ekurhuleni, where small-scale free-range systems dominate. ASF risks are linked to pig movements—through sales or new introductions—as well as poor husbandry, limited veterinary involvement, and weak biosecurity.

CONCLUSION

Basic biosecurity measures, such as pig confinement, feed safety, and prevention of introduction of the virus via people and fomites, can help to avoid ASF. The sharing of knowledge accomplished through the involvement of extension officers, who play a critical role in supporting farmers in acquiring crucial information, which is then converted into advice and guidance for better farming techniques.

REFERENCES & AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Agricultural Research Council and all the farmers who participating in the research study.

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Thapelo Rametse
rametset@arc.agric.za